



MASSACHUSETTS E-LEGIIONNAIRE

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Commander's Corner



Commander Nelson Isaack Blake

Hello and welcome to all of the Massachusetts American Legion Family. Wasn't the last few month fast moving? How is it that we are all ready in to September when it just feels like we had department convention and where electing new officers to lead this department in to the future and to help reach the goals of membership.

As this month is starting we need to remember that membership and Be the One is not a once a month

thing it is a all the time thing.

This month we have a membership table at The Big E, which we share with are department friends from Connecticut. At this event we inform the many visitors that pass by the American Legion tent and maybe even sign up a few for both departments. Maybe we even get info to the other Northeast Departments of possible members that visited the tents.

While we are at the Big E the Auxiliary will be entertaining The National President that was just elected at National Convention.

On that same Saturday we will be having the first DEC for the year at the Bedford Post.

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I said it a lot the past year that membership is our job! We need to make sure that for every legionnaire that we lose that we replace them with at least two others just to fill the void that has been left by them. As this year is, just getting started, for most post, lets not forget that we still have members that didn't pay last year and are still able to be added to the membership of the post! As I said last year " DO YOUR JOB" and that job is membership! If we want to keep the outstanding organization alive we need to keep recruiting!

Yours in service,

Nelson Izaak Blake
Commander
The American Legion
Department of Massachusetts

The American Legion's Legislative Division uses VoterVoice as its grassroots advocacy platform for connecting American Legion members and advocates with their members of Congress. VoterVoice allows The American Legion to contact every member of Congress on large, national campaigns as well as target specific members on key committees that pertain to The American Legion's legislative priorities.

In 2023, The American Legion conducted action alert campaigns that resulted in nearly 48,000 emails sent to Congress by Legionnaires and advocates.

Contact your congressional representatives

You can contact your representative through our campaigns located on our Legislative Action Center, votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home. Be sure to share The American Legion's legislative priorities using the Legislative Agenda when you contact their office. While you are there be sure to sign up for our legislative alerts so you can stay up to date on all of The American Legion's legislative campaigns.





An emotional John P. "Jake" Comer, past national commander of The American Legion, speaks to the National Executive Committee Monday after he was surprised by a resolution to name the NEC Room at National Headquarters in Indianapolis in his honor.

A U.S. Air Force veteran of the Korean War who had been aware in advance of nearly every resolution to come before The American Legion National Executive Committee over the last half-century had no idea about this one.

American Legion Past National Commander John P. "Jake" Comer of Massachusetts wiped tears from his eyes Monday when he stepped to the podium of the Pre-NEC meeting at the organization's 105th National Convention, in New Orleans. The NEC had just passed Resolution 1, its only resolution heading into the convention, to name the historic NEC Room at The American Legion National Headquarters in his honor.

Three past national commanders – Paul Morin, David Reibein and Daniel Dellinger – spoke to the committee about the impact of Comer's mentorship to them. "I would not be standing here before you today if not for Jake Comer," said Morin, a fellow Massachusetts Legionnaire, who served as national commander in 2006 and 2007.

Comer joined The American Legion in 1962 and held offices at every level of the organization, serving as national commander in 1987 and 1988. That year, he was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to travel to Nicaragua and return with a report on the Contras and deliver it directly back to him. He raised more than \$1.1 million for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and more than \$1 million for the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C. He was later instrumental in the move to establish a permanent home for the American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, N.C.

Moreover, according to a plaque that will hang in the NEC Room now bearing his name, "he devoted more than three decades to mentoring leaders at every level of The American Legion."

For generations of Legionnaires who will vote on resolutions in decades to come, Comer's name and legacy will be etched into the architecture of a room in Indianapolis where all resolutions – *except one* – have received his counsel for more than four decades: The John P. "Jake" Comer National Executive Committee Room.





National Commander James A. LaCoursiere, Jr.

Loyalty. Unity. Valor

As he stood on the stage of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans addressing delegates to the 105th American Legion National Convention, newly elected National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. pledged to continue to maintain the mission of the organization's Be the One veteran suicide prevention program, and raise funds for the Veterans & Children Foundation. "You don't fix something that's not broken," he said, referencing the work done before him by Past National Commanders James

Troiola and Daniel Seehafer. "We're going to maintain the course and follow the consistency that has been set."

And then he introduced what he called his personal and secondary theme: L.U.V., or Loyalty, Unity and Valor.

"The L is the loyalty, the true compassion from the heart," LaCoursiere said. "But the unity is when we all pull together, we all work as one, for one mission. And that's to drive our organization forward, which also enhances America for the better.

"The valor ... we carry that with us in our hearts. And we sit back and we maintain that from the day we raise our hand to serve this great country and still do that today. That's why you all are here. You do that back home with your posts, your units, your squadrons. And for that, I sincerely thank you."

A U.S. Air Force veteran and member of American Legion Post 91 in Moosup, Conn., LaCoursiere then shifted to suicide prevention, noting that Be the One "is a very meaningful and personal program and project to me. Be the One, as you heard, is not a slogan, not a catch phrase. It's not just something that looks nice on a billboard or anything such as that, but rather a direct mission statement. Far too many veterans have lost their lives due to suicide, as well as our active-duty troops and members of military families.

"As Commander Seehafer always stated, 'We, The American Legion, are about changing lives and saving lives.' Together, we can reduce the veteran suicide rate and destigmatize the issues of mental health. Together, we want to train and educate members within our great organization and in our communities about what the Be the One mission is all about."

That includes letting individuals know that it's OK to not be OK. "We, The American Legion, are there for them. We need to listen, be compassionate, ask the difficult questions and give them the guidance in which they need," LaCoursiere said. "When I get the honor of testifying before Congress, I want to be able to look Congress in the eyes and let them know that The American Legion has trained and educated more individuals than any other organization in the world."

Sending the right message about what The American Legion is and does is another focus for the new national commander.

“We need to make every community in the nation know and understand who we are. We are The American Legion,” LaCoursiere said. “The second word ... is American. This says we represent all of America’s veterans, our active duty, Guard and reserves, and their families as well. Legion is all of us united together as a family striving for the same goals: to keep the United States of America prospering and keep the promise for a stronger country through our youth, our voices in Congress, and striving for the much-deserved quality of life for all those that have served before and continuing today in our armed forces, along with their families. Do not forget the families.

“We need to go beyond the four walls of our post homes and the locations where we meet to become much more visible in every community throughout our great nation, as well as the foreign outlying departments. We do so much great work for our organization and for our great country, but we still are not identified enough as I feel we should be. Together, let’s let all of America know that we are The American Legion, we are supporting veterans and their families, as we continue our service by serving America, through changing lives and saving lives. The world will know that The American Legion *is* the voice for veterans.”

LaCoursiere called for continued, and improved, legislative advocacy from the Legion Family. “We need to continue to make our voices heard in our communities, states and on Capitol Hill,” he said. “We have a fantastic grassroots program and constantly have the tools and resources at your fingertips, but in my opinion, we need a hell of a lot more of our Legion Family members to utilize the resources. I encourage – no, actually, the challenge was placed yesterday by Commander Seehafer, when he asked you all to take a brief moment, if you have not done so yet, to register for the Legislative Action Alerts by registering at **legion.org/action**, and respond to them regularly by sending messages to Congress on a regular and frequent basis.

“Make our voices heard, and let’s make our members and our numbers show ... especially when we have crucial matters on the table before them, such as The Elizabeth Dole Act supporting our caregivers; the Major Richard Star Act allowing combat-injured veterans to receive both their earned retirement pay and disability compensation without offset; Pay The Coast Guard, ensuring the Coast Guard receives their earned pay during a government shutdown; and numerous other hot-button issues on behalf of our troops, veterans and families.”

LaCoursiere closed by reminding Legionnaires of a promise he made this summer to Legionnaires during the annual National Membership Workshop – one that’s about having fun.

“I promised everybody that if we all work together and hit the 100-percent mark by the Membership Workshop in 2025, that I, along with my aide, will appear on the stage at the workshop and a brief appearance at the national convention dressed up as cheerleaders.

“I’m cheering for all of you and am committed to working with you, as we grow our organization and let America know who we are – we are The American Legion. The voice for veterans and their families. Thank you, and God bless each and every one of you, and God bless the United States of America.”



Trish Ward was elected national president of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) during the organization’s 103rd National Convention held Aug. 23-29 in New Orleans.

“I stand before you today incredibly honored to have been elected to the position of national president for the 2024-2025 administrative year and I thank you deeply and genuinely for your support and confidence,” Ward said from the convention stage. “As a dedicated and committed member of this organization, it’s hard for me to express the emotion of this moment. Yes, it is the opportunity of a lifetime, not only for me, but also and more so for my beloved Kansas.”

Before her election to the ALA’s highest volunteer office, Ward held numerous leadership positions in the organization at the unit, district, department, and national levels. At the national level, she served as chair of several programs, including Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Leadership, Legislative, ALA Girls Nation, Public Relations, and Membership. She also served as national vice president during the ALA’s 2023-2024 administrative year.

Ward is a member of John P. Hand Unit 250 in Louisburg, Kan. She is eligible for ALA membership through her father, John M. Brusati, and her grandfather, Edmund S. Lindberg. Her father served in the U.S. Army in World War II, and her grandfather served in the U.S. Navy during WWII.

In her professional life, Ward retired in 2023 as Senior Lead Project Manager at Lumen, a global technology and IT company. She holds bachelor’s degrees from both the University of Southern California and the University of Kansas. Her hobby is studying parliamentary law, and she is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians

Ward’s family is also involved in The American Legion Family organizations. She and her husband Steve bring children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to the Family experience.



Joseph's affiliation with the American Legion runs deep. He is a charter member of Otero-Garcia-Navarrete Squadron 72 in Albuquerque, N.M. His eligibility stems from his father, Tony Navarrete, a Vietnam-era U.S. Army veteran. From his earliest memories, The American Legion has been an integral part of his life, a testament to his unwavering commitment.

Joseph is humbled and grateful to have garnered the endorsement and support of a diverse range of American Legion entities. These include the Otero-Garcia-Navarrete Post 72, Unit 72, Squadron 72, American Legion Riders Chapter 23, and the Detachment and Department of New Mexico. He also enjoys the backing of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of New Mexico, further underscoring his broad appeal and potential for effective leadership.

Joseph's parents raised him and his brother in a home that revolved around Legion values: volunteerism, patriotism, Americanism and good citizenship. Legion events and the ceremonies to honor our veterans were part of their daily lives. His respect for veterans and their sacrifices is genuine and sincere. They are a proud Legion Family. His father, Tony, continues to serve the Legion as Department and Detachment Adjutant for New Mexico. His mother, Rita, is the American Legion Auxiliary's past national president (2009-2010). His brother, Steven, is a long-time member of Squadron 72 and director of the New Mexico Boys State program.

A graduate of the National Management Institute, Joseph has familiarized himself with valuable organizational information. In preparation for his role as Sons of The American Legion national commander, he served on a variety of committees and positions, including National Vice Commander, NEC, Alt NEC, and Subcommittee on Resolutions, appointed by The American Legion to the Committee on Committees and appointed to the Strategic Planning Ad-hoc Committee. He has also served as chairman of the Membership Committee, Veterans Employment & Education Commission and the Americanism Commission.

Joseph and his wife Loretta share a family of seven children and eight grandchildren. Through example, they hope to give each of them the same values of honor, love and respect for God and country.



DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

As I was not the Delegation Leader at our recent National Convention, but a Dept. Delegate, I will only touch on a few related highlights. Our Past Dept. President Monique Connor will most likely be sharing most of the Convention News at Fall Conference.

I just want you all to know how special it is for me to help represent the Dept. of MA, ALA at these functions. Being a part of the American Legion Family has allowed me to make wonderful lifelong friendships and to see and experience so much of the history of the United States of America, as I was able to do going to and coming home from this event.

One of those highlights was the Friday night before the Convention Meetings began. Thanks to a member being able to obtain a few tickets to a Jazz Cruise, at which we had a great time at, but got to share "Who we were" and "Why we were in New Orleans" with the band Director. We were all wearing "TEAM MASSACHUSETTS" shirts, so that caught his eye. So as not to be the only group on the boat to be singled out, we let him know that there were many other Legion Family Members aboard. He had the band play all the tunes representing each branch of the service to everyone's delight. Then he called us up to sing "**All Hail Massachusetts.**"

The next afternoon, we attended the Eastern Division Caucus. Our Eastern Division National Vice President presided over a great and enjoyable meeting. We all wore our "**BE THE ONE**" Shirts. It was an extreme honor and a pleasure to be introduced at this event by our out-going Dept. President Monique Connor.

On Sunday evening, many of us visited the WWII Museum. All I can say is, what an awesome place! One really needs a few days to really see it all. Being able to bring up the name of the person who gave this member her eligibility there is special. That was my "Dad," who was a WWII Navy Veteran.

The Convention convened at 8:30 Monday morning with all MA members in place. Hearing the Committee reports from Committee Chairs from around the country is always a great learning experience. We were visited by the AL National Commander Daniel Seehafer and SAL National Commander Donald Hall, Jr.

Most of our members attended the ALA Luncheon at which all the Women of the Year were introduced. That afternoon we were given the option of attending a couple of Breakout Sessions. This member opted to attend the one on Parliamentary Procedure which was a good learning event. This was also attended by other members of our Dept. and several others attended the session addressing "**Be the One.**"

On Tuesday night many of us attended the National Commander's Banquet and on Wednesday night we attended the States Dinners. Great events, as always. Like I said, you will be hearing more from Monique. This year for the first time in several years, the incoming Department Presidents were marched in for installation. It was such an honor. Trish Ward from Kansas is our new National President. Hope you all get to meet her when she comes to Massachusetts; Sept. 12-15, 2024.

Thank you all for this wonderful opportunity. Thank you, Frank for waiting for this message. It is so appreciated. God Bless our American Legion Families and God. Bless America.

Donna Blattenberger, Department President – 2024-2025

Membership year 2025

We are 2 months into the new membership renewal year. Numbers are looking good! But it's early, the next renewal notices will be out in in early October, which sees a large response. The upcoming membership renewal cutoff date is 11 September. That means, any renewals not processed by that date, the member will receive a 2nd notice to renew. Sooooo please process all membership renewals you have in your possession, to minimize members getting a second notice, and making duplicate payments.

Paid on Line: All too often, Department gets phone calls "Can you tell me how many of my Post members paid on-line"? This information is readily available, for Commanders, Adjutants and "permission assigned" Membership Chair's, on MyLegion.org. Log on to MyLegion, click on My Account, click on Reports/Labels, then Member Online Renewals - pick your parameters, and there you go. If you cannot "see" the prompts, you may not have permissions, did you turn in your Commanders and Adjutant Report?

462 Post: This is our "cloud" of members, most know what it is and how it works. I will be sending this list out, want to get on an exclusive e-mail list, send me a note. Prepared as an Excel spreadsheet, it will be distributed to your District Membership Team (DMT). The DMT's are being requested to send it to their Posts. Take a look for potential new members not only in your community, but surrounding cities and towns as well.

Membership Sources: Log onto Studentveterans.org, this is the Student Veterans of America group. Log in, search for chapters in Massachusetts (Hint: There are 15 chapters in the Commonwealth) and engage. Send the SVA chapter an e-mail. Something to consider, almost all of the members are using the G.I Bill. Who authored the "Serviceman's Readjustment Act" of 1944? Your right.

The Snowbirds are Coming: Massachusetts enjoys a large number of transient "Snowbirds" that head south for the Winter. We know who they are, if the member has not renewed, reach out to them and highly suggest that they renew before they go. A nice new 2025 membership card will help them get into the southern Posts in January, a bit easier.

Tool Bag: Been working on your elevator pitch? Have you taken Basic Training? Many, many tools are available to help the Membership Teams at all levels. ***MyLegion.org*** - reports/ labels has letters you can use to send to members. ***legion.org/training*** has a tremendous library of materials you can use, not just to look for members, but how to welcome them once you have them. We are working on a spreadsheet to help you keep track of your CPR deeds.

Scott M. Conner,
Sr. Vice Commander, Membership Chair
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A Foundation of Hope, Department Commander Blake's Charity for 2024-2025

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation feeds and houses children of military personnel and veterans facing urgent, unexpected hardships. It prevents eviction, keeps the power on and fulfills basic needs to hold a family together through difficult times.

The foundation also covers rigorous training and accreditation costs for American Legion claims experts who provide free representation for veterans and families applying for disability benefits, survivor assistance, GI Bill opportunities and more.

Since its inception in 1925 as the American Legion Endowment Fund, the foundation has assisted millions of veterans, their families and children in need. In 2019, the American Legion Endowment Fund began doing business as the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation to more clearly state who benefits from tax-deductible donations to the separate non-profit 501c3 element of the nation's largest veterans organization.

The foundation relies entirely on charitable donations from individuals, like-minded associations and corporate allies.

At any one time, more than 3,000 trained and accredited American Legion service officers are handling the needs of 750,000 or more U.S. military veterans who have become disabled through service to our nation, as well as their families, who may be caregivers, surviving spouses or dependent children.

The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance program ensures that qualified military and veteran families with minor children at home can pay for food, shelter, clothing or other necessities when sudden, unexpected financial hardships strike. The program distributes between \$250,000 and \$1.2 million each year in one-time cash grants of up to \$1,500 each.

Measurable results of the foundation

3,000+ Number of trained and accredited American Legion service officers who provide free benefits and claims application services for veterans and their families.

750,000 Approximate number of veterans receiving free disability claims assistance at any time free of charge by trained and accredited American Legion service officers nationwide.

\$1,500 Potential amount of one American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grant to help military and veteran families cover the cost of basic household needs during a crisis.

\$15,500 Amount in American Legion Temporary Assistance cash grants awarded to military and veteran families who lost everything after Hurricane Harvey in 2017

\$842,000 Average amount in annual American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants awarded between 2012 and 2016.


\$30 MILLION Approximate amount in cash grants issued from The American Legion Endowment Fund and Veterans & Children Foundation to families in need since 1925.

\$1.1 MILLION Approximate amount in American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants urgently distributed in one month to 1,713 junior enlisted members of the U.S. Coast Guard with children at home who had a 35-day pay delay due to the January 2019 government shutdown.


\$25 MILLION Fundraising goal to make the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation sustainable for the future.


Veterans & Children Foundation: Key Points


The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly known as The American Legion Endowment Fund, provides financial resources for the organization's Temporary Financial Assistance Program and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation support, including training for accredited service officers.


 *The Temporary Financial Assistance Program helps military and veteran families with minor children at home when they are hit with unexpected financial hardships, from sudden health-care emergencies to delayed military pay. Funds are disbursed as cash grants solely to be used for essential household costs.*

 *Over \$6 million in Temporary Financial Assistance grants has been provided over the last decade alone.*


 *More than 3,000 trained American Legion service officers provide VA benefits representation and other forms of assistance to some 750,000 veterans at any one time, all the time, free of charge.*


 *American Legion service officers are directly responsible for veterans disability compensation of more than \$14 billion per year.*

 *The need for more service officers, and more accreditation training, is essential as a new generation of wartime veterans returns to civilian life and becomes eligible for state and federal disability and health-care services and benefits.*

 *The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation has provided tens of millions of dollars for disabled veterans and families since 1925, and funds must now be replenished in order to continue making life-changing differences in their lives.*

 *Charitable gifts to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation are 100% tax-deductible because the foundation is its own 501c3.*

 *Donors who make substantial contributions to the foundation may be recognized as members of the prestigious 1919 Society.*

 *The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation is carefully governed by its own non-profit endowment corporation, led by the national commander of The American Legion.*



The American Legion is proud to announce an official partnership with the Army-Navy Football Game presented by USAA, which will be played for the 125th time on Dec. 14, 2024. The American Legion becomes the first veterans service organization (VSO) to sponsor "America's Game" in its history.

The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans service organization, has secured a multi-year deal alongside presenting sponsor USAA and participating partners Chevrolet, Exchange, Duke Cannon Supply Co. and Palantir. The American Legion will also be participating in year-round sponsorships of both Army West Point Athletics and Navy Athletics. The agreement starts with this year's game at Commanders Field in Landover, Md., and helps The American Legion raise awareness about its Be the One mission to reduce the number of veterans and servicemembers lost to suicide.

"We are going to amplify our Be the One Mission by being official partners of the Army-Navy Game presented by USAA," American Legion National Commander Daniel Seehafer said on the stage of the 2024 American Legion National Convention in New Orleans. "Your American Legion has become the very first VSO to sponsor America's Game."

"As the nation's largest VSO, it is fitting for The American Legion to be at this annual celebration of service, honor, country," American Legion Chief Marketing Officer Dean Kessel said. "We are truly honored to support these student-athletes who are committed to protecting the freedoms we cherish."

The Army-Navy Game is among the longest standing and most storied rivalries in college football history. This new partnership aligns with the Legion's core values of service, patriotism and camaraderie.

Chet Gladchuk, Director of Athletics at the U.S. Naval Academy, said: "The opportunity to enhance our relationship with The American Legion is so very much appreciated. As partners, we share common values that accentuate country and patriotism. America's Game will only further promote our shared vision and mutual support for those veterans who have advanced the cause of our great nation."

Mike Buddie, Director of Athletics at Army West Point, said: "We are thrilled to partner with The American Legion as our official veteran service organization. This collaboration will continue to elevate America's game on the national stage and showcase the incredible support The American Legion provides to our veteran servicemembers."

The sponsorship also allows The American Legion to raise awareness about Be the One.

"While we know the game will provide our nation's veterans and other fans entertainment, it's also true that many are suffering inside," Kessel said. "That's why it is so important for us to bring Be the One to millions of military supporters. By raising awareness of the suicide crisis in forums like this, we are effectively increasing the probability of servicemembers, veterans, their families and other military supporters to Be the One to save one life."



Embracing the Spirit of Americanism: The American Legion's Enduring

For nearly a century, the American Legion has been a beacon of patriotism, community service, and advocacy for veterans' rights. Founded in 1919 by World War I veterans, the organization has grown into one of the largest and most influential veterans' groups in the United States. At its core, the American Legion is dedicated to promoting Americanism – a set of values that embody the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy. In this article, we'll explore the American Legion's commitment to Americanism and how it continues to inspire generations of Americans.

Americanism is a way of life that celebrates the unique blend of freedoms, opportunities, and responsibilities that define the United States. It's about embracing the Constitution, respecting the flag, and honoring the sacrifices of those who have served our nation. Americanism is also about community – working together to build stronger, more compassionate neighborhoods and cities. It's about recognizing the diversity that makes America strong and promoting unity in the face of adversity. Through its various programs and initiatives, the American Legion promotes Americanism in several key ways: Flag Education Teaching children and adults alike about the history and significance of the American flag, including proper flag etiquette and the importance of respecting Old Glory.

Citizenship Developments Encouraging civic engagement, voter registration, and community involvement through programs like the High School Oratorical Scholarship Program and the Boys State/Girls State leadership development initiative.

Veterans Support: Advocating for veterans' rights, providing resources and services like claims assistance and employment support, and honoring their sacrifices through initiatives like the Poppy Program and Veterans Day ceremonies.

Community Service Organizing volunteer efforts, charity drives, and disaster relief initiatives that make a tangible difference in local communities.

The American Legion offers a range of programs and initiatives that promote Americanism, including:

American Legion Baseball Teaching young athletes about teamwork, discipline, and good sportsmanship while promoting community engagement.

Scholarship Programs Providing educational opportunities for students pursuing higher education, including the National High School Oratorical Contest and the Legion Auxiliary's Non-Traditional Student Scholarship.

Veterans Employment and Education Commission: Supporting veterans' transition to civilian life through job training, education, and employment resources.

By embracing Americanism, we can build a stronger, more united America. If you're passionate about promoting patriotism, community service, and veterans' rights, consider joining the American Legion or supporting its initiatives. Together, we can make a difference and ensure that the spirit of Americanism continues to thrive for generations to come.

The American Legion's commitment to Americanism is a testament to the enduring power of patriotism and community service. By promoting the values that make America strong, the organization inspires us to work together towards a brighter future. Join the American Legion in its mission to promote Americanism and make a positive impact in your community today!

Bob Jerdan

DVC Americanism Chairman 24-25

Candidate for SR. Vice Commander



Prior to becoming a member of The American Legion, Army National Guard veteran Joseph Desroches saw a post on Facebook in which Wilson-Thompson American Legion Post 185 in Feeding Hills, Mass., announced it was setting up a gaming area within the post and was looking for game donations.

Desroches, 33, wanted to assist the post’s effort, so he reached out and shared that he had some contacts within the gaming community – primarily the nonprofit Stack Up, which was founded to bring veterans and civilian supporters together through a shared love of video gaming through a variety of programs.

Desroches, who shortly thereafter joined Post 185, reached out to Stack Up, which has had multiple collaborations with both the Legion’s National Headquarters and local posts.

“I got a response back within a couple days, saying ‘We’d love to help out,’” Desroches said. “They asked if there was any specific equipment we were looking for. I told them anything would be a benefit and we’d be grateful for.

“They ended up sending us the latest Xbox system and a whole handful of games. Some accessories as well. They were very quick to jump in on helping out.”

The American Legion has provided Operation Comfort Warrior grants to Stack Up in the past to cover such expenses as [updating Joint Base Lewis-McChord’s gaming area](#) and [providing video games and other accessories](#) for Fort Irwin’s Desert Warrior Week. Stack Up also [gifted four gaming PCs to American Legion Post 46](#) in Culver City, Calif., which was planning on using them to start an esports league. *(Continued on Page 15)*

On its [website](#), Stack Up shared, “We’ve helped a few American Legion Posts before by getting them Supply Crates. American Legion Posts often lack gaming areas and equipment and with more and more Veterans gaming, they need to update their systems. We’re happy to help provide these consoles as the American Legion has benefitted Stack Up through its Operation Comfort Warriors before to help us get more Supply Crates into the hands of Veterans.”

“I think it’s huge,” Desroches said of the Legion’s relationship with Stack Up. “It definitely offers a place for people to go and relax, unwind, decompress and hang out with others. We have a little gaming corner (at Post 185) off to the side with couches. I figure it’s going to make a big impact, especially with drawing some of the younger crowd in. Having something like that is kind of a stepping stone, bridging the gap of making some of the younger crowd not sure how to get involved. I think that’s going to be a big help.”

Desroches said he’s been gaming “since I was little” and said when he was in detainee operations at Guantanamo Bay, it served as a coping mechanism for he and others.

“Gaming gives you that opportunity to connect or reconnect with new people from all over the world,” he said. “I think it’s just another tool in the toolbox kind of thing. You don’t have to travel to do it. You can sit down, jump on a game, message some people.

“Online gaming is ease of access to talk to like-minded people, unwind, game and chat it up. And get things off your chest if you need to.”

That includes what can be difficult topics. “Maybe it’s not something you can easily talk to your family about,” Desroches said. “My post commander, Drew Pajack, he’s trying to do a lot of this stuff. He wants to really expand this, and hopefully we can work with other posts and kind of show them, ‘Hey, this is what we’ve been doing’ and see how we can help as well.

“It’s not just to benefit our post. It’s really to set a standard or a waypoint for other people to jump on board. That’s the long-term goal.”



The American Legion

AUG 09, 2024

Two years ago, Legionnaire Mitchell Keil organized a 100-mile relay from his Post 125 in North Adams, Mass., to Post 414 in Sutton, Mass., in support of the American Legion’s [Veterans & Children Foundation](#). Keil and many of the same walkers – Post 125 Legion Family members and friends – recently set out for another 100 miles to support the Legion’s [Child Welfare Foundation](#) (CWF) which provides grants to nonprofits that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children.



The walkers and support vehicles left Post 125 at 6 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 2, and arrived to Post 306 in Paxton, Mass., on Sunday, Aug. 4, after making an overnight stop.

Dressed in bright yellow Child Welfare Foundation shirts, the walkers were visible to passersby to share the message of CWF and raise funds along the way. Keil believes the total raised for CWF is about \$10,000. Money raised is the result of donations for the walk and 50/50 raffles throughout the past year at Post 125.

“Every time we do an event at Post 125, we do a 50/50 and instead of taking that 50 and putting it into the general fund, we specifically put it aside for this (CWF fundraiser),” said Keil, a post service officer and the Department of Massachusetts historian. “We’ve learned to not just put it toward everything that we’re working on, but to let it accumulate and give it a specific goal. And we tell people exactly what the 50/50 is being raised for.”

Post 125 chose to walk for CWF because it was the fundraising project for immediate Past Department Commander Sandra Davis. And the post knows how to successfully fundraise for the cause as it’s received the [CWF 100% Per Capita Banner](#) the past four years.

“Not only am I proud that we were able to do the walk and raise that much money, but that the community was really behind us the whole time we were doing it,” Keil said.

Along the route, the walkers encountered heat, humidity and downpour rain; walked in the dark with the support vehicles’ lights illuminating them; got lost on river walks; shared camaraderie and listened to music or audible books; enjoyed a hearty breakfast at Post 124 in Westfield Sunday morning; and was escorted by the Paxton police and fire department to their final destination of Post 306 where they celebrated with a meal.

“(The walk) definitely wasn’t without its hiccups,” said Keil, “but we had a lot of fun.”

Keil plans to do the 100-mile relay again in 2026 with a goal to visit a new department. He has mapped out posts that are about 100 miles away in Middlebury, Vt., Cooperstown, N.Y., and Danbury, Conn.

“We’re trying to see if there’s going to be any interest to receive us in another department,” Keil said.

As I write this article, we are finishing up at the 105th American Legion National Convention in New Orleans, LA.

There were a lot of great speakers and reports given to include thousands of dollars raised for American Legion Charities. \$930,000 given to the Veterans and Childrens Foundation. Unfortunately, both major political party candidates chose to not visit our convention. National Commander Seehafer recorded a live video to send to both parties noting our disappointment in not coming to speak. For those who did not attend the Convention, I encourage you to check out the videos at www.legion.org. There were many motivating speeches.

Attending the Media and Communications Commission, I learned some of the following: 3800 have been trained so far with the Be the One online videos, 5 sessions are planned for September; additional Be the One resources are available online; the national website is being updated and is due to be completed this Fall; the Flag information comic books have been updated and are a big seller through Emblem Sales; the annual report is available online as is the digital magazine. Let us not forget the podcasts that are gaining popularity. Let us remember that Legiontown is a page where you can post information about a project your Post has done. It is also a source of ideas for project you can do!

Next year, 2025 is the 100th anniversary of American Legion Baseball. Watch for more information to be coming out. Remember, there are currently 87 members of the Baseball Hall of Fame that played Legion Baseball.

The coming year will also see many patriotic celebrations as we look to the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. And of course the many battles that led up to that event. In 2026, the USS Constitution will be leading the tall ships into Boston Harbor. What is your city or town doing to celebrate? Is your Post involved?

A repeat from last month but worth the message as we look ahead to the November election:

Are you registered to vote? If not, there is still time. And most important is to actually get out and vote!

I will suggest that one be an educated voter. Ignore the political ads. They are all biased. Personally, I ignore them along with most of the general media. Look at the voting records of the candidates. What are they proposing to do once elected? Do you agree with MOST of their proposals? There are several sites to get a sense of reality in terms of voting records. These include: aarp.org/electionguides; Ballotpedia.org; opensecrets.org; vote411.org; usa.gov/voting-and-elections; and votesmart.org. Please join me in voting this November.

Remember: BE THE ONE. Saving lives. Changing lives. One at a time.

John Lenotte, Alternate National Executive Committeeman Department of MA; 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. Member, American Institute of Parliamentarians. Local Board Member, Selective Service System. I may be reached at jplenotte@gmail.com



Veteran's Administration Volunteer Services

Dear Legionnaires

The Boston VA Health Care System needs clothing for all our veterans. Currently there is a critical need for women's clothing. All clothing must be new and ready to be worn.

Attached is the flyer on the upcoming Greater Boston Stand Down. Please get the word out to all your members.

Please call the local representative below with any questions and to schedule a drop-off appointment.

Brockton: Lana Otis (774) 826-1957 or 774-826-1135

www.cdceportal.va.gov/facility_needlist/?id=523A5

Jamaica Plain

www.cdceportal.va.gov/facility_needlist/?id=523

Mary Peak or Damien Powell 857-364-2443

West Roxbury

www.cdceportal.va.gov/facility_needlist/?id=523a4

Peter Tribuna or Eben Orcutt 857-203-5135

Bob Burke

Department Chairman: VAVS Committee

(508) 415-8501



VETERANS EXPO!



Free Food & Fun!

LIVE 

For Vets, Troops, Family & Friends

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
VA Boston Brockton Campus
 10 AM – 2 PM, 940 BELMONT ST, BROCKTON, MA

-  Live Bands/Music and Free Prizes!
-  Jobs and Career Fair! Bring DD214
-  Fed/State Resources and Benefits
-  Health Services and Checks
-  Military Vehicle and Equipment Displays
-  Women Veterans Seminar at 11:00
-  Kid's Zone! Pony Rides, Bounce House and More





COOKOUT! 

*For more information, go to www.eventbrite.com and search for "Massachusetts Veterans Expo", email VABostonVets@va.gov or call (617) 275-6101.



Boston Healthcare System



City of Brockton



With generous support from Cell Phones for Soldiers



STAND DOWN
GREATER BOSTON 2024

BOSTON CITY HALL PLAZA
2024 Greater Boston Stand Down
Taking a stand for Veterans
Friday, September 20

Veteran Service Hours 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

FOOD | MUSIC | RAFFLES | PRIZES

Please join service providers, employers and community organizations in providing essential supportive services to Veterans, including: employment assistance, housing assistance, medical care, wellness programs, legal support, prevention services.

For more information, visit nechv.org/StandDown or Email StandDown@nechv.org





JOIN US AS WE REMINISCE
AND HAVE FUN AT OUR

“COUNTRY FAMILY REUNION!”



**TESTIMONIAL BANQUET in honor of
Department President Donna Blattenberger**

**Sunday, September 29, 2024
Middleton Post 227
69 River Street, Middleton, MA 01949**

**Social Hour: 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Dinner Served: 2 p.m.**

Donation: \$40.00

Make checks payable to: Methuen Unit No. 122

and Mail to: Beverly Monaco, Ticket Chairman
30 Seneca Street, Methuen, MA 01844
Telephone: (978) 687-1987

Deadline for Reservations: is September 15, 2024

. No tickets will be sold at the door.



Around the Department— Department Commander's Banquet



The American Legion
Department of Massachusetts, Inc.
RM 546 – 2 State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133-1044
(617) 727-2966

Email: deptadjutant@masslegion.org

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER NELSON IZAAK BLAKE BANQUET

July 16, 2024

Dear Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders,

Department Commander Nelson Blake's banquet, will be held on Saturday, November 16, 2024 at Nonantum Post 440, 295 California St, Newton MA 02458.

A social will be held at 3 PM - Opening of program 3:45 PM - buffet will be open at 4:15 PM

Ticket donations are \$ 50.00 per person and you need to purchase from your District Ticket Chairperson. Please make checks payable to "American Legion Department of MA" and mark "Tickets Only"

Tables will be set for 10.

Cutoff date for Banquet Tickets is **October 28, 2024 (Tickets required at door)**

Audience Business Casual (trousers and collared shirt for men and appropriate apparel dress for women - **please no jeans**)

Best Western Hotel, 380 Winter Street, Waltham MA 02451

Call Hotel (781) 890-7800 or use the link below

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.22009.html?groupId=3M1JY5V9

The code is **American Legion**

Room rate King or Double \$129.00 plus tax 11.7% = \$144.10

Extra person in room - \$10.00 each

Free Breakfast Buffet and free parking

The cutoff date for reservation is **November 9, 2024**

On behalf of the Committee, we thank you for your co-operation.

Yours in comradeship:

Co Chairman: Robert Desrosiers and Robert Lewis

Ticket Chairman: Lisa McPhee Dept. Adj.

Ad Book Chairman: Louie Brault PNEC

Members: 10 District Ticket Chairman



Around the Department— Department Commander's Banquet



District Ticket Chairperson

Department Commander's Banquet

All tickets sales need to be in the Department Office

Deadline for tickets October 28, 2024

NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT DOOR

District 1

Dennis St Pierre
18 Orchard St
Adams MA 01220
beermansst@hotmail.com
413-652-5822

District 3

Gary Fontaine
404 Southwick Rd Trlr 43
Westfield MA 01085-4856
chieffont7@aol.com
413-519-2755

District 4

Scott Conner
7 Meadowbrook Rd
Spencer MA 01562
scottscpo@gmail.com
774-239-6162

District 5

Robert Desrosiers
441 Lakeview Ave
Lowell MA 01850
fishtruck15@aol.com
978-459-4260

District 6

James Fratolillo
374 Manet Ave
Quincy MA 02169
jdftratt@comcast.net
617-792-7175

District 7

Milton Lashus
15 Parker St
Charlestown MA 02129
miltonlashus@gmail.com
774-766-8960

District 8

Sandra Davis
PO Box 95
Gloucester MA
skeeisme@hotmail.com
978-879-8682

District 9

Stephen Souza
25 Billys Ln
Somerset MA 02726
t5ssteve@yahoo.com
508-642-6660

District 10

Rachel Perron
1 Ocean Dr
Mattapoisett MA 02739-2329
rachellperron@yahoo.com
207-632-2831



**Department Commander's Banquet
Honoring Nelson Izaak Blake**

Saturday - November 16, 2024

Copy deadline is October 28, 2024

Check Ad size

District # _____

Post # _____ Auxiliary # _____ Squadron # _____ ALR # _____

**Advertising rates for the commander's book
Check Ad Size Desired**

Printing area

7 1/2" x 5" \$60.00 Full Page _____

3 1/2" x 5" \$40.00 Half Page _____

1 1/2" x 5" \$25.00 Quarter Page _____

MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT

Email Ads to: deptcoordinator@masslegion.org

Please enclose check with Ad Payable to:

"The American Legion Dept. of MA"

Mail checks to:

**The American Legion
State House Rm 546-2
24 Beacon St
Boston MA 02133**

Check # _____

Amount \$ _____



Around the Department— Department Commander's Banquet



Department Commander Nelson Izaak Blake

Booster Sheet **Deadline is October 28, 2024**

District # _____

Post # _____

Unit # _____

Squadron # _____

ALR # _____

\$1.00 per person

\$2.00 per Mr. & Mrs.

*******PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MISS-SPELLINGS*******

Check # _____ Amount\$ _____

1 _____

16 _____

2 _____

17 _____

3 _____

18 _____

4 _____

19 _____

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6 _____

21 _____

7 _____

22 _____

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29 _____

15 _____

30 _____

Post can also type names and send on a separate paper.

Mail to: The American Legion Department of MA

State House Rm 546-2

24 Beacon Street

Boston MA 02133



Veterans breakfast @Harvard Community Health Center, Carter Post 16, Adams Post 36, and Veterans of the community, Photo by Ken Starks, PDC



This is annual celebration on Main Street North Adams, Commander Mark Sprague and Membership Chairperson David Levesque on a recruiting campaign. The city shuts down Main Street every year and local vendors come out and sell their products, with singing and dancing up and down the street. With hundreds of people out to enjoy the festivities.

9/8/2024	1:00PM	POW/MIA	Battleship Massachusetts
9/14/2024	10:00AM	Finance Committee	Post 221 Bedford
9/14/2024	11:00AM	DEC & Membership	Post 221 Bedford
10/7-10/10		Fall Meetings	Indianapolis, IN

AMERICAN LEGION 2025 Membership Standing *as of August 22, 2024*

Department Membership Standings 2025 Membership Year

- District 1: Berkshire 54.21%**
- District 7: Suffolk 49.82%**
- District 5: Middlesex 46.09%**



	District	Goal	Current	% of Goal
1	BERKSHIRE	1195	649	54.21%
3	HAMPDEN/FRANKLIN/ HAMPSHIRE	3422	1523	44.51%
4	WORCESTER	4421	1997	45.06%
5	MIDDLESEX	3623	1670	46.09%
6	NORFOLK	2319	968	41.74%
7	SUFFOLK	1142	569	49.82%
8	ESSEX	2442	1087	44.51%
9	BRISTOL	2496	1132	45.35%
10	PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE	3573	1606	44.95%
297	CAPITOL HILL	423	341	80.61%
462	HEADQUARTERS	1689	428	25.34%
	National Quota	26,756	11,971	44.74%

As a membership organization, American Legion Auxiliary members make a difference every day for our veterans, military, and their families. Our membership numbers change from year to year for various reasons, which can impact the outreach we are able to do.

The American Legion Auxiliary has seen in recent years that small-town rural environments are struggling, leadership capacity is dwindling, membership is aging and churning, and infrastructure is weakening. These reasons related to our membership have led Ward to an ALA national focus on helping reinvigorate our organization through membership — from the ground up.

Ward is visiting ALA departments (states) during her term as national president to share a content enablement experience to help departments help their units succeed. Leveraging her deep business acumen as a senior lead project manager and corporate trainer, Ward looks to bring her skills to empower departments to build organizational excellence. During the visits, she will focus on how to build leadership capacity and share knowledge on how to stop the trend of units surrendering their charters.

To help motivate and guide departments, Ward established the Department Merit Medallion Recognition. There are five established areas of focus that, if achieved, will drive business and operational excellence:

- Achieve 85% membership benchmark goal by June 30, 2025.
- Submit department impact report.
- Governance excellence (Constitution & Bylaws annual review, board responsibilities, disciplinary process, meeting and voting authority).
- Financial policies and process (990 compliance, audit standards).
- Financial donation obligations (ALA Foundation Veteran Projects Fund, Auxiliary Emergency Fund).

	District	Goal	Current	% of Goal
1	BERKSHIRE	190	8	4.2%
2	FRANKLIN /HAMPSHIRE	268	8	3.0%
3	HAMPDEN	402	14	3.5%
4	WORCESTER	1037	72	6.9%
5	MIDDLESEX	940	45	4.8%
6	NORFOLK	377	29	8.6%
7	SUFFOLK	103	16	15.5%
8	ESSEX	612	19	3.1%
9	BRISTOL	268	41	15.3%
10	PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE	765	130	17.0%
462	HEADQUARTERS	184	14	7.6%
	National Quota	5,106	396	7.8%

More about SAL Commander Joseph Navarrete

The new SAL national commander noted the organization will continue to support the Be The One initiative — “We will be helping to end veteran suicide together” — and will continue immediate Past National Commander J.R. Hall’s Four Pillars Challenge in which squadrons are encouraged to raise one dollar per member each for Operation Comfort Warriors, the Child Welfare Foundation (CWF) and the department’s Boys State program, and to hold a blood drive.

Navarrete also set a goal for the SAL to raise \$500,000 for the Veterans & Children Foundation. “We have proven that the Sons know how to raise money,” Navarrete said, referencing the SAL’s \$10 million raised all time for CWF, which was celebrated on Saturday.

Also on Sunday, the five SAL national vice commanders for 2024-25 were elected:

Northeast: Robert Manzo of Maryland

Southeast: John Lawrence of Louisiana

Central: Harl “Butch” Ray of Illinois

Midwest: Mike Monserud of Iowa

Western: Dan Ashley of Arizona

2025 S.A.L. Membership Standing as of August 22, 2024

	District	Goal	Current	% of Goal
1	BERKSHIRE	223	7	3.14%
3	HAMPDEN/FRANKLIN / HAMPSHIRE	721	99	13,73%
4	WORCESTER	961	42	4.37%
5	MIDDLESEX	1231	19	1.54%
6	NORFOLK	819	26	3.17%
7	SUFFOLK	189	40	21.16%
8	ESSEX	434	19	4.38%
9	BRISTOL	273	21	7.69%
10	PLY/BARN/NAN/DUKE	772	49	6.35%
	National Goal	5623	322	5.73%



Post 98

Saturday morning



Coffee break



Veterans, Aux, and Potential Members

American Legion Hall

32 Beach st

8:00—10:30

Come on down

Rockport, MA



SERVICE DOG PROJECT MOTORCYCLE RIDE



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS - CHAPTER 101 - WOBURN, MA



HELP US SUPPORT OUR VETERANS!



\$25 FOR RIDERS - \$10 FOR PASSENGERS

FOOD-RAFFLES 50/50-MUSIC

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH - REGISTRATION 9:30AM - KSU 11:00AM

AMERICAN LEGION POST 101 - 194 LEXINGTON STREET, WOBURN, MA





SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION



Saturday, October 5th from 12-5 PM

Hanson Athletic Association

171 Reed St, Hanson, MA 02341

Proceeds will be donated to the



Sign up at the Whitman American Legion, Post 22

33 Legion Pkwy, Whitman, MA 02382

\$100 for a team of 5

Pay by cash or make checks payable to SAL Squadron 22

Checks can also be mailed to the Whitman American Legion - Attention: John Cameron

**Please print the full names of your team of 5 if you mail a check or add names to the sign-up sheet
at the Whitman American Legion**

We will also have a 50/50 Raffle and Side Raffles at the Bowling Tournament



**Massachusetts
E-Legionnaire**

The Massachusetts E-Legionnaire is the official publication of the Department of Massachusetts American Legion and is published at least 12 times per year

The American Legion
Department of Massachusetts, Inc.
Room 546-2, State House
Boston, MA 02122-1099
email: fmacdonald53@comcast.net

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Francis J. MacDonald, Jr.

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Alternate National Executive

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John Lenotte

Service Officer

Mike Whalen

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Massachusetts? If so, please follow these basic guide-lines 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 embed-ded 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
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