July is here and we will be celebrating Independence Day on the 4th of July. Almost a quarter of a millennium ago, thirteen little colonies decided it was time to “hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. They took action and sent a little nasty-gram to the King of England, head of the most powerful empire on earth at the time, saying enough is enough, we demand freedom. 56 brave souls representing the people of these 13 little colonies had no idea if they were lighting a path for better tomorrow or signing a death warrant for their people. We know this “little nasty-gram” by another name: The Declaration of Independence. Every 4th of July we continue to celebrate the independence declared and the actions taken by the 13 colonies 247 years ago that started a new nation that would become The United States of America. One word can sum it up: COURAGE!

Think about the courage it took for 13 little colonies to stand up against their giant

Continued on Page 2
oppressor and say there is a better way. The courage it has taken every generation that has followed
to grow and transform a nation into The United States of America we know today and the courage we
must have to preserve it for future generations. We don’t do this by taking the easy path or letting it be
someone else’s problem. We do it by having the courage to stand up and fight for our way of life be-
cause we know freedom is not free. Every fight, battle, and/or war to protect our way of life has a
hefty cost that goes beyond a price tag that simply measures dollars and physical costs that can be
measured, seen, and/or treated. Hidden mental costs may be inside every soldier and sailor going un-
seen, unnoticed, and/or unrecognized. For some, it may be a small cost that can be unburdened in our
own memory banks. For others, it may be a larger mental cost that cannot be unburdened alone. Or it
could be a combination of both. Mental health costs cannot be measured or predicted.

The mental health struggle is real and can have very dire consequences. It is up to us to have the cour-
age to help. Be the one to make it personal. Be the one to ask a veteran how they are doing. Be the
one to listen when a veteran needs to talk. Be the one to reach out when a veteran is struggling. It is
up to us to have the courage to be the ones to stop veteran suicide. The life you save may be the next
great leader of the free world, the veteran next door or your own.

Sandra Davis
Department Commander
Dear American Legion Family Members and Friends,

I have always been a guy who sees the glass as half-full, not half-empty. So, when it comes to our 2023 membership year, I’ll start by celebrating the positive.

As of last week, The American Legion welcomed 77,074 new members to posts across the country and overseas. This exceeds the goal of 75,000 new members that I called for during my election on Sept. 1, 2022. There are still a few days left in this membership year, so I strongly encourage our posts to cross the finish line with a sprint rather than a stroll. Here is an easy opportunity to join online. Notice I said “glass half-full.” On the flipside of this great growth of new members, our renewal rate needs dramatic improvement.

There are 172,850 members who paid dues to their posts in 2022 but have not yet renewed. At the department headquarters level, we have 21,343 non-renewals. The American Legion recognizes that every year some members will pass away and join post everlasting. This is why we set our renewal goal at 90%, instead of 100%. Even so, our current retention rate is 88.65%.

In theory, it’s more difficult to recruit a new member than it is to keep an existing one. The existing member has already been convinced that The American Legion is worth joining. When people decide not to renew, chances are it’s due to a lack of engagement from their posts and fellow Legionnaires. They at one time believed that The American Legion offered programs, advocacy, service and camaraderie which outweighed its reasonable annual dues. Or maybe they just need one more reminder, from you. Online renewal is an easy click away.

I absolutely believe that we can achieve 90% renewals through better engagement. If a post only reaches out to its members in the form of a renewal notice, the results will be predictable. Newsletters are nice, but phone calls and visits are even better. Let each and every veteran in your post know that they are valued members of your American Legion Family. Don’t pressure people to go to meetings if they clearly have no desire to attend but let them know that you will always welcome their input and participation.

With more than 12,000 American Legion posts worldwide, not every post is a good fit for every Legionnaire. If conflicts or geographical issues are standing in the way, encourage the member to find a home at a post which is more convenient.

Don’t listen to the naysayers who believe The American Legion is in decline. Major media outlets have been predicting our demise for over a half-century now. While the veterans population is significantly smaller than it was following the Vietnam War, The American Legion is still the nation’s largest and most powerful veterans service organization. Let’s keep it that way.

Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola
National Commander, The American Legion
Hello Legion Family!

I am so excited to be the 23-24 Department President for the American Legion Auxiliary. This year we will be going back to basics, Life of our Veterans, Love for our Country, Liberty for all is what we do, increasing our membership and retaining those that have already joined us so they don’t get left behind, and we will be taking on the Legion’s “Be the One” campaign.

Let me tell you a little bit about my-self and why I joined the ALA. I have always been the type of person that wants to help. I always think of myself as number two not number one. It would be no difference with my military family. My Great Grandfather, Chester Mann was drafted in 1917 to WWI at the age of 24 and in 1942 drafted again for WWII at age 49. He was one of the founding charter members for my Winchendon Post 193. My Grandfather Harold LaDeau was drafted in 1942 for WWII at the age of 19. My father Ronald King served during the Vietnam Era stateside and my husband served in the Air Force during Lebanon/Grenada. My oldest son joined the National Guard and received his orders for Afghanistan in 2010, overseas he went.

These are my why’s I joined the American Legion Auxiliary. I have always felt great gratitude and love for my country and the veterans that help protect us and keep us FREE.

Now onto our next topic. Over the course of the wars many things have been learned. We have all heard of PTSD, what it is, and what it can do to a person. The Veteran community put a number on it. 22 veterans a day committing suicide. 22 a day! With the influx of the recent wars/conflicts that number rings true, or did! Last year the American Legion started the “Be the One” campaign. “Be the One” is their moto for suicide prevention in our Veteran community. I say finally!! Suicide has been around a long time, but the plan is to break that stigma on it and save lives. It is working! More people are talking about it and getting the help that is needed. The number I am told is down to 17.

Many of us have been touched in one way or another with some form of suicide or a tried event. For a person to get so low that they feel they have no way out is not right. I have had my personal and trying times with both my sons. Thank God my community hospital has a Suicide Prevention Task Force. This is where I learned so much and was able to help and be an advocate, especially with our Veterans and First Responders. Heck my Great-Grandfather, the one that started my Post...he died in 1962 of a single gunshot wound to the head. They all said he was “crazy”. Um hello he did two wars, WWI and WWII...no wonder why? Think of all the things he saw and couldn’t get it out of his mind. Well after my son deployed and came home...I knew the first night what I was in for. PTSD is no joke. Some people can hide it well and others can’t. So why not “Be the One " to save a life.

How you ask ?...just LISTEN! Be There! Reach Out to someone who can help. IT SAVES LIVES! So...

BE the ONE to save a life!

BE the ONE to Recruit NEW members, BE the ONE to Reunite OLD members, BE the ONE to Spread the MISSION.

Monique Connor
Department of Massachusetts
American Legion Auxiliary 2023-2024
Dan was born and raised in Merrill, Wisconsin. In High School, he was the class treasurer and a member of the Marching Jays and Jazz Band. Dan was also involved in sports already lettering in Cross-Country as a Sophomore. Dan’s real prize, however, came when he crossed the finish line of his 7th grade dream of becoming a pastor.

After high school, Dan attended Concordia University in Mequon, WI, and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree. As part of Concordia's global education program, he had the opportunity to travel and visit the Holy Land. Dan continued his education by earning a Masters of Divinity form Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. He also studied in Tallinn, Estonia. His two years of field work were at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Decatur, IN and he severed is vicarage year at St. John Lutheran Church in Plymouth, WI.

In August of 1997, he came to Horicon, WI, and was installed as the Assistant Pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church. In October 2000, he accepted the position of Administrative Pastor at St. Stephen, where he is currently serving.

As God has a way of opening and closing doors, so it was with “Lieutenant Dan’s” military uniform. His service to God and Country would never be placed in storage. Dan continued to serve our veterans and their families by holding numerous position within the American Legion over his 26 continuous years of membership.

Dan is married to his wife Stacey. He has two children, a son (Jacob) and a daughter (Emma), Stacey and Emma are members of Unit 157, Horicon and Jacob is a member of Squadron 157, Horicon.

Dan has served in all positions within the Department of Wisconsin culminating with him being the Department Commander. He also served as our National Chaplain.
Jim was born in Honolulu, Hawaii and attended Montville High School where he played J.V. Football, Varsity Football and Varsity Indoor & Outdoor Track. After graduation Jim had aspirations of furthering his education in drafting, but instead opted to join the U.S. Air Force where he worked in patient affairs and was trained to help support their Med Evac Unit of Moody Air Force Base. He was honorably discharged in 1983 as an Airman 1st Class.

Jim is married to his wife Lisa. Jim has two children, Patrick and Meghan and three step children Jason, Kaylene and Johnathan, (deceased).

His wife Lisa is an active member of the Auxiliary and has served as the National American Legion Auxiliary Northeast Region Children & Youth Chairwoman.

Jim currently works for the American Legion Department of Connecticut as a field representative for the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund, assisting veterans and their families with temporary financial assistance.

Jim is a 27 year member of the American Legion at Post 91 in Moosup, CT and a 13 year member of the Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 91 Moosup, and a founding “father” of Connecticut's American Legion Riders.

Jim has served in all positions within the Department of Connecticut culminating with him being the Department Commander in 2006-2007. He also served as our National Vice Commander 2008-2009.
Past Department Commander = Sally Nay

I would like to take a moment and thank all those in The American Legion Family who assisted me during my years as a department officer while trying to do my best for The American Legion department of Massachusetts. As my year as Commander has come to an end I look back and thank those who helped me to complete this year. It has not always been easy but working for the good of The American Legion is always worth the effort.

Remember to:

Honoring those who serve, those who have served and those who serve eternally.

And **BE THE ONE** to help a fellow Veteran!

The Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), which provides 24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans can now be accessed by dialing 988, then Pressing 1. The number may be new, but the crisis line’s dedicated, caring, qualified responders will continue to listen and help. A Veteran does not have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

Veterans can still call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to connect with responders or reach the VCL by chat ([VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)) and text (838255). More information is available [here](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat). Please share this important information with your Veteran patients, staff, and community!

Americanism

Hi I would like to say thank you to the members who came out and gave a vote of confidence to be one of three Department Vice Commanders for the year 2023-2024. One appointment I did receive was to be the Americanism Committee Chairman. Two Awards that I have the honor of giving out are the American Born Citizen Award and Foreign Born Citizen Award. I would like the District Chairman of the Americanism committee to start looking for citizens who are truly amazing citizens who are deserving of this award. I have the application on e file.

Robert Jerdan  
Department Vice Commander  
Americanism Chairman 23-24
Hello to all Department of Massachusetts Legionnaires and Legion family member I am Senior Vice Commander Nelson Blake and i want to tell you what my plans are for this year for membership so that we can have the best year possible. I am hoping we reach every goal that the national organization set before us or to be within striking distance of the goals as the year goes along. Let us not forget that as a legion family membership is the life blood of this outstanding organization and every year that we don't reach our goals is another year closer that the voice of the veterans could go unheard from.

This year Department Vice Commanders have been assigned districts and I will tell you what Vice Commanders have what districts,

DVC Drew Pajak has districts 1,2,and 3, DVC Scott Connors has districts 4,5,and 8, DVC Robert Jerdan has Districts 6,7,9,and 10 , and DECW Cindy Lacoste has all Department Woman Veterans Needs. I am including this years plan on how to work on increasing membership this year.

Yours in Service

Nelson Blake
Senior Vice Commander

District discussions of membership plan for 2023/2024 – Potential topics to include in your plan

- Organizing a district membership team
- Goals for membership within a district
- District plans for transferring 462 members
- New community membership activities.
  - District membership drives
  - Promoting Post membership activities that might include a ask your neighbor campaign
  - Revisiting the membership door tags
  - Other topics from the districts

What help do Posts/Districts need from their Vice Commanders regarding training or organizing the 462 activities?

---

### Department Membership Standings 2023 Membership Year

**District 2: Franklin/Hampshire 93.29%**

**District 1: Berkshire 91.65%**

**District 4: Worcester 91.13%**
Service Officer—The Pact Act and Hypertension

In August of 2022, Federal Legislation was passed adding the very common ailment, Hypertension, to the list of presumptive diseases caused by exposure to Agent Orange. This change in VA law establishes eligibility for compensation for many Vietnam Veterans who have been denied benefits in the past. Years of compiling medical records had shown that veterans who served in Southeast Asia had a higher incidence of High Blood Pressure than the general non-exposed population. As Hypertension is diagnosed in over 47% of the population of the United States, the occurrence is even higher among veterans, leading researchers to conclude that there must be a connection to certain chemical exposures.

Medically, High Blood Pressure has been shown to lead to many other health issues. which can ultimately be the cause of death. Surviving spouses will now be more likely to be granted a DIC claim if the veteran's death certificate lists Hypertension as a contributing factor. For that reason alone, veterans should file a claim for Hypertension even if medication has controlled the issue, or if his BP readings are borderline high. No matter the veteran's age, being service connected to Hypertension [even at 0%], may be the deciding factor as the VA considers a claim application.

Secondary illnesses that high blood pressure may cause include damage to the arteries, the heart, the brain, the kidneys, the eyes, and may also cause sexual dysfunction. All veterans should be aware that although these conditions may not be directly connected to their military service, they can now be linked as service connected due to the new hypertension presumptive decision. Applicants can contribute evidence to their own claims by keeping records of their home blood pressure readings and including this information when they file a disability compensation claim.

Semper Fi
Mike Whalen
Greetings American Legion Family.

I hope this edition of The E Legionnaire finds you all in good health and spirits.

With department convention behind us the page has turned to the new American Legion Marketing Year of 2023-2024. As per tradition our first marketing and fundraising campaign of the year will be our yearly address label drive. These address labels are printed and distributed on behalf of the department via national and we should all be receiving our labels in the mail soon. Please consider a donation when yours arrive as funds raised are specifically earmarked for the department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Fund. This worthwhile endeavor helps us fund such things as canteen books for both state soldiers homes in Chelsea and Holyoke. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation is the first of our four pillars and always a worthy cause. We cannot support veterans without your help and financial assistance. Many thanks in advance to those who will donate and many thanks to all that you have all contributed in the past to this worthy cause.

Stay safe this summer and a blessed summer season to The American Legion Family and all our loved ones.

Sincerely,
Mike Davis NEC-Marketing Chairman.

Support the Tango Alpha Lima podcast

The American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast is nearing its 200th episode. Since its debut in April 2020, the podcast has captured the compelling stories of veterans and servicemembers, won multiple awards and sharply increased its audience.

Here are three ways you can support the podcast:

• **Subscribe to receive each episode:** Whether you use the industry leader, Apple Podcasts, or another option, you can subscribe for free to Tango Alpha Lima so you never miss an episode. Pick the podcast catcher of your choice, search for Tango Alpha Lima and hit the button to subscribe to automatically download all future episodes.

• **Sign up for the newsletter:** Whether you subscribe to the podcast, you may be interested in The American Legion’s weekly newsletter that highlights each new episode as well as highlighting previous ones that may also be of interest. The newsletter is sent shortly after the new episode is released Tuesday mornings. Sign up for the free newsletter, [legion.org/newsletters](http://legion.org/newsletters)

• **Rate and review:** The higher a podcast’s rating is, the more often it will show up in the feeds of potential listeners. Adding a rating (hint, hint: 5 stars please) and review to Tango Alpha Lima will help get the podcast in front of more veterans, servicemembers and their families. Visit Apple Podcasts, Spotify or other podcast-hosting sites to add your rating and review.
The American Legion Riders are a strong supporter of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, which provides grants to nonprofits that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children. Since 1955, the CWF has awarded $19 million in grants.

The CWF presents awards annually for significant contributions to the foundation. American Legion Riders are now eligible for several of those awards as a recognition of their great support to CWF.

**U.S. “Udie” Grant Legacy Award**

To qualify: Must be the top department nationally, based on combined total contributions of The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Riders and Eight & Forty during a contribution year.

**Garland D. Murphy Jr. Award**

To qualify: Must be the most active department in the nation, based on actual contributions received during a contribution year. One department from each organization (The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Riders, and Eight & Forty) is recognized.

Both the U.S. “Udie” Grant Legacy Award and Garland D. Murphy Jr. Award are presented on stage during The American Legion’s annual national convention.

**“Heritage Circle” Gift Club**

Awarded to departments (American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and Eight & Forty) for their cumulative donations made during the contribution year.

- **Benefactor (gold):** $5,000
- **Patron (silver):** $2,500
- **Sponsor (bronze):** $1,000

**“Children First” Gift Club**

Awarded to American Legion posts, Auxiliary units, Sons squadrons, Legion Riders and Eight & Forty salons for their cumulative donations made during the contribution year.

- **Guardian (gold):** $1,000
- **Advocate (silver):** $ 750
- **Caretaker (bronze):** $ 500

Drew Pajak, Chairman

Child welfare Foundation
The AHL Springfield Thunderbirds Donates $2,000 to American Legion Highschool Lady’s Fastpitch Program.

On Tuesday, June 6 the Thunderbirds Hockey Team presented a donation check for $2,000 to the Legions Softball Fastpitch Program. The funds were raised during a special jersey auction on Military appreciation night.

One of the many ways the Thunderbirds give back to the community and their supporting fans throughout the New England area.
Editorial—PDC John P. Lenotte

Congratulations to the new American Legion MA Department Commander Sandra Davis and all her officers for the year 2023 - 2024. And to immediate Past Department Commander Sally Nay and her officers for a great year. In 2 months’ time we will be electing a new National Commander at the Convention in Charlotte, NC.

Although most Legion meetings at all levels begin again in September, now is the time to create a plan for the coming year. Waiting until the Fall, you will lose 25% of the year! Of course, membership is important and with my 45 years in Human Resources, I will remind everyone that RETENTION is the first step in recruitment. What are you offering your Post members other than our great monthly magazine and a membership renewal notice? Are you telling your members about Post meetings and activities? Are you letting the community know about the great work you are doing? Need some ideas? How about attending a District meeting to get together with other Posts and your District officers to share ideas? Looking for more ideas – try the National site at www.legion.org; go to members, then membership and post activities to review several videos with some great ideas. You can also look at various media and publications for lots of information that you can download. The resources are there and available for your use. Also keep your eye out for the many training session put on by some of our Department officers. Remember, the Department site is www.masslegion.org.

In summary, there is a lot of help and resources available for each and every Post. It is up to each Post to take advantage of them.

On a personal note, I want to thank all Legion members who came to the Department Convention in Marlborough. And a special thanks to those who voted for me, electing me as your next Alternate Executive Committeeman. I am privileged to represent the Department of MA.

May GOD BLESS AMERICA and those who protect our way of living, including all our first responders and their families.

John Lenotte, Past Commander, Post 4 Haverhill MA; Past Commander District 8 Essex County and Past Commander, Department of MA. Member American Legion National Media and Communications Commission. Candidate – elect for Alternate Executive Committeeman representing the Department of MA. Member, American Institute of Parliamentarians. Local Board Member, Selective Service System. I may be reached at jplenotte@gmail.com
My Fellow Legionnaires,

I hope you are all doing well now that our Department Convention has concluded. A big congratulations to Sandra Davis on her ascension to Department Commander. I want to thank all of you who attended the convention and showed your support to everyone involved. Above that I would like to thank a few people directly if I may,

I would like to start by thanking PNC Paul Morin and PNC John P. “Jake” Comer for the opportunity to advance in a leadership role within this department. Thank you to my wife, Jodie Pajak, Our newly elected National Executive Committee Member. I am very thankful for her support and the ability to watch her become the first female member of this Department to be elected as a red hat wearing national officer. Next is Louie Brault, who has been there for me through thick and thin since we moved here in 2009. He and his wife Rosie have been like family. He has taught me so much over the years during his campaign and my wife’s. I would also be remiss if I did not thank Wilson Thompson post 185 and District 3 for their support.

Beyond those above I must thank the following for their support so I could run for Department Vice Commander, Dennis St. Pierre and all of the Members of North Adams post 125, Bob Burke, Mary Standish and Steve Souza. Also, my Hospitality room captains Annette Macaudda, Linda Pajak and Rosie Brault. And finally, everyone that voted, whether it was for me or not, I want to thank you. Those who did not give me something to work for in the year to come, I hope I can earn your vote next year by proving myself worthy.

In closing, I have been appointed as the Department Children and youth Chairman and the Child Welfare Foundation Chairman (our Commanders Charity this year) for the coming year so you will all be hearing from me on a regular basis. I look forward to seeing all of you for many years to come. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely and with deep gratitude,

Drew Pajak
Department Vice Commander

Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honorary Chairman</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Honorary Chairman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PNC John P “Jake” Comer</td>
<td>PDC Louie Brault</td>
<td>PNC Paul Morin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC Jodie Pajak</td>
<td>PDC Jim Fratolillo</td>
<td>PNVC Mark Avis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Kelley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denis St. Pierre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Brehio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC Mike Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Burke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legion staffer on suicide: ‘We, as a society, need to do better’

The American Legion—June 21, 2023

In a very personal and emotional testimony before a House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (HVAC) subcommittee, Tiffany Ellett shared her own experiences losing friends and loved ones to suicide, why it’s so critical to stem this tide in the veteran community and beyond, and how The American Legion is working toward that goal.

Addressing HVAC’s Subcommittee on Health on June 21, The American Legion’s Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division director named four people close to her who have taken their own lives in the past three years, including two veterans.

“Mental health and suicide do not just affect one community in one way,” Ellett said as she teared up. “This is a complex problem that needs a multifaceted solution. We, as a society, need to do better.”

Ellett shared 2021 statistics from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that show an estimated 12.3 million adults in the U.S. seriously considered suicide, 3.5 million planned an attempt and 1.7 million attempted. “(The) Veterans Health Administration is the largest integrated health care network in the United States,” she said. “If any organization has the ability to pull together the means to create a multifaceted solution to the mental health epidemic plaguing the United States and its veteran population, it is VA.”

Ellett expressed support for both the VA Zero Suicide Demonstration Act of 2023 and the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program Act, noting the Legion’s efforts on both fronts.

“In 2021, The American Legion started its Be The One movement to destigmatize and encourage the discussion of mental health, suicide and seeking help,” Ellett said. “This movement, in combination with our Buddy Check Program created in 2019 and adopted by VA through 2023 legislation, are examples of The American Legion’s constant vigorous support of peer-to-peer solutions for veterans’ mental health complexities.”

The transition from the military to the civilian workforce can also be a stressor for mental health, said Ellett, noting “a veteran’s perceived loss of identity or mission. One of the solutions for this empty space is to immediately provide a new mission to the veteran. This is just one of the reasons we support the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2023, which assists in building a direct path for a corpsman or medic to become an Intermediate Care Technician (ICT), augmenting the VA medical workforce. That being said, we would like to see the Department of Homeland Security included in this legislation so that the Coast Guard Health Services Technicians may be included in the recruitment database. We think the VA ICT program is one that with increased use could not only assist in amplifying personnel for our veterans, but could also provide
much-needed transition assistance to those exiting the service by giving them a mission to move directly into.

Ellett closed by discussing legislation being considered to expand care for veterans through improving long-term care, home services and living conditions, and community care.

“The American Legion believes that veterans, and their families, are best served when their long-term care needs are promptly met while also honoring their self-autonomy and giving them the choice to remain within their local communities,” she said. “We support the introduced legislation that not only calls for an increase in funding to support housing improvements for disabled veterans so they may retain self-autonomy in the comfort of their own home, but also that which calls for codifying community care access standards to ensure veterans will receive timely, quality health care.”

Ellett also stressed the importance of caring for those who care for others. “Often the caregivers of veterans, be they spouses, siblings, even children, carry a burden that many of us don’t see,” she said. “They do such a good job of holding up the veteran that no one sees the cracks in the foundation. As a disabled veteran, the spouse of a disabled veteran, and an advocate for our veterans and their families, I have witnessed the demons that lay in wait in the dark for each of us. The American Legion calls on Congress to pass legislation such as those discussed today to assist in evolving care and support for our nation’s veterans and their families.

Read Ellett’s submitted testimony here. Watch Ellett’s oral testimony beginning at the 1:05:28 mark here.
WASHINGTON — According to Medicare’s latest nationwide survey of patients, VA hospitals outperformed non-VA hospitals on all 10 core patient satisfaction metrics — including overall hospital rating, communication with doctors, communication about medication, willingness to recommend the hospital, and more.

As a part of the survey, Medicare awards star ratings from one star to five stars, with “more stars representing better quality care.” Based on patient surveys between July 2021 and June 2022, 72% of VA hospitals received four or five stars for Overall hospital rating compared to 48% of reporting non-VA hospitals. Additionally, VA hospitals received a higher percentage of four or five star ratings than non-VA hospitals for Communication with doctors (87% vs. 48%), Communication with nurses (59% vs. 35%), Responsiveness of hospital staff (63% vs. 34%), Communication about medicines (80% vs. 38%), Cleanliness of the hospital environment (69% vs. 52%), Quietness of the hospital environment (49% vs. 38%), Discharge information (65% vs. 55%), Care transition (76% vs. 35%), and Willingness to recommend the hospital (76% vs. 52%). The results are drawn from Medicare’s Care Compare website.

These findings align with a recent systematic review of more than 40 peer-reviewed studies, which found that VA health care is consistently as good as — or better than — non-VA health care.

“At VA, Veterans are the ultimate judges of our successes or failures — so we’re very proud to be this highly rated in a survey of Veterans,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “Our goal at VA is to deliver world-class care to every Veteran, every time, and we will continue to invest in VA health care and the patient experience until we make that goal a reality.”

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services update the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems Star Ratings each quarter. The survey is administered to a random sample of patients across the country. The survey asks discharged patients 29 questions about their recent hospital stay, including 19 core questions about critical aspects of patients’ hospital experiences. The same questions are asked on VA and community hospital surveys to evaluate the patient experience. More information on methodology can be found here.

VA also surveys Veterans in order to understand and improve the Veteran experience with VA. The VA Trust Report for the second quarter of fiscal year 2023 shows that nearly 90% of Veterans who get their care from VA trust VA for their care (based on 560,000 surveys). Additionally, more than 79% of Veterans trust VA overall, reflecting a 1.9% increase from the last quarter and a 24% increase since 2016.

Visit access to care to compare VA hospital data to other medical centers in the community. View VA’s trust report and other customer experience data for more details.
Department Commander Sandra Davis, Department Adjutant Lisa McPhee and Executive Committeewomen Cindy Lacoste work the Legion Information Table.

Secretary Jon Santiago of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans Services meets with the Department Representatives at the Women’s Conference.
I just had the honor of presenting State Representative Jerald Parisella with the Massachusetts American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Award 2022-2023. Representative was selected as one of three who are exemplary examples of Americanism based on their acts and deeds in their community. Jerald was presented with a certificate as well as a flag that was flown over the USS Constitution.

Thank you for all that sponsored tees, sponsored a team, participated in the mini golf tournament and made donations to The Department of Massachusetts American Legion Auxiliary fundraiser to benefit The Salvation Army Bridging the Gap Program. We raised $4,100.00 with your support! The funds will go directly to assist students of the Bridging the Gap program that serves at risk youth throughout the state.

Thank you   Katina Polemenako
NEC Michael Davis lights the candle for our Veterans of Current Conflicts as Asst SGT At Arms Cindy Lacoste assists

Department Commander Sally Nay lays the American Legion Wreath with assistant Sgt-at-Arms Adam Doud and Sgt-At Arms Robert Desrosiers assist.

Photos by Lisa Borges, Department Photographer
It is an honor to announce that our father, Bill Seckinger, was awarded the Citizen of the Year Award by the American Legion State Department!

This prestigious award is given to a recipient who gives back to our Veterans and to our community. As many of you know, Bill has owned and run Muckey’s Liquors for 37 years and in that time, he has started many initiatives to benefit our Veterans. We have ongoing collections of bottles and cans that are donated to the American Legion every month, along with Rolling Thunder, the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, the Middleboro All Sports Boosters Association, and Ted Williams Camp among several others. Not only does he collect donations, he initiated the cleaning and maintenance of our beautiful Veterans Memorial in Middleboro with the American Legion, participates in fundraising events, and is always looking for an opportunity to help. He has a genuine love for our country and our community and the utmost respect for those who have served.
The Adjutant General visited our convention and requested our support for the Machine Gun Range at Cape Edwards on Joint Base Cape Cod. He reiterated that the machines guns are already fired on Cape Edwards this is just improvements to the range. EPA originally gave approval then reneged once a activist group on Cape Cod got involved.

The American Legion Department of Massachusetts in Convention at Marlboro MA voted unanimously to support this National Guard Effort on Camp Edwards.
Department Commander Sally Nay provides gifts and is capping the outgoing officers.

Some of our incoming Department Officers for 2023-2024

Photos by Lisa Borges, Department Photographer
Around the Department—Convention

See more pictures of Convention on our Facebook Page!

Page 24

Photos by Lisa Borges, Department Photographer
Congratulations to Happy Salmons of Westfield’s BSA Troop 124, the 2023 American Legion Department of Massachusetts Camporee Commander’s Trophy Champions.

BSA Troop 124 is sponsored by American Legion Post 124 and co-sponsored by the Westfield Sons of The American Legion Squadron 124.

BSA Troop 124 won the Commander’s Trophy at the 2022 Camporee.
JOHN LUTINSKI SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION
2023
THE AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL PROGRAM
Department of Massachusetts

1. The Department of Massachusetts Athletic committee will award annually a $1000.00 scholarship to be used toward the expenses of the education of a participant of the American Legion Baseball Program.

2. Applications shall be filed on or before July 15, 2023
Send application to:
John P. Comer
40 Russell Rd
Somerville MA 02144

3. The scholarship shall be for boys who have graduated from high school in the year 2023 and will be entering their freshman year of college. The scholarship will be presented at the Department Baseball Tournament in Natick MA at the Mahan Field on July 22, 2023

APPLICATION

Students Name________________________________________________________

Address______________________________________________________________

City or Town________________________________State________Zip____________

Date of Birth______________________________ Telephone #_____________________

Fathers Name and Occupation____________________________________________

Mothers Name and Occupation____________________________________________

List brother and/ or sisters and their ages

Family's Adjusted Gross Income:______________________________
Note: Please attach a copy of your official High School transcript. If information is omitted you will be disqualified.

A letter of recommendation from a school official, counselor, or teacher shall accompany this application.

A letter of recommendation from the manager or coach of your American Legion Baseball team is also required.

Name of High School____________________________________________________________

Address_______________________________________________________________________

Name of School/College you will be attending_______________________________________

Please list activities you participated in during high school. Please list awards, honors and recognition received.

What do you plan on pursuing when you enter college? Why?

I certify to the accuracy of the foregoing facts.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT_______________________________________________________
## 2023 Membership Standing as of June 29, 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  BERKSHIRE</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>91.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  FRANKLIN /HAMPShIRE</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td>1266</td>
<td>93.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  HAMPDEN</td>
<td>2622</td>
<td>2280</td>
<td>86.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  WORCESTER</td>
<td>4814</td>
<td>4387</td>
<td>91.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  MIDDLESEX</td>
<td>4228</td>
<td>3693</td>
<td>87.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  NORFOLK</td>
<td>2659</td>
<td>2341</td>
<td>88.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Suffolk</td>
<td>1202</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>89.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  ESSEX</td>
<td>2751</td>
<td>2475</td>
<td>89.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  BRISTOL</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>2526</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE</td>
<td>4100</td>
<td>3568</td>
<td>87.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297 CAPITOL HILL</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>92.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>462 HEADQUARTERS</td>
<td>2056</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>51.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Quota</strong></td>
<td>30,534</td>
<td>26,281</td>
<td>86.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a rush? Need American Legion Family applications quickly for an event? Try these simpler versions which can be printed from your home office — and without stealing all of your ink! We removed the color block headers from the original brochure (which you can still order from your department/state ALA office if you prefer) to make things easier for your membership recruiting activities. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org to download this black-and-white version.

**Auxiliary Membership as of 6/29/2023**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Units</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2023 Goal</th>
<th>Present Membership</th>
<th>District Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BERKSHIRE</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>102.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FRANKLIN/HAMPIONE</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>92.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HAMPDEN</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>96.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>WORCESTER</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>94.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MIDDLESEX</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>95.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NORFOLK</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>97.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SUFFOLK</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>76.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ESSEX</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>99.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>BRISTOL</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>94.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>93.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>462</td>
<td>HEADQUARTERS</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>44.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,384</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,001</strong></td>
<td><strong>92.89%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would like to introduce myself to the American Legion Family
My name is James W. Blake the newly elected Detachment of Massachusetts Sons Commander. My eligibility to become a Sons member is from my father, a veteran of WW II.

I know I have big shoes to fill, but I’m looking forward to the opportunity, My theme is He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother so put on your big boy pants and get it done.
We owe our Veterans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>% of Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  BERKSHIRE</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>107.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  FRANKLIN /HAMPshire</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>88.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  HAMPDEN</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>101.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  WORCESTER</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>92.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  MIDDLESEX</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>97.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  NORFOLK</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>89.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  SUFFOLK</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>108.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  ESSEX</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>98.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  BRISTOL</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>93.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>104.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Goal</td>
<td>5442</td>
<td>5253</td>
<td>96.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post Events

Post 98 Saturday morning Coffee break
Veterans, Aux, and Potential Members
American Legion Hall
32 Beach st
8:00—10:30
Come on down

Coffee and Conversation
Coffee with a Vet open to public...
No need to be Military to join us
Monday mornings 8am - 10 am...
Upstairs
American Legion Post 373 Baldwinville
THE VIETNAM TRAVELING MEMORIAL WALL ®
Dalton American Legion Post #155
258 North Street Dalton, MA
September 14-18, 2023
Hosted by: Dalton American Legion Riders #155

Volunteers Needed:
All 58,311 Names on the wall NEED to be read,
All Veteran agencies and individuals are encouraged to reserve time to read names!
Please email reading time requests to: mikebradley1936@aol.com

Donations Needed:
Private donations can be sent to:
American Legion Riders #155
258 North St.
Dalton, MA 01226
Attn: The Wall

Or scan below:
Post Events

FUND- FEST 2023

Fundraiser to benefit
American Legion Post 113
Manchester-by-the Sea, MA

September 30, 2023, 1pm-6pm
Rain or Shine

Enjoy an afternoon of Live Music, Food, Raffles
50/50, Fun games and Caricatures
Come one and all to Fund-Fest

Support Post 113
Tickets $20-includes Food
ATM on Premises, Credit Cards Accepted

Sponsored by Post 113 American Legion Riders
with support from our 113 Sons and Auxiliary

RIDE FOR THE HOLYOKE SOLDIERS HOME
Sponsored by Cherry Valley & Baldwinville ARA

PUBLIC EVENT - ALL RIDERS WELCOME
Saturday, July 15 (rain date July 16th)

Cherry Valley Post 443 - 167 Main Street, Cherry Valley, MA
$20 Rider - $10 Passenger

Registration 9:00 am
Kickstands up @ 11:00 am sharp

Food & Raffles

Proceeds to the Soldiers Home
Holyoke, MA
BIKE & CLASSIC CAR NIGHTS 1ST & 3RD FRIDAYS
BEGINNING JUNE 2, 2023 • 6PM – 10PM

June 2nd – Superchargers
June 16th – Tony Soul Project
July 7th – Salty Sisters Project
July 21st – A Night of Zeppelin
August 4th – Mychael David Band
August 18th – Candy Criminals
September 1st – Wild Combo
September 15th – Tony Garcia Band

Rain or Shine

VERNON HILL POST 435 • 267 PROVIDENCE ST., WORCESTER, MA

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall is coming to Dalton MA
Sept 14 -18
Post Events

Dalton American Legion
258 North Street
Dalton, MA

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2023
Registration 9 - 10:30am
KSU 11am

Breakfast by the Auxillary

POST RIDE ACTIVITIES
Food - Drink - Raffle
Live music by the HOT SHOT HILLBILLIES
Vendors ~ Public Welcome
4th Annual
"To Hail and Back"
Poker Chip Run

SUNDAY JULY 9, 2023

Dudley Gendron American Legion
156 Boston Road
Sutton Mass 01590

Registration: 9:30 am
Kick stands up: 10:30 am

$20 Per Person

Ride Sponsor

Proceeds from the ride are used to Benefit

GARRISON
SPEED SHOP
INC.

Helping Vets and first responders. Visit
https://garrisonspeedshop.org to learn
more about the shop and their mission

Made with PosterMyWall.com
Post Events

1st Annual Brenda's Ride
August 27, 2023

Dudley Gendron
American Legion
156 Boston Road
Sutton MA 01590

Registration: 9:00 AM
Kick Stands Up: 10:30 AM

$20 Per Person

Last year the Central Mass Legion Riders along with our friends and families all came together to do something great for one of our own. Brenda wanted to do something to pay it forward, and help children this year. Brenda has chosen Operation Camp as the charity for this year's ride. Every year Operation Camp sends children of fallen military members to summer camps, anywhere in the United States. Proceeds from this ride will go towards helping support our Gold Star Families children. Visit https://www.operationcamp.org to learn more about this amazing organization.
AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS
CHAPTER 142
ASHBURNHAM, MA
132 Williams Rd.
01430

$50/50 RAFFLE
Chinese Raffle

CASH BAR

POKER RUN

Sat. Aug. 26th. 2023 At 1:00 pm

SAVE the DATE

$15 Riders / $15 Passengers
You have to pay to play
Food will be available when return

Sign ups @
KSU @
About 60 miles
Contact:

All Proceeds Benefit Veterans and Community
Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Massachusetts? If so, please follow these basic guidelines for submissions.

- Submit your text in Microsoft Word format (.doc) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf). Save your file as the same name as the article, so we can easily keep track of it. Be sure to make it clear who the author is, whether it’s you or if you are just forwarding it to us. • **WE LOVE ARTICLES WITH PHOTOS**, or any other kind of images! Include photos and/or artwork for articles *separately* (NOT embedded in the article) as high resolution (300 dpi, or better) JPGs. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article. Let us know in your e-mail of any corresponding captions, and/or name of the photographer if necessary.

- Spell check everything! Especially people’s names, web addresses, etc. You can help us greatly here by simply running your spell check function in your word processing program.

- **E-mail everything directly to us at fmacdonald53@comcast.net no later than the 25th of every month for it to appear in the very next issue.** This way we have plenty of time to work with in case we need to clarify anything with you.

**Want to Subscribe to Mass E-Legionnaire:**

Send your email address to: deptsecretary@masslegion.org or to the Editor at fmacdonald53@comcast.net.

Still receiving correspondence through the U.S. Postal Service? Send the Department office your Name & Address and you will get a hard copy mailed to you.

The American Legion, Dept. of Mass, Inc.
Room 546-2, State House
Boston, MA 02133

The American Legion e-Legionnaire is a member of
The American Legion Media Alliance
TALMA

Follow the Department of Massachusetts on Facebook @
The American Legion Department of Massachusetts