



The Veterans Observer

Published By Colorado American Legion Post 123



Volume 1

July 2024

Issue 7

A podium-worthy life of service

By: Scott Rayl

We who served are no strangers to medals. Whether we have a few or many, we know the stories they tell. But some Legionnaires, feeling the rush of accomplishment, were awarded medals prior to their service.

Every few years, nations from around the globe compete in the Olympics. Starting July 26, they will be in Paris where Post 1 – the “Mother Post” – will be on the front line.

As post historian and membership chairman, I engaged in a unique project to discover the founders of our post. In researching over a thousand former members, I discovered many unique individuals, James “Jim” Henry Duncan among them. Not only was he an Olympic medalist, but he had a long and distinguished athletic career.

This discovery led to many questions that are pertinent to maintaining our relevance and sustainability as an organization. If we do not know our history and continue to commemorate our former members, we will have a hard time articulating our reason for existing with new members.

The stewards of our overseas war memorials and cemeteries employed by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) have been a subject of

great interest of mine for over a decade. One characteristic about some of them has always struck a chord: How can someone serve in a time like World War I or World War II, then spend day after day maintaining the stones that bear the names of people they served with? I have researched thousands of graves



Jim Duncan competes in the discus competition at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912. (Photo via Wikipedia)

overseas, and I feel like I have gotten to know a lot about them, but I don't know if I have what it takes to look over a single grave of a fallen comrade. This is also a part of Jim Duncan's story, as he was the first superintendent of Suresnes American Cemetery outside Paris and continued in the position for its first 12 years.

Duncan had the literal weight of the world holding him back. Born in New York, he was placed in an orphanage at 4 and

spent the next decade being formed by this experience. Such was his will that he persevered against his circumstances. This struggle shaped his competitive spirit – he became a survivor and a hero as he overcame the obstacles of his life and found a path to being a career athlete.

Eventually, Duncan became

The Stockholm Games are well-known for many reasons. This was the competition in which Gen. George Patton also participated; the last competition where the gold was solid and not plated; and is also famous for the controversy that jeopardized Jim Thorpe's qualification to compete – his medals were stripped and his marks stricken from the official record after the International Olympic Committee learned he had previously played minor-league baseball, counter to their rules on amateurism. It is difficult to verify how many, but it is believed that a large number of track-and-field competitors threw their medals away in protest of Thorpe's treatment by the committee. The Duncan family believes his bronze was a victim of this protest, and their quest to have it replicated has begun. The quest continues, with Paris Post 1 (through me) as a partner in the effort.

the inaugural world-record holder in discus, leading up to the Stockholm Games of 1912. Favored to take the gold, he instead earned the bronze behind a Swedish competitor and his teammate. He maintained his world record of 47.59 m – set on 27 May 1912 in Celtic Park in Queens – well into the 1920s. His records for individual right and left-hand throws held into the 1930s.

Duncan's legacy continued with a celebrity status in the world of athletics, but America's commitment to the Allies in World War I changed his path, and he was sent to the front. His service started as an enlisted man, but by war's end he was a second lieutenant in the 11th Engineers. Much of his service record is unknown, but there is one report stating, “Sgt. Duncan

(Continued on Page 2 See American)

(*American Continued from Page 1*)

was among the American engineers who, during the battle of Cambrai, dropped all work, grabbed up rifles and went to the aid of the British soldiers in the front lines.”

After the war but still in uniform, Duncan competed in the Inter-Allied Games in France. He was honorably discharged (I believe in France) in August 1919. Evidence suggests he spent some time with the French National Olympic Team in 1920 as a trainer, but as of yet I have not obtained the details from a French authority. As his time passed with the ABMC, he married and became an avid participant in Post 1's baseball team as the American Expeditionary Forces withdraw from the continent along with their teams, new competition emerged in the form of the London post, their chief rivals for baseball dominance in Europe.

Jim Duncan was a founder of Paris Post 1, the modern Olympic Games and the ABMC. He was an emissary of international competition through sport and a pioneer in the modern concept of global citizenship. Born Sept. 25, 1887, he died on Jan. 21, 1955, and now rests in Section 6 at Grave 9447-B in Arlington National Cemetery. His legacy is being further captured in an autobiography written by his grandson James Duncan, title to be determined.

Discovering these details about the members of Paris Post 1 has allowed me a unique opportunity to invite their modern families back, as I have done with so many others. I suspect I will have another Olympic story to tell as our post continues to grow and serve on the front lines of remembrance. If you're in Paris, reach out! We have so many stories involving our founders and their role at the “Second Embassy” of Pershing Hall.

Celebrating 80 years of the VA home loan program

By: Annie Sutton, Senior Writer, VA Loan Guaranty Service, VA News

With the stroke of a pen, President Franklin D. Roosevelt positively changed the lives of World War II Veterans and the millions who would follow for generations to come by offering them access to a college education, unemployment insurance and housing support when they returned home.

The historic signing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 changed the face of the American landscape as thousands of Veterans took advantage of the VA Home Loan program. Using this new benefit, they bought, built and adapted homes across the nation, creating the suburban communities we see today. By 1955, those first recipients had constructed 20 percent of all new homes that were constructed after the war and were granted more than \$30 billion in loans to do so.



Photo courtesy of the VA.

Over the next eight decades, VA's Home Loan program would help Veterans to secure more than 28 million home loans (as of June

2023). Elements of the VA Home Loan program have changed to better serve Veterans, their families and their survivors. The cornerstone benefits include low interest rates, no insurance payments and no down payment, giving those who sacrifice on behalf of all Americans the ability to buy, build or adapt homes.

Among other enhancements to the program, VA partnered with Congress to add the [Native American Direct Loan \(NADL\) program](#) and the [Specially Adapted Housing \(SAH\) program](#). NADL offers Native American Veterans—those who have historically served our nation in large numbers—with low interest loans to buy or build homes on federal trust lands. The SAH program enables Veterans who have certain service-connected disabilities with grants to buy, build or adapt homes to meet their needs.

Throughout the years, each improvement has been a result of concentrated effort to help Veterans achieve home ownership and

The American Legion Internet Observer

The American Legion Internet Observer is an official publication of American Legion, Post 123, Colorado, and is owned exclusively by Legion Post 123. Published Monthly



Publisher/Editor-in Chief:

Doug Winter
doug@2twr.com

Contributors:
The American Legion
Dispatch

Design, Layout and Editor:
Darrell Myers
chief1921@comcast.net

Still Serving America

Do you have an ongoing program or activity that serves your community?

Do you have a friend or relative that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help others?

Send an e-mail to chief1921@comcast.net and tell us what your story is or how you or this person is demonstrating that they are Still Serving America, but must be received by the 10th of the month, the month prior.

In submitting your information, please be sure to include your full name, address and telephone number. There's a good chance the information you send us will make it into The Internet Observer.

improve their lives, on behalf of a grateful nation. As [VA reflects upon the years since the passage](#) of this remarkable legislation, America can take pride in the millions of Veterans who have been

able to buy, build or adapt homes across the nation.

The G.I. Bill created lasting prosperity for America and for many Veterans, families and their survivors.

Black Veterans: New support for fighting cancer

"Veterans are encouraged to talk to their VA provider about cancer screenings"

By: Courtney Franchio, Program Manager, VA National Oncology PVA News

VA reaffirms its commitment to supporting Black Veterans and their families in the fight against cancer. By providing tailored support, information and best-in-class cancer care to promote improved wellbeing and outcomes, we highlight our efforts to ensure equitable care for all who served.

When Black male Veterans are diagnosed with prostate cancer, one of the most common diagnoses in the Veteran community, they have better outcomes when they choose VA for their care.

One [recent study](#) compared the impact of healthcare systems on prostate cancer outcomes for Black male Veterans in VA and non-VA systems in the same neighborhoods. The study found that within VA, socioeconomic and racial disparities decreased or vanished. This is because VA reduces barriers to access historically seen in non-VA settings, which minimizes these disparities.

Uterine cancer and Black Women Veterans

While Black Veterans within VA may experience better outcomes for some forms of cancer, their risk remains elevated for other types. [Recent studies](#) have found that Black women are more likely to be diagnosed with an aggressive form of uterine cancer and more likely to die than women in other racial and ethnic groups. Recognizing the importance of early detection and treatment, VA created [a new resource](#) equipping Black women Veterans with essential knowledge about risk factors and symptoms.

A Pap smear test does not screen for this type of cancer, which is why it's important to know your body, know the risks and know the warning signs to catch it early. If symptoms arise, VA

can perform tests such as an ultrasound or biopsy to detect or rule out uterine cancer. By raising awareness and providing accessible information, VA is working to empower Black women Veterans.

Genetics Service support for Black Veterans and families

Part of the best-in-class cancer care at VA includes providing genetic testing as the information locked in Veterans' genetic code can be critical in tailoring treatments. Genetic testing is also important for understanding any cancer risk there may be for a Veteran's family.

[The Clinical Cancer Genetics Service \(CCGS\)](#)

provides Veterans with world-class cancer genetic counseling that is readily accessible, regardless of where they live within the U.S. Through this service, Veterans have access to cancer risk assessments, hereditary germline genetic counseling and testing.

CCGS uses genetic testing to improve the detection, diagnosis and treatment of Veterans with cancer by aiding in precision cancer care (such as cancer immunotherapy, chemotherapy and more) based on their unique genetic background.



Photo courtesy of the VA.

VA strives to empower Black Veterans to overcome the challenges of cancer and achieve optimal health outcomes. Together, we stand united in our mission to ensure that no Veteran faces cancer alone.

Veterans are strongly encouraged to talk to their VA provider about the need for different cancer screenings and what screening options are available.

Learn more about [cancer care at VA](#). Visit My HealthVet to learn tips and tools to help you partner with your health care team, so together you can manage your health.



Facing Foreclosure? VA shares important updates to help you keep your home

From: Veterans Benefits Administration

VA understands how stressful it can be to face the possibility of foreclosure, and it is committed to doing everything possible to help Veterans and their families stay in their homes. That's why, today, VA strongly encouraged mortgage servicers to continue to pause foreclosures of certain VA-guaranteed home loans through Dec. 31, 2024. This targeted moratorium will give Veterans and their families more time to explore all home retention options.

Here's everything you need to know about how to find support and keep your home

What support options are available to you if you're worried about foreclosure? With VA's Home Retention Waterfall, there are a series of steps designed to provide you with multiple options to avoid foreclosure:

- If you're facing short-term financial difficulties, there are forbearance agreements that could help you avoid foreclosure by temporarily reducing or pausing payments. Under this option, your loan payments will not be forgiven, but you will have the time you need to work through short-term challenges.
- If you've missed loan payments, you might be able to arrange a plan to catch up gradually. This is called a repayment plan.
- If you need further assistance, the next step is a loan modification, which adjusts the rate and term of your loan to make payments more manageable. Under this scenario,

a high-interest rate environment may cause your modified mortgage payment amount to increase.

Finally, if these options aren't enough and you're experiencing severe hardship, VA's new VASP program could be a last-resort option for qualifying Veterans. Through VASP, VA will purchase the modified loan from your loan servicer and then place it in the VA-owned portfolio as a direct loan—therefore making it more affordable.

How do you qualify for VASP?

Importantly, VASP is not something you can apply for directly with VA. Instead, if you exhaust all other home retention options, your mortgage servicer will evaluate whether you are qualified for VASP and submit a request on your behalf.

Who do you call to get the support you need?

If you're facing financial hardship, you should first contact your mortgage servicer and work with them to explore all available home retention options. If you need additional support, you can always contact VA directly by calling 877-827-3702, option 4, or by visiting the VA Home Loans website for additional information.



This photo courtesy of the VA

VA is here to help you every step of the way. VA helped more than 145,000 Veterans and their families avoid foreclosure in 2023 alone, and it is committed to doing everything in its power to help all Veterans stay in their homes.

BE THE ONE



KITCHEN & HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, IDEAS, & REVIEWS

KITCHENTIPS@2TWR.COM

doug@2twr.com

Patty@2TWR.com

Join The American Legion



Help Our Nation's Veterans

Legion joins with others to call for swift passage of Dole Act

By: The American Legion

The American Legion was one of several veteran service organizations who gathered in Washington, D.C., today to urge passage of H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

Chanin Nuntavong, executive director of The American Legion's Government Affairs Office in Washington, D.C., joined with former Sen. Dole, as well as representatives from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wounded Warrior Project, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Military Officers Association of America and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. All of the participants called for passage of H.R. 8371, with Nuntavong opening his remarks focused on how the legislation can benefit rural veterans.

Nuntavong shared the story of Dan and Jeri McKeaney, who were in a motorcycle accident while riding with the local chapter of their Marine Riders Group. Both were transported to a hospital by Emergency Air Medical Services (EMS), which Dan credited with saving his life.

"He credits the extraordinary pre-hospital care from the EMS team and believes he's alive today because of them," Nuntavong said.

"Section 143 (of the bill) ensures that rural air ambulance services receive the funding they need to continue offering these vital, lifesaving services.

"This bill will also strengthen rural America. Rural veterans encounter distinct challenges in accessing healthcare. In an emergency, every minute counts, which is why Emergency Air Medical Services can make the difference between life and death."

Other key provisions of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act include:

- **Increasing Home-Based Care Resources.** Expands access to home- and community-based services at every VA medical center, which would provide severely ill and aging veterans with more and better options to receive their care at home rather than in institutions.
- **Improving Access to Care.** Helps ensure that decisions between veterans and their VA providers about seeking care in the community are honored. Enhances access to critical residential rehabilitation treatment programs for mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
- **Honoring the Fallen.** Expands education benefits for surviving families. Removes archaic language that penalizes surviving spouses from moving forward after their loss.
- **Supporting Homeless Veterans.** Raises the grant and per-diem rate for veteran homelessness providers who partner with VA and provide rideshares to veterans for medical, housing and employment appointments and ensure veterans can get the resources they need to be lifted out of

homelessness.

- **Caring for Caregivers.** Creates mental health care grants for certain caregivers who become strained by the demands of providing help and support to veterans with heightened needs. Provides a pathway to advocacy for organizations to provide veteran families support navigating VA's caregiver and long-term care services.

"We also advocate for veterans' right to choose where they spend their final days," Nuntavong said. "Currently, the VA provides burial support only if the veteran passes on VA property. Section 30, known as Gerald's Law, aims to extend this benefit to veterans who wish to spend their remaining time at home. Named after Gerald Elliott, a proud Legionnaire, this section honors his story.

"Gerald, like many veterans, faced the choice between spending his final days in a hospital or at home with his family. He chose home, but due to an obscure federal regulation, his family did not receive VA support. This change seeks to rectify such situations, ensuring that all veterans and their families receive the support they deserve."

Nuntavong also pointed out the education and employment component of H.R. 8371 and the negative impact of failing to pass the legislation. "H.R. 8371 puts veterans to work," he said. "In the

past five years, 14,000 women and men have graduated from the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET-TEC) program. VET-TEC has provided these veterans with the skills and knowledge to compete for in-demand tech sector careers. In addition, graduates reported salaries that can support them and their families. Without Section 102, VET-TEC would be shuttered."

Dole also spoke, calling for a sense of urgency from Congress. "Like all bipartisan initiatives, each side was asked to make some sacrifices. Now, the time

has come to move this bill forward and deliver all its promises," she said. "The resources, reforms and improvements contained in this legislation are precisely the types of advances that only Congress can provide. And I don't see how we can truly care for our veteran community if we wait another day to get it passed.

"For all those who have served and all those considering service in the future, this is a moment to show that we can put politics aside, even when it's an election year, and come together to perform a most noble responsibility: to care for all who have borne the battle. Bring this bill to the floor now."

Nuntavong closed by offering a frank message about the importance of passing H.R. 8371. "If the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act is not passed, all the programs we have discussed today are in jeopardy," he said. "Veterans and their families and caregivers will see reduced health-care services and reduced employment opportunities."

American Legion Family members wanting to contact their members of Congress to urge passage of H.R. 8371 can do it at <https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Campaigns/116565/Respond>.



Photo provided courtesy of The American Legion.

Army stiffens rules barring extremist, gang activity among soldiers

By: Corey Dickstein/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers cannot post, like or share any extremist or gang-affiliated content on social media or participate in other extremist activity even when they are off duty, according to new Army rules unveiled Wednesday.

The new rules clarify soldiers — on active duty or in the Reserve or National Guard — cannot knowingly participate in or support any extremist activity in or out of uniform, according to two new memorandums that Army Secretary Christine Wormuth sent to the force Wednesday.

Those caught supporting extremist or gang activity — including wearing clothing, flying flags or sporting bumper stickers on their vehicles in support of extremist views — must be reported to their commanders, who are now required to report all such allegations to the Defense Department inspector general and the Army's Criminal Investigation Division, according to the memos.

"Active participation in extremist activities can be prohibited even in some circumstances in which such activities would be constitutionally protected in a civilian setting," Wormuth wrote in one memo. "Enforcement of this policy is a responsibility of every command, is vitally important to unit cohesion and morale and is essential to the Army's ability to accomplish its mission."

The new rules come some two years after the Defense Department issued guidance to the force about extremist activities in response primarily to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by supporters of former President Donald Trump.

More than 200 military-affiliated individuals have been charged or convicted for participating in the attack, including about 24 people who were serving in the military at the time, according to data released last month by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. About 16% of those charged in the siege to date were veterans or service members, according to the data.

The new rules released Wednesday bring the Army into compliance with a 2021 congressional mandate requiring the Defense Department and its services to standardize reporting processes to the inspector general so the watchdog could better gauge the military's response to extremism within its ranks, said Bryce Dube, an Army spokesman.

In the inspector general's 2022 report on extremist activity within the military's ranks, the office reported 146 accusations of extremist activity among service members in 2021. Last year, the IG reported 183 allegations of extremist activity among U.S. troops in 2022.

The new guidance also provides "leaders more precise guidance on effectively addressing these activities," Dube said.

The memos direct more training for soldiers on extremism. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, which oversees initial entrance training and other service schoolhouses, will implement training in its courses to "ensure that the policy and procedures on prohibited [extremist] activity" are understood by soldiers in its programs.

The memos also instruct Army commanders to advise their soldiers periodically "that extremist activities are inconsistent with the Army goals, beliefs and values, as well as the oaths of office and enlistment" and prescribe standardized extremism training to be conducted by trained professionals. Wormuth's memos also more clearly define prohibited extremist activities.

Wormuth offered a 14-part definition of banned activity that includes "advocating, engaging in, or supporting the overthrow of the" government, advocating for discrimination "based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation" and "knowingly displaying paraphernalia, words, or symbols" that support extremist ideals or groups.

The extremist activity definitions also bar soldiers from providing monetary contributions to extremist groups, attending their meetings or engaging with them online, "including posting, liking, sharing, re-tweeting, or otherwise distributing content" supporting extremism. Soldiers found to have engaged in such activity

face administrative or criminal punishment, and they could be booted from the Army or lose their security clearance, Wormuth wrote.

She encouraged commanders to intervene early when they suspect soldiers could become involved in extremist activity, "primarily through counseling." The Army secretary vowed to continue working on the issue, writing it was imperative the service stamp out any extremist activity among its troops.

"Active participation in extremist and criminal gang activities is inconsistent with the responsibilities and obligations of military service, including the U.S. Army oaths of office and enlistment," Wormuth wrote. "Such prohibited activities damage the nation's trust and confidence in the Army as an institution and as a professional fighting force. They undermine morale and reduce combat readiness. Extremism calls into question a soldier's ability to follow orders from, or effectively lead and serve with, persons of diverse backgrounds."



Photo courtesy of The American Legion.

White Ribbon VA

White Ribbon Veterans Affairs - pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence against others

White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence across the Department of Veterans Affairs by promoting a positive change in culture so that the actions outlined in the pledge become the organizational norm. White Ribbon VA is an awareness movement where All—regardless of their gender—can participate.

Background: White Ribbon VA was inspired by the White Ribbon organization which is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, and to promote gender equity and healthy relationships. Since its inception in Toronto in 1991, the White Ribbon Campaign has spread to over 60 countries around the world, including college campuses, military bases and stations, and within a number of states across the country.

White Ribbon USA and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) are partnering with the VA to promote White Ribbon VA under the Stand Up to Stop Harassment Now Campaign. White Ribbon USA, NASW, and VA have the shared goal of taking an active stand in ending sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

We invite you to join us in making a pledge to stop violence against others and to symbolically wear the white ribbon.

White Ribbon VA Pledge:

I, (your name), pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence against others.

Document your commitment by accessing this [webpage](https://www.whiteribbonusa.org/whiteribbon-va-pledge): <https://www.whiteribbonusa.org/whiteribbon-va-pledge>



Department of Veterans Affairs Eastern Colorado Health Care System 1700 N Wheeling St Aurora, Colorado 80243 303-399-8020		
Departments	Scheduling Questions	Clinical Questions
Cardio-Thoracic	720-723-6392	720-857-2710
Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)	720-857-5404	720-857-5571
Bariatrics	720-723-6363	720-723-4782
Urology	720-723-4775	720-857-5829
OBGYN	720-857-5701	720-857-5377
Vascular	720-723-6392	720-723-4780
Plastics	720-723-3271	720-857-4782
Breast	720-723-6363	720-857-4780
Orthopedics	720-723-6683	720-857-5580
Podiatry	720-857-5406	720-857-5577
Colorado Springs	719-227-4690	719-227-4432
Neurosurgery	720-723-6684	720-723-4782
General Surgery	720-723-6363	720-857-5816
For other concerns: Dial 303-399-8020 then Press 1 for Pharmacy Press 2 to make or change an appointment. Press 3 to speak to a Nurse. Press 4 for Eligibility and Registration Press 5 for Billing Questions Press 6 for Community Care and Mission Act information. Press 7 for Veterans Crisis Line		

Task Force Movement continues to evolve

By: Jeff Stoffer

An American Legion-supported presidential task force directed to fast-track veterans, transitioning military personnel and their spouses into careers of need in the U.S. economy continues to make headway on its mission.

Task Force Movement met June 20 at the White House to review the effort, launched in April 2022, at first to speed up the process for veterans and servicemembers nearing transition to obtain commercial driver's licenses and enter a trucking industry hungry to fill positions and strengthen the nation's supply chain, which was severely weakened during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the months that followed, TFM expanded to address critical shortages in cybersecurity, health care and more.

"Task Force Movement has really been a crucial organization that stepped up during a time of crisis in our country and a time of acute supply-chain disruptions but has really now evolved and grown into an organization that can help us strategically in so many of these critical sectors where we need to build long-term resilience," said Special Assistant to the President for Manufacturing and Industry Policy Monica Gorman. "We need you."

TFM has broadened its scope to include aviation and maritime shipping. Reframed as Task Force Movement – Transportation, the initiative credentialed and placed into the trucking industry approximately 750 veterans and transitioning members of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2023.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, explained Gorman, Americans realized how fragile the supply chain is "to daily life, and we experienced unprecedented disruption, and a lot of that was caused by demand for goods. People were working from home. They were ordering things, and we had to keep the goods moving. It became clear that we had not paid attention to the people who kept goods moving in this country. Trucking moves 70% of all goods here. And truck drivers keep America moving, literally carrying on their backs the products that everyday Americans need."

Working various collaborations, TFM was able to secure \$300,000 that year in scholarships for veterans and Afghan refugees and generated \$3.2 million in funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation for CDL training programs at community colleges. TFM also assisted the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in its Drive for Success program that provided 500 scholarships for veterans, military spouses and members of the National Guard and Reserves.

Industry leaders in trucking understand "the importance of transitioning military personnel and veterans as a key pipeline of people who are perfect for these types of roles, who know safety culture," Gorman said. "A quote from the president that I love, 'If

you can handle a tank, if you can handle an armored personnel carrier, you sure as hell can handle a commercial truck.'"

Vinn White, a senior adviser in the Department of Transportation, told meeting attendees that the work of TFM is important and appreciated, as DOT works to "increase the number of states that allow military driver's exemptions to pass the knowledge test for CDLs" and, "we're working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand medical examiners to certify military members who can go out and get their CDLs ... we are engaged in military outreach."

The aviation industry, which is facing critical shortages of qualified mechanics, is now a point of emphasis for TFM-Transportation, which is planning to work with the Teamsters to develop a six-week Aviation Basics Course that would serve as a pre-apprenticeship opportunity in technical aviation fields, many of which pay

more than \$100,000 a year, for transitioning military personnel and veterans.

Seafarers, port workers, shipbuilders and maritime engineers are also in short supply, which impacts the U.S. supply chain, and TFM is now conducting research and working with government agencies, training institutions, labor unions, industry associations and the military to identify ways to break down barriers to employment.

TFM Cybersecurity is working to leverage its growing list of collaborators to offer scholarships and accelerated training programs for veterans, transitioning servicemembers and military spouses. TFM reports that some 650,000 jobs in cybersecurity were unfilled in 2023.

TFM Healthcare aligns employers, industry associations, unions, academic institutions, training providers and veterans groups to put more military-trained medical personnel to work across the country.

Task Force Movement has also expanded to establish its first state-based program, working with universities and community colleges in Illinois to put more veterans to work in medical fields there. "What we're trying to do in Illinois is not trying to put people in jobs; we're trying to put people in careers," said Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Deputy Director Julio Rodriguez. "So, we've been very focused on apprenticeship models, learn and earn models. What we have found – and I think this is true of the military community – people can't just go to training for the sake of going to training. They have families. They have to earn a living. And they have to earn it from the minute they hit the ground. What we've learned about



A diverse group of stakeholders from industry, government, academia, the military, VA and organized labor met June 20 at the White House to review recent developments in the Task Force Movement mission to help veterans fill critical needs in the U.S. economy. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

Continued on Page 11 See Apprenticeship)

Connecticut post facing possible closure of building stages six-digit fundraising effort

By: The American Legion

Bolton-Kasica-Patterson Post 68 in Berlin, Ct., was chartered in 1920. Around 27 years later, its membership built a facility to call home. But that facility was in danger of possibly closing down a few years ago. The roof needed severe repairs, and the post was out of money.

But after what amounted to close to a two-year fundraising effort, the post has a repaired roof and a little bit of money left over to make the day-to-day operations and any future repairs a little easier. And it's because of a complete American Legion Family effort, along with support from the community, that allowed Post 68 to raise nearly \$130,000 during that span.

"We've come a long way," said Vince Triglia, who has served as post commander for 13 years and has been a member for 23. "We were kind of living paycheck to paycheck. We do have a canteen, but once COVID hit, obviously all operations were shut down. And that nearly killed us. We had literally no income. I thought this was it, that we were going to have to give everything up but our charter.

"But we made it through. We really sort of defied the odds. We're not exactly rolling in dough, but ... we went from not having anything in our pockets to having something at least to fall back on for that just in case, rainy day type of thing."

Triglia said that before the pandemic hit, the Town of Berlin received funding to provide grants for façade upgrades throughout the community – one of which was designated for Post 68. The only condition was that the grant would pay for half of the cost of the upgrade, while the post would cover the other half.

"The bottom line was, we had no money," Triglia said. "Through the years there was regular wear and tear. And we didn't have the money (to match the grant), so we got bypassed on that."

Triglia said a veteran who served on the Berlin Economic Development Commission started to help the post get local contractors to help with low-cost/no-cost maintenance. "But our biggest problem was that we were having roof problems," he said. "Any heavy rainfall and we would take in as much as two to four inches of water."

At that point, a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 68, Karen Mortensen Cote, led a unit effort that took the lead on fundraising efforts. "Her backstory was that she had done fundraising ... and these ladies put together all kinds of fundraisers, from dances to comedy shows, car shows to dinners," he said. "There was a whole list of that they did and assisted us with. We did it as a Legion Family, and she kind of spearheaded it."

Word of the fundraising effort spread through local media outlets, as well as social media.

"The guy who did our roof, he's from the southern part of the state, and he heard our story," Triglia said. "And he happened to be a Marine. He contacted me, and he gave us a sweet deal."

With the cost of the roof repair taking up a large brunt of the money raised, the post has benefited from its members, some of whom are tradesmen and have been able to do additional repairs necessary.

"Everything else we're doing – the façade upgrades – are all done by sweat equity and whatever cash we have to buy materials," Triglia said. "We've been able to save a lot. And if it wasn't for the sweat equity of it, we'd be broke again, because the cost of labor is through the roof. So, we've been very fortunate in that way."

Triglia said the post also has benefited from local government leaders, who have used their network connections to get construction experts to assist with efforts at a reduced cost, including a landscaping project this summer that won't cost the post a cent. He's also thankful to the around 300 people who donated during the fundraiser.

"There were a lot of elements to this whole thing, and it grew to where it was almost overwhelming," he said. "But that's appreciated."

The community support didn't come without some public relations work first. Triglia said

the post had developed a poor reputation within the community, being seen as only a bar where occasional trouble took place. "It took us awhile to get out of that stigma of what people thought we were," he said. "But once we started getting back into the (Legion) programs ... we sponsor the Boy Scouts. We do scholarships again. That made a difference."

The post's actually made it to the American Legion World Series in 2009 but had since dropped off; Triglia said the post has recently started sponsoring a baseball team again.

Rebuilding the post's image also included Triglia and a few other members go "post-hopping", where the group would visit other Connecticut Legion posts to see what they were doing and to reintroduce Post 68.

"It was just a whole group of people that cared enough," Triglia said. "I promised my older guys ... I would never shut that building down. They built that specific to them. And so far, we're not shutting the building down. It's still a struggle. But it's a lot easier knowing there's the support between the town, individuals, private companies in our town that have really given us the boost that we needed to be where we're at."



Photo courtesy of The American Legion.

Letter about the path forward for the Department of Colorado



Date: 7-1-24

To: Colorado American Legion District Commanders

Subject: Role for Districts in Path Forward

Many of you were present at the convention in Ignacio to hear my remarks concerning the path forward for Colorado in restoring the charter of the Department of Colorado. Please accept my personal thanks for having made the effort to attend.

I am writing this report for two purposes, first to lay out our vision for the path forward to restoration of the Department charter that was discussed at the convention for those who did not attend and second to provide all of you with a written version of that path forward that you can distribute among your posts and members.

As regards the future, there will be three events leading to restoration of the charter. The first will be the creation of a working group to develop a first draft of the new Constitution and Bylaws. That will happen sometime in the September timeframe.

That initial draft will be submitted to the constitutional convention for which each district will elect two delegates. That constitutional convention will develop the final draft to be submitted to a special state convention. It will be necessary for the delegates to the constitutional convention to come to a unanimous decision on that final draft.

That final draft will be submitted to a special state convention to be held in Ft Collins, CO on January 24-26, 2025. Adoption of a Constitution and Bylaws by the special convention will be the first step. Election of officers as specified in that Constitution & Bylaws will be the second step. With those steps accomplished, preparation of a recommendation to the National Executive Committee for reinstatement of the Department charter can begin.

There are two steps that your district should take in preparation for those events. The first is the election of the two delegates from

your district to the constitutional convention. We need the new governing documents to be prepared through the voice of the people. Therefore, your district's delegates should be selected by election at your district conference.

Secondly, your district should consider whether any members of your district should be considered for election to Department office once the new governing documents are in place. Those elections will happen following adoption of the new governing documents. Candidates should be announced by endorsement by their post and district. Space will be available on the Department website for those endorsements to be posted.

In addition to an endorsing resolution, there will be space for the candidate's resume to be posted. We are encouraging candidates to create that resume of all their qualifications, Legion and civilian, not just a list of Legion offices. While any Legionnaire can run for any office, we hope to discourage candidacies being announced for the first time from the convention floor.

Following the close of each district's fall conference, two things should be forwarded to Department Headquarters. The first is the names and contact information of the two delegates elected to the constitutional convention. Along with that information, endorsements and resumes of any candidates for Department office should be forwarded from the conference.

Certification of the election of the two delegates and adoption of the endorsing resolutions should be signed by the District Commander and Adjutant certifying that those decisions have been accomplished by the district membership. That certification should be done by sending the meeting minutes when that election was accomplished to headquarters.

It must be stated that this plan is just that at this point, a plan. Every plan can and sometimes must be changed. There are many challenges that must be overcome in order for the charter to be reinstated. It will require cooperation and communication for that to happen. Your participation will be important.

Best Regards,

PNC David Rehbein, Colorado Administrator



(Apprenticeship Continued from Page 8)

the apprenticeship movement, it's a way to not only grow your own, but to really build real retention. In industries like I.T. and healthcare, oftentimes employers overlook the very people who are already working for them, and I would venture to say we have a lot of veterans and their spouses who are under-employed in this country."

From working to fill gaps in the U.S. economy to connections among diverse stakeholders, on the national and state levels alike, TFM is getting its arms around much more than its initial mission to train more truck drivers.

"We're doing an awful lot with an organization that just has a few people to staff it," TFM Executive Director Elizabeth Belcaster said at the meeting. "It comes from the partners. The partners are passionate about the work that they are doing. I think everybody on our board, everybody that's a partner at some level, has had a relationship with a program for veterans or transitioning servicemembers. That's really what makes us grow and makes the work continue."

TFM Treasurer Brandon McPherson said a key aspect of the task force's progress is "being able to speak different languages. Universities and corporations – they have their languages – and

inside some of these organizations, we all have our different languages that we speak. How do you navigate that? What's led us to success thus far, and what has to continue to happen at the state level, is to have a large group of interpreters. Illinois is different from Michigan, which is different from Pennsylvania. There's no manual. It's just kind of up to us, in our groups and cohorts, to bring that out."

American Legion member Patrick Murphy, the 32nd Under Secretary of the Army and the first veteran from the war in Iraq to be elected to Congress, is chairman of TFM, and American Legion Employment & Education Division Director Joseph Sharpe serves on the steering committee.

"One of the reasons The American Legion supports Task Force Movement is that out of about 200,000-plus veterans who leave the military every year, only about 30,000 actually have jobs," Sharpe told the task force. "So, you have about 170,000 who are unemployed. And after six years, 60% of those individuals are under-employed. That's why it is so important that we do what we can to ensure these veterans are gainfully employed. It helps with recruitment and retention, as well."

Renewed Purpose: How a Marine Corps Veteran Reignited His Career at ATDM

By: Dr. Debra Holley, Director, Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing Program, VA News

In the past two years, 92 Veterans have found renewed purpose and new careers through the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program. ATDM is an intensive training initiative designed to prepare workers for roles in the submarine industrial base, focusing on areas like additive manufacturing, CNC machining, nondestructive testing, quality control inspection (metrology) and welding. This program provides a promising path for Veterans and service members transitioning to civilian life, offering a thriving new career in defense manufacturing.

A Veteran's journey from the battlefield to the workshop

Dustin Frantz, a Marine Corps Veteran who served in the Iraq conflict, joined the ATDM program with experience in simple machining from his time as a unit armorer.

"The precision of machining and 3D modeling fascinated me," said Frantz. "I've always loved machining and knew I wanted to be part of American manufacturing in a big way."

After his military service, Frantz transitioned into civilian life as a business owner, running a custom robotics company. However, a traumatic injury in 2018 left him hospitalized and suffering from amnesia, resulting in the loss of

his home, property and savings. Despite these setbacks, Frantz persevered, trying various jobs and even starting a food truck business during the pandemic. Yet, he sought something more permanent to support his family and contribute to his country.

Discovering ATDM and a new opportunity

Frantz came across ATDM through a student success story featured in VA's newsletter, [#VetResources](#).

"Free housing? Free schooling? At first, I thought it was too good to be true," said Frantz. Nevertheless, he applied and was accepted into the ATDM program in early 2024. He relocated to Danville to train in [CNC Machining](#).

At ATDM, Frantz quickly impressed his instructors with

his dedication and eagerness to enhance his skills. In April, he was honored as the Star Skilled Tradesperson at Martinsville Speedway's NASCAR Cookout 400 race, where his name was proudly displayed on RFK Racing's #CarWithAMission Ford Mustang. This event highlighted ATDM's mission to supply skilled workers for the submarine industrial base, a cause deeply resonating with Frantz as he embarked on his new career path.

"There is nothing more formidable than the U.S. Nuclear Navy showing up. And when that submarine shows up, I want my fingerprint stamped on one of the parts. I want to be part of what



Photo provided courtesy of The American Legion.

(Continued on Page 12 See Setbacks)

(Setbacks Continued from Page 11)

makes our Navy a global deterrent to terrorism and war. The projection of power stops wars before they start, and there's a unit of pride there that stirs the blood," said Frantz. "I remember being in Iraq, driving a Cougar or a USMC 7-ton. I knew there was a machinist in America building the parts for our machine, making sure it worked and keeping us safe, and I'm all the more grateful. They made sure my brothers and I could come home."

Looking ahead to a bright future

Frantz will graduate from ATDM this June and has already secured a job with FasTech, an additive manufacturing and advanced-metal, 3D-printing company in Danville. As a husband and father of seven, he is eager for his family to settle in Southside Virginia and feels a renewed sense of purpose in supporting the submarine industrial base.

"For anyone who feels like they've been passed over, lost their opportunity, or had it stolen from them because of illness or accident, this is your opportunity. It's a fantastic school for beginners and a chance for anyone already in the industry to

improve their skills," he added. ATDM / Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing / Powering New Beginnings

About ATDM

Located on the [Institute for Advanced Learning and Research](#) campus in Danville, Virginia, ATDM is dedicated to equipping students with the latest manufacturing technologies to support the submarine industrial base. Funded by the Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy, ATDM offers full scholarships that cover both training and housing.

How to Apply to ATDM

[Visit Building Tomorrow's Navy and the Defense Industrial Base. You could earn the skills for a new career in as little as 4 months.](#)

| The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (atdm.org).

Select "Apply."

Complete the easy enrollment application.

Select "Submit," and step closer to new opportunities.

Steps to treat long COVID

By Jennifer Campbell

In the wake of the pandemic, an estimated 17% of patients are dealing with lingering health effects of the virus. "Long COVID" is characterized by persistent symptoms ranging from fatigue and brain fog to respiratory difficulties and organ dysfunction.

While most people recover within a few weeks, others grapple with a protracted and unpredictable course of illness. Weeks turn into months and sometimes years as patients navigate physical, cognitive and emotional challenges.

Long COVID symptoms can vary widely, affecting virtually every system in the body. Fatigue, perhaps the most common and debilitating symptom, can make the simplest tasks arduous. Cognitive dysfunction can impair memory, concentration and decision-making. Respiratory issues such as shortness of breath and chest pain may persist long after the virus has cleared the body.

A person with long COVID may experience other symptoms too, including palpitations, dizziness, gastrointestinal disturbances and joint pain. For others, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own tissues. On top of it all, the psychological toll of a protracted illness can cause stress and anxiety, exacerbating symptoms and impeding recovery.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to treating long COVID, a multidisciplinary strategy focusing on symptom management, rehabilitation and holistic support is typically recommended.

The first step is a comprehensive evaluation by a physician. This may involve laboratory tests, imaging studies and consultations with various specialists, including pulmonologists, cardiologists, neurologists and mental health professionals. Here's what to expect:

Symptom management. Treatment should address the person's unique symptoms. This may include medications to alleviate pain, inflammation or other specific symptoms.

Therapy. A structured rehabilitation program will address physical deconditioning and functional impairment. Speech therapy or cognitive rehabilitation may benefit those experiencing cognitive difficulties.

Pacing and energy conservation.

Balancing activity and rest, breaking tasks into manageable segments, and prioritizing activities based on priorities and goals help prevent symptom exacerbation and optimize energy levels.

Psychological support. Recognizing the psychological impact of long COVID is critical. Health-care professionals should provide appropriate support and resources. This may include cognitive-behavioral therapy to address anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress symptoms, as well as mindfulness-based interventions to promote stress reduction and resilience.

Nutrition. A balanced diet rich in nutrient-dense foods will support immune function, energy production and overall well-being.

Sleep. Follow good hygiene practices, such as a consistent sleep



Photo provided courtesy of the VA.

schedule, creating a restful sleep environment, and avoiding stimulants like caffeine and electronic devices before bedtime.

Social support. Facilitate connections with others experiencing long COVID through support groups, online forums or peer networks. Sharing experiences, coping strategies and resources can provide encouragement and a sense of community during recovery.

Army veteran Jennifer Campbell is a certified personal trainer with a master's degree in nutrition education. She is past commander of the California Legion's 24th District and Hollywood Post 43.

VA awards \$28M in grants to support legal services for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness

By: The American Legion

Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded \$26.8 million in legal services grants to 108 public or nonprofits whose goal is to increase access to legal services for eligible veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness.

Ending veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA and for the Biden-Harris administration. These grant funds made available as part of VA's Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant Program, more than double the total dollars and mark a 37% increase in grantees over last year's inaugural grant cycle.

"Every veteran deserves access to safe, affordable and permanent housing, and we know that legal support is among the most needed services by veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "Through these grants, we are working hard to ensure veterans' unique civil legal needs are met and drive towards our ultimate goal of ending homelessness for all veterans and their families."

This grant program is enabled by American Legion-supported legislation Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D., Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 and ensures at least 10% of funding supports the provision of legal services for women veterans. Individual grant awards were up to \$300,000 for a 14-month grant cycle starting Aug. 1, 2024. Grant recipients will deliver a variety of legal services to veterans, such as:

- Providing representation in landlord-tenant disputes to prevent eviction.
- Assisting with court proceedings for child support, custody or estate planning.

- Helping veterans obtain benefits like disability compensation.
- Defending veterans in criminal cases that can prolong or increase their risk of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines and driver's license revocation.
- Upgrading characterization of discharges or dismissals of former members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Legal services are one way VA is working to eliminate veteran homelessness and meet the goal of placing at least 41,000 veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing this year. Thanks in part to VA's efforts, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness has fallen by nearly 5% since early 2020 and by more than 52% since 2010. The department has also expanded access to

health care for homeless veterans and called for a moratorium on foreclosures for veterans with VA-guaranteed loans.

Today's grant awards complement other programs delivering needed services to at-risk veterans, including the recent \$57 million announcement from the U.S. Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program to help veterans experiencing homelessness re-enter the workforce.

Visit Legal Services for Veterans or email lsv@va.gov for more information and to see a list of this year's grantees.

If you are a veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at

risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

And visit the VA Homeless Programs website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for veterans exiting homelessness.



Photograph provided by The American Legion



2 Civil War soldiers to receive Medal of Honor for one of the Army's earliest special ops missions

By: Matthew Adams/Stars and Stripes

Scott and Kimberly Chandler heard family stories growing up about their great-great-grandfather, George Wilson, being a spy.

"Hearing from my mom, it was talked about in hush terms or whispers," Kimberly Chandler said.

Wilson was born in Belmont County, Ohio, in 1830. He was a tradesman who supported his family as a journeyman shoemaker, according to the Army. Wilson enlisted in the Union Army's 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment on Aug. 31, 1861.

Philip Shadrach enlisted into the same regiment the following month. He was born in Somerset County, Pa., in 1840, and left orphaned at an early age.

Less is known of Shadrach's work, other than he was a "laborer." But on Sept. 20, 1861, he left home and enlisted, according to the service. The two men eventually volunteered for the same mission and experienced the same fate.

Pvts. Wilson and Shadrach will be awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously Wednesday, becoming the last members of a unit known as Andrews' Raiders to be recognized with the nation's highest decoration for combat valor.

In one of the earliest special operations in Army history, Union soldiers dressed as civilians to infiltrate the Confederacy, hijack a train and drive it north for 87 miles, destroying enemy infrastructure along the way.

During what became known as the Great Locomotive Chase, six of the Union soldiers became the Army's first recipients of the newly created Medal of Honor, according to the service.

The plan for the Great Locomotive Chase was hatched by James Andrews, a Kentucky-born civilian who served as a spy and scout. He proposed a group of volunteers penetrate the Confederacy with the aim of degrading the railway and communication lines that supported the South's stronghold of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Andrews, another civilian and 22 volunteer Union soldiers, who later became known as Andrews' Raiders, made their rendezvous point in Marietta, Ga. Shane Makowicki, a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History, said the plan was hatched April 6, 1862.

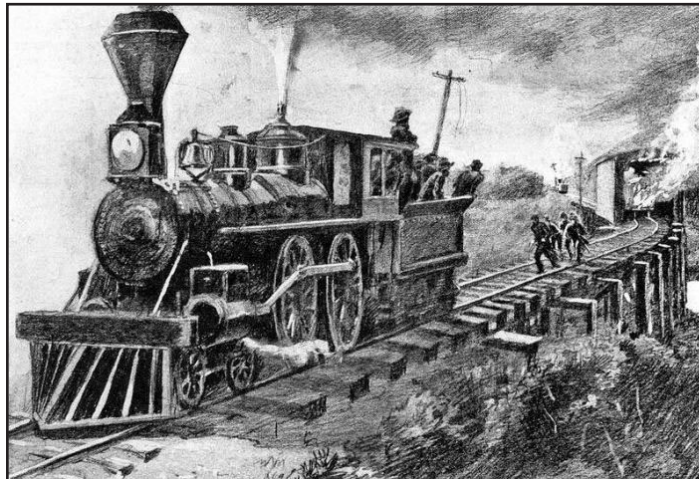
Wilson, Shadrach and the other soldiers volunteered one day later. They made it to Marietta on April 11. On April 12, 22 of them commandeered a locomotive known as the General and proceeded north, tearing up railroad tracks and cutting telegraph wires as they went along.

The General's conductor, William Fuller, and two others began

chasing the raiders — first on foot, then by a handcar, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Andrews' efforts driving the General were slowed by their sabotage efforts and because he needed to permit oncoming trains to pass on the single-track railway. This allowed Fuller's party to gain on the Union force.

Running low on fuel and with the Texas, a locomotive commandeered by Fuller, on their heels, Andrews' Raiders abandoned their effort just 18 miles short of Chattanooga.

After it became clear the mission failed, Shadrach and Wilson along with several others attempted to evade Confederate troops and escape. Some including Shadrach and Wilson were eventually captured.



Drawing provided courtesy of The American Legion.

"The event, if it would have been successful and cut off Chattanooga from Confederate supplies, it could have shortened the war by a year, year and half, two years," author and historian Brad Quinlin told reporters Tuesday.

Andrews was tried as a spy and saboteur and executed on June 7, 1862. Seven others were subsequently hanged, including Shadrach and Wilson, on June 18. Nineteen of the 22 Union soldiers received the Medal of Honor. One soldier was offered the medal but declined as he did not fully participate.

Former President George W.

Bush signed the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act that included a measure to allow him to award Wilson and Shadrach with the medal. But Bush never did.

"The Civil War Medal of Honor is ancient history. Things moved in relevant and more current directions," Ron Shadrach, a great cousin of Shadrach, said Tuesday.

Makowicki said it is important to remember the Medal of Honor at the time of the Civil War was a new award.

"Today we might think everybody on the mission would have good documentation and every soldier who participated would be awarded the medal just the same," he said. "You often needed someone to advocate on your behalf if your officers had left the regiment. It was a bit more of an ad hoc process, so it really does appear to be by all accounts more of an oversight than certainly any comment on their behavior."

Ron Shadrach, 67, from Independence, Ohio, remembers seeing a plaque his aunt showed him as a little kid that had the Shadrach name on it but didn't know what it was about. In 2003, he saw a newspaper article pulling for Wilson and Shadrach to get the Medal of Honor.

"That started to connect the dots. Anytime I brought it up over the years my dad would say the same thing, 'It's something that

happened down South and we're totally not related," Shadrach said.

Once he learned of the relation, Shadrach started to work on getting the Medal of Honor for both men. He started compiling the information in 2012 and connected with Brad Quinlin.

Shadrach had a binder of information that he submitted in February 2016 to Gen. Mark Milley who was the Army Chief of Staff at the time. The binder includes drawings of Wilson and Shadrach before being executed by hanging. There were photos of letters that the private's youngest sister wrote for 20 years trying to get back pay and any rations that Shadrach was eligible for while in a Confederate prison.

"I didn't have much patience with the government for these delays. It's like, 'This makes no sense,'" Shadrach said. "If not for that delay, I wouldn't have had time to put this document together. It wouldn't have uncovered all this information. It's like a blessing in disguise."

Scott Chandler, 61, from Fredericktown, Ohio, said he got into this story back in 2020 when there was talk about Wilson receiving the Medal of Honor. But his family didn't have much knowledge of Wilson.

"I just had the thought — My mom's [older than] 80, her sisters aren't far behind her in age so I started pushing for it because I wanted to see her be able to accept it," Chandler said.

He heard the award was on the president's desk so there wasn't much he could do. During that time, Chandler started doing his own research. He used some information that his mother had and was sharing some with his sister, Kimberly, 59, who lives in Walla Walla, Wash., with her family.

In accounts about Wilson, he was fighting to help keep the Union together and it appeared he wanted slavery abolished. There is a drawing that depicts Wilson and the men being hung. He gave a final statement, saying he had "no ill-will toward the South" and ended it by saying "one day the Union flag will fly over your states again," according to Chandler.

Chandler said his mother and her two sisters will keep Wilson's Medal of Honor for a while but will donate it afterward to the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center in Chattanooga, Tenn. The medal will be displayed in the same city where Wilson is buried at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.

Legion supports bill to fund veteran construction apprenticeship programs

By: The American Legion

The American Legion supports the Spectrum and National Security Act, a reauthorization bill that would provide funds for veteran construction apprenticeship programs, improve security of U.S. communication networks and more.

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, sponsored the Spectrum and National Security Act, which will modernize the nation's spectrum policy to protect our communications networks against foreign adversaries, restore Federal Communications Commission auction authority, secure critical broadband funding to keep Americans connected, and invest in CHIPS and Science innovation initiatives that will boost U.S. technological competitiveness.

Veterans Employment and Education Commission Chairman Jay Bowen said The American Legion looks forward to working with Congress to ensure passage of the legislation.

"The bill promotes both licensed and unlicensed spectrum

innovation, removing some of the restrictions to development," he said. "And significantly, this bill will provide funding for education grants related to veteran apprenticeship programs to enhance technical education and opportunities for veterans. We are thankful for Sen. Cantwell's leadership, and the opportunity to expand veteran education in technology fields."

The bill, S4207, is now in a Senate committee.

"By modernizing federal spectrum strategy and restoring auction authority, we can promote innovation, boost U.S. competitiveness, and complete the 'rip and replace' necessary to strengthen our national security," Cantwell said. "Importantly, this proposal will also allow us to make important investments, such as \$500 million to educate, train, and expand our future telecommunications workforce."



Photo courtesy of The American Legion.

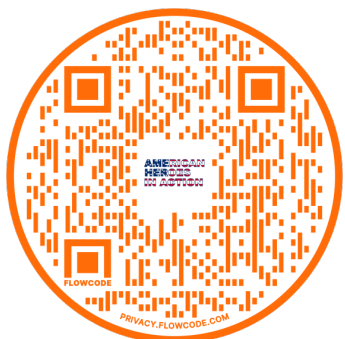
Stay in touch with legislative priorities and advocate on behalf of veterans [by signing up here](#) to receive Grassroots Action Alerts.

AMERICAN HEROES IN ACTION

American Heroes in Action (AHIA) fundraising brings in the money we need to pay for our all expenses paid, outdoor adventures. We have two exciting fundraising events in August. Join us for our 2nd annual Summer Shotgun Showdown, on Saturday, August 17th. Or golf with us in our 4th annual Hacking Fore Heroes golf tournament on Saturday, August 24th. Our summer fundraisers are a great time, for a great cause.



Dust off your shotgun and come shoot with us in the **2nd Annual Summer Shotgun Showdown**. We'll be shooting at Colorado Clays, in Brighton, CO, on Saturday, August 17th. Registration is \$100 per shooter or \$380 per team of 4. Registration includes 100 clays, breakfast and a BBQ lunch. Scan the QR code to get signed up today.



Hacking Fore Heroes



Todd Creek Golf Club in Thornton, CO.

On Saturday, August 24th we will be holding the **4th Annual Hacking Fore Heroes** golf tournament. Join us at Todd Creek Golf Club, in Thornton, CO.

Four persons scramble, Shotgun start at 9:00 AM

Entry Fee is \$150 per Player, or \$600 per Team

Entry fee includes: 18-hole greens fee, Cart, Range Balls, BBQ Lunch, Hole Prizes, 1 Raffle Ticket, Swag Bag, Awards, and T-Shirt or Hat. Prize awards go to 1st place, 2nd place, 3rd place, and last place.

Last year, Will C hit a hole in one, and won a three year lease on a Ford Mustang Mach E. Sill-Terhar Ford will provide another vehicle to give away this year. Maybe you could drive this one home. We are limited to the first 36 teams of four players.

Scan the QR code below and get your team signed up today.

