



The Veterans Observer

Published By Colorado American Legion Post 123



Volume 1

February 2024

Issue 2

The Brown Bomber

By: Kali Martin Schick

More than 16 million men and women raised their right hands and swore an oath of enlistment into the U.S. military during World War II. Only one was the world heavyweight boxing champion: Joe Louis. Like many Americans, he was drafted into the Army, enlisting under his legal name, Joe Louis Barrow, on Jan. 14, 1942. A champion fighter in the boxing ring, he was ready to fight for the United States.

Born in Alabama in 1914, Louis was one of eight children born to Munroe and Lillie Barrow. His mother later married a widower, who added his six children to the household. When he was about 12, his family moved to Detroit, where work opportunities were better for African Americans. Louis had been slow to develop, walking and talking later than many children. He did not excel in school and by 15 quit, working instead to support his family.

In his late teenage years, Louis began boxing with a friend and found he had a particular talent for the sport. By 1934, he had won 50 of 54 amateur fights and had his sights set on going pro. Louis fought his first professional match on July 4, 1934, and won with a knockout in the first round. Louis' success quickly made him a hero to Black Americans. Unlike his predecessor, heavyweight champion Jack Johnson, Louis was naturally reserved, a trait his managers urged him not to lose. His quiet demeanor served him well. When he spoke, people listened.

Louis spoke loudest with his fists. In 1937, he defeated heavyweight champion James J. Braddock, earning the title for himself. The next year, Louis faced German boxer Max Schmeling in a rematch that carried the weight of two ideologies: a Black American boxer squaring off with Nazi Germany's prized fighter. Their first match,

in 1936, was a loss for Louis. This time, he knocked Schmeling out in the first round. With this victory, Louis' popularity grew with Black and white Americans. When he donned an Army uniform in 1942, he still held the heavyweight title.

Prior to Louis' enlistment, the Army's Bureau of Public Relations was discussing what to do with the famous boxer. Although numerous celebrities joined the military during World War II and were given (or allowed to have) combat assignments, Louis' opportunities in a segregated Army were few. It was determined he would serve Uncle Sam doing what he did best: boxing. Louis attended boot camp; he had to learn how to be a soldier even if he would not fight. In March 1942, he was allowed to defend his title; he beat Abe Simon and raised money for the Army Emergency Relief Fund.

A poster of Louis, dressed in combat gear and wielding a rifle with a fixed bayonet, became a wildly popular war-bond advertisement.

Quoting a speech Louis gave at a fundraiser, the poster exclaimed, "We're going to do our part ... and we'll win because we're on God's side." Louis did his part, assigned to a traveling group of Black boxers and entertainers. The troupe was an enormous success, drawing huge crowds of GIs across the United States and eventually throughout Europe.

Louis did a lot to lift the morale of GIs. Getting to see your hero box in person was something thousands of young men must have written home about. One story recounted a young GI willing to risk his already damaged eyesight just for a glimpse of America's "Brown

Bomber." If Louis had any problems with his ambassador role, he never told anyone. There was just one known rule: he refused to box in front of segregated audiences.



Sgt. Joseph Louis Barrow speaks to assembled troops during an appearance at Camp Hill in Newport News, Va., on Sept. 10, 1943. National Archives

(Continued on Page 3 See Military)

A Message From National Commander

Congress must pass spending bill to ensure national security

By: Daniel J. Seehafer, National Commander

Dear American Legion Family members and friends,

Once again, the Department of Defense (DoD) may be faced with another continuing resolution (CR), which would compromise national defense strategy and undermine improving quality of life issues for servicemembers.



Daniel J. Seehafer
National Commander

In essence, a CR would cap funding at the previous year's levels, providing none of the approved increases and preventing any new programs from beginning that were authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024.

This comes at a time when America is facing multiple national security threats such as China's aggression, Russian provocation and the possibility of the Israel-Hamas war spreading.

It is not the time to be reducing our military capability. But that is exactly what the CR would do.

Consider this: Under a CR, our nation's defense programs would receive \$26.6 billion (3%) less than the \$886.3 billion authorized by the NDAA.

This stop-start-stop-start game also disrupts the hard-working employees of DoD, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They are the backbone to the services provided to our veterans and the defense of our nation. Their ability to carry

out their critical work should not be subjected to the whims of a polarized Congress.

Speaking of Congress, I am scheduled to provide testimony on behalf of our great organization on March 13. If Congress does not sufficiently pass funding to support our military and VA, you better believe I will make our feelings known loud and clear.

After all, resolution after resolution opposes such inaction by Congress. Among them:

- Our steadfast support for improving quality of life for servicemembers and their families, Resolution 85, approved by the National Executive Committee (NEC) in August 2016.
- Our call for a DoD budget, based on the 2022 National Defense Strategy, Resolution 11, approved by the NEC last May.
- Our military commitments in the Indo-Pacific region, Resolution 118, approved by the NEC in August 2018.

Last but not least, the CR would present a devastating setback for operations by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). In order to fulfill ongoing missions, DPAA received a \$40 million increase in budgeting for FY24. But that would be wiped out due to the CR. Another CR will only continue to hurt our national security.

There is no better time than right now to do the right thing for America, its military members and their families. Congress must pass an actual spending bill to ensure our military is properly funded throughout this year.

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

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.

Still Serving America

(Military Continued from Page 1)

The military was willing to bend its rules for a few, but it did for Louis.

In addition to supporting millions of GIs through his appearances and shows, Louis stepped in to help friends when needed. When officer candidate (and future baseball star) Jackie Robinson knocked out a white officer's teeth over racist remarks, Louis made some phone calls. He not only managed to keep Robinson from being court-martialed or worse, but he carried enough clout out of the ring to help keep him in officer candidate school. Traveling across the country, Louis could gather information and use his status to make changes, and he is credited with helping to desegregate Army buses.

Like the millions with whom he served, Louis had to adjust to life outside the Army after the war. He joined The American Legion as a member of Peter Salem Post 45 in Louisville, Ky. He continued to box, though years of exhibitions had taken a toll on him. He defended his heavyweight title until his retirement in 1949, when it had become apparent, he was no longer in peak form. In 1950, Louis came out of retirement, necessitated by debts and trouble

with the IRS. His last match was Oct. 26, 1951, against fellow Army veteran and then-heavyweight contender Rocky Marciano. Marciano won and apologized to Louis; even his opponent hated to see the heavyweight great fall short.

Upon Louis' death, President Ronald Reagan waived the stringent requirements for internment at Arlington National Cemetery, and America's hero was buried there with full military honors April 21, 1981.

Despite winning millions over his career, it is estimated Louis personally earned less than \$1 million. He never shook his troubles with the IRS, though he was able to live comfortably. Louis pursued other passions, especially golf. Among the many strides he made for civil rights, directly or indirectly, it was his desire to play in the 1952 San Diego Open that resulted in the removal of the bylaw excluding Black golfers from the Professional Golfers' Association of America (today's PGA Tour). Whether it was in the boxing ring, on the fairways or in an Army uniform, Louis set himself apart as a fighter, advocate, friend and veteran.

About the Author: Kali Martin Schick is senior historian at the National Medal of Honor Museum.

American Legion Colorado Boys State Registration: Now through May 1, 2024

This years Boys State to be held at *Northeastern Junior College, Sterling CO - June 2nd – 8th 2024*

American Legion Colorado Boys State is a six-day hands-on experience in the operation of the democratic form of government, the organization of political parties, and the relationship of one to the other in shaping Colorado government.

The American Legion Colorado Boys State program is sponsored by the Colorado American Legion. The program cost is paid for by The American Legion.

At Boys State, young men learn about city, county, and state government through a non-partisan objective education approach. The young men also form friendships which will last a lifetime!

Boys state is for high school juniors going into their senior year with at least one semester left of school.

As an American Legion Colorado Boy's State Delegate, You will;

- Demonstrate your Leadership Abilities
- Interact with Delegates from across Colorado
- Share your ideas and opinions
- Learn from others
- Make friends for life!

Multiyear membership opens to 2025 renewal

By: The American Legion

If you renewed for the 2024 American Legion membership year prior to the new multiyear membership rollout on Dec. 4, you can now take advantage of a three-year membership starting with the 2025 membership year.

Visit legion.org/renew for the multiyear membership of 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Legionnaires still needing to renew for 2024 or veterans joining the organization for the first time can also lock-in a three-year membership (2024, 2025 and 2026) by visiting legion.org/renew or legion.org/join.

Here is what you need to know about the three-year membership:

- Multiyear membership sign-up is only available on the

national American Legion website (legion.org/renew and legion.org/join). Current or potential members cannot renew or join for a three-year membership at the post level or through MyLegion.org.

- Payment for the three-year membership will be upfront.
- There is not a discounted rate with the three-year membership.
- Membership cards will still be sent annually by Legion posts.
- Those who sign up for a multiyear membership will not receive a renewal notice during the time they have signed up for the multiyear membership.

Continued on Page 11 See Multiyear)

One year, \$18.8 billion in veterans benefits claims

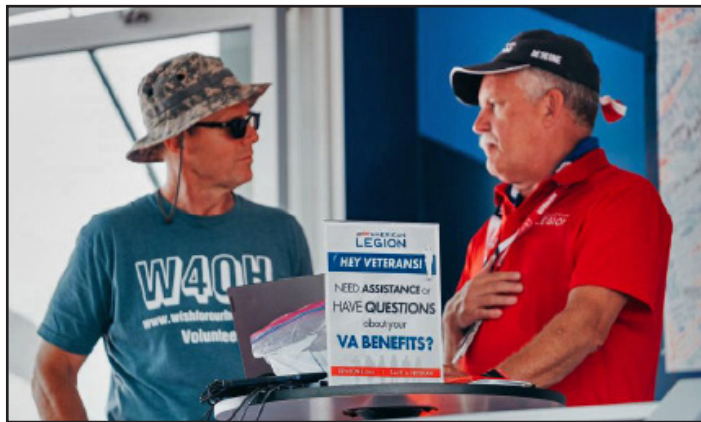
By: The American Legion

There are more than 18 billion reasons why our nation's veterans gave thanks to The American Legion during Fiscal Year 2023, which ended in September.

That's because American Legion accredited service officers secured nearly 19 billion dollars — \$18,800,997,141.62 to be precise — in benefits claims for veterans. That amount exceeds the \$16 billion that veterans received in the previous fiscal year.

Three sites secured more than \$1 billion in FY 2023:

- St. Petersburg, Fla., \$2.4 billion.
- Columbia, S.C., \$1.1 billion.
- Montgomery, Ala., \$1.1 billion.



American Legion Department of Indiana service officer Bryce Hullett (right) assists a veteran. Photo by Hilary Ott /The American Legion

Also, in the most recent fiscal year, the Legion's Board of Veterans' Appeals Unit represented more than 11,234 appellants — helping them to secure more than \$89,616,242 in retroactive VA claims benefits.

The American Legion's 3,000 accredited service officers provide this expertise at no cost to any veteran, whether they are a Legionnaire or not. Some organizations charge for this service but do not get better results.

"I could not be more pleased with the extraordinary and selfless work of our team of service officers," American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer said. "This represents one of the core values of our organization: assisting our

brothers and sisters. It is, in fact, a value that changes lives and saves lives."

"Around the Posts"

Veterans Day Honors in La Veta, CO



La Veta school in Southern Colorado honoring veterans on Veterans Day.

Article taken from LegionTown USA, article originally submitted by: Jim Lambert

La Veta school in Southern Colorado held a Veterans Day ceremony on November 13, 2023.

There was a color guard from the Brian T. Chiquette Post 16 American Legion. The Legion supplied the color guard and held a flag folding ceremony.

The students read poems and readings in recognition of veterans.

The whole school attended.

Join The American Legion



Help Our Nation's Veterans

"Around the Posts"

Team member making a difference

Article Taken from LegionTown USA Article originally submitted by: Joel Haas, Honor Guard Captain

The primary mission of The American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 honor guard is to support Final Honors for our veterans, which is then followed by supporting our Post and our community.

The members of the honor guard showed very strong support in all mission areas by supporting 69 events during the 2023 calendar year.

Of the 70 events supported, 55 of those events were Final Honors for our veterans, five presentation of colors events for our Post and our community, two ceremonies at Pikes Peak National Cemetery supporting Memorial Day and Wreaths Across America, one Celebration of Life ceremony, and two parades (4th of July and Veterans Day).

One member of the honor guard stands out in providing support to our



Post 209 honor guard Captain Joel Haas (left) presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Post 209 honor guard member Bill Thomas (right) January 9, 2024 (Photograph by Honor Guard Member Joe LaChat)

veterans, our Post and our community – Bill Thomas. Bill joined the honor guard in August 2021 when answering a call for anyone willing to support even just one event a month, because that one event might be the one that the honor guard cannot support without another available member. This year, Bill has become much more than a “one event a month” honor guard member. Out of the 70 events the honor guard supported in 2023, Bill supported 48 of those events. Final Honors for our veterans accounted for 44 of the events, 80% of the total Final Honors performed by the honor guard. Bill was that one “available member” for 24 of those Final Honors, ensuring those veterans received the honors they earned and deserved.

Our veterans, our Post and our community are very lucky to have Bill as a member of The American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 honor guard.

American Legion Member Discount Programs

All veterans who serve their country are entitled to certain benefits, but those who join The American Legion have additional ones.

Legionnaires qualify for a variety of services and special offers,

ranging from health-care aid to discounts on computers and electronics

Visit our national Legion website at: <http://www.legion.org/benefits>

Colorado's U.S. Navy Seabee License Plate

Effective 01January2024, the State of Colorado (per Senate Bill 23-212) is offering “U.S. Navy Seabees” license plates to individuals who served in the Naval Construction Forces.

About: Creation of this license plate was per Senate Bill 23-212.

Available For: Motorcycles, Passenger cars, trucks that do not exceed 16,000 pounds empty weight, or a noncommercial or recreational vehicles and motor homes unless otherwise specified (not available for any vehicle registered as Tax Class A – International Registration Plan (IRP)).

Who Qualifies: Honorably Discharged Veteran, Retired, Active, or Reserve Members of a Construction Battalion of the United States Navy (including women veterans, and discharge LGBT veterans).

Requirements: Qualifying person must submit a copy of form DD214 (issued by the U.S. Government) or military orders that demonstrate they are or were members of a Construction Battalion

of the United States Navy. (For the PWD versions of these plates, the DR 2219 will be required as detailed in CRS 42-3-204.

Fees: One set of plates is exempt from fees allowed by CRS 43-3-213(1)(b)(II)(D). A second or additional set requires a one-time fee of \$50.00 for issuance or replacement of plates, in addition to other taxes and fees.

Personalized License Plate Fees: Not allowed.

Number of Plates Allowed: Unlimited, only the first set is exempt from fees.

For more information about this plate and other plates available for veterans visit DMV Online at myDMV.colorado.gov

**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



Legionnaires encouraged to engage in promoting voting but remain non-political during election cycle

By: The American Legion

This year ushers in a presidential election. And while American Legion posts are encouraged to promote “Get Out the Vote” (GOTV) efforts, it is important to remember to remain nonpartisan in the process.

The American Legion is a nonpolitical, nonpartisan organization but advocates for all U.S. citizens to register and vote in all elections. The American Legion does not show preference for or against any particular candidate or political party.

With that mind, here are some dos and don'ts for Legionnaires and posts to follow during the election cycle.

1. Can I wear my American Legion cap to a political event? No. The American Legion cap is considered the official legion uniform (see p. 38 of 2024 Officer's Guide). If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with The American Legion emblem visible, must be removed so as not to imply any endorsement by The American Legion.
2. Can we use our American Legion post for a political



Graphics provided by The American Legion.

event? When using post facilities to host any candidates, the post must remove American Legion emblems and American Legion flags to avoid any impression of endorsements. Candidates for all parties must be presented equal opportunity to use the facilities on the same terms and conditions as other competing candidates.

3. Can I get The American Legion at the local, state and national level to support a candidate running for Congress or any political office? No. In Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, “The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.” Additionally,

the National Charter, approved by Congress, stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is never to help or endorse a candidate. However, you, as a private citizen and not speaking for the organization, can do whatever is legal and ethical to advance his/her candidacy.

Volunteer Opportunity from Boulder County

Become a Companion Volunteer

Are you looking for a meaningful way to connect with an older Veteran who feels isolated or lonely?

Consider becoming a Companion Volunteer. Volunteers are matched with an older adult who lives alone or with family caregivers and visit their program partner two hours weekly.

The AAA Respite & Companion Volunteer Program invites adults 21 & older to apply to become a Companion Volunteer.

Applicants must pass a criminal background check and make at least a 6-month commitment. If this opportunity speaks to you, call (720) 864-6526 or email infoRespite@bouldercounty.org for more information. Or submit your volunteer application to: boco.org/RespiteVolunteer.

The contact information above can also be used for older Veterans or their caregivers who are interested in receiving this service.



Beware of job scams targeting Veterans

Veterans lose significantly more money to job scams

It's no secret that job scams are on the rise, but did you know that Veterans are often the top targets of job scams? Although job scams are widespread, Veterans often report more significant financial losses. Why is that?

Veterans are often targeted because they have access to benefits and resources.

Business and job opportunity scams were among the Top 10 frauds reported to the Federal Trade Commission in 2022.

According to a recent Better Business Bureau report, job scams ranked as the second-riskiest scam in 2022.

Common job scams

Job scams may include business or job opportunities, such as offers to start new businesses or opportunities to work from home. Some examples of work-from-home job scams include reshipping scams and reselling merchandise scams. Additionally, scammers may post fake job ads for nannies, caregivers and virtual assistants on job sites. You should also be on the lookout for mystery shopping job scams, job placement service scams, and government and postal job scams.

Scammers may pose as "recruiters" on LinkedIn, Indeed and other job sites. They might send you to a fake website to "apply" for jobs or schedule phony virtual interviews. However, they're not looking to hire you but to take your money and personal information instead. Scammers use many tactics, so how do you tell a scam from the real thing?

How to avoid a job scam

The FTC recommends you take the following steps to protect yourself from job scams.

Search online. Look up the name of the company or the person who's hiring you, plus the words "scam," "review" or "complaint." You might find out they've scammed others.

Not sure if a job offer is legit? Contact the company using a phone number or website you know is legitimate—not the one you got from the "recruiter."

Verify if the recruiter is legit. Check to make sure the recruiter that calls you is who they say they are by doing an online search or calling the company directly. Recruiters will generally

email from their company (@companyname.com), not personal email like @gmail.com or @yahoo.com. Keep an eye out for similar company names with extra characters or spelling errors.

Talk to someone you trust. Describe the offer to them. What do they think? This also gives you time to think about the offer.

Ask questions about the job description. Scammers post vague language about the prospective job. Be sure to read the fine print.

Do not provide personal information during an interview. Before giving you any details about the job, they'll ask for your driver's license, Social Security, branch of military service or bank account number to fill out "employment paperwork." But if you share it, they might steal your identity.

Do not pay for the promise of a job. Scammers may promise you a job—if you pay them. But no legitimate job will make you pay

for training, equipment or anything else to get the job. Anyone who does is a scammer.

Do not trust a "cleared" check. No legitimate potential employer will ever send you a check and then tell you to send money back to your new boss in the form of money or gift cards. That's a fake check scam. The check will bounce, and the bank will want you to repay the amount of the fake check.

Report job scams to the FTC

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. But the FTC has resources to help you spot job scams. If you see a job scam or lose money to one, report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

How to find a job

Employment is an important issue for Veterans. Helping Veterans find and obtain employment, as well as advance in their civilian careers, is a high priority. VA is here to help and has employment resources available for Veterans. Visit <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/> for more information.

You can also find free, official information about federal jobs at USAJOBS.gov, FedsHiresVets.gov, and CareerOneStop.org. Your State's Department of Labor may have job listings, contacts for local job offices, and resources for counseling and referrals.



Photo provided courtesy of The American Legion.



Iowa post's Legion Family turning Buddy Checks into much-needed plowing service

By: The American Legion

Retired U.S. Air Force master sergeant, Kevin Snyder has tried to take what he did in his military capacity and transfer it to his work as a member of American Legion Nash Post 140 in Kingsley, Iowa.

The post's sergeant-at-arms and service officer, Snyder and his wife – Auxiliary Unit 140 President Tamie Snyder – came up with an idea to offer free snow plowing services to the community's disabled veterans and the widows of veterans. It's part of the post's effort to stress community service while performing Buddy Checks on their members.

"We're a small town. We've got a Legion post, but we didn't have a very active post for a long time," Kevin said. "We're trying to reinvigorate membership to be more active. And while the post did a lot of (honor guard appearances at) funerals and such, it just wasn't working. So, we tried to put our heads together to see what we could do."

Snyder, when working for the Legion, has tried to duplicate his efforts on active duty. "In the unit I was in ... when a guy would deploy, someone would make sure the car was running, the wife and kids had groceries, the lawn was being cut, whatever needed to be done," he said. "We have a lot of older members ... that just can't get out and get around. And we have members who have passed away and their widows are left behind. Their kids are grown and off living their lives in another state, so these ladies are pretty much left to fend for themselves."

"So, we kind of took it as when I was going out doing Buddy Checks, it was like when I was a first sergeant. You're looking for things. You're looking to see if there are groceries in the refrigerator, if the lawn needs cut, if the car's broken down or has a flat tire. That kind of stuff. And you would just go ahead and go back to your unit and make sure it got taken care of."

After around two feet of snow hit, Kevin said those needs became pretty clear. "Since we're out there checking in bad weather and good, our old guys and our widows – who are all Auxiliary members – we thought we'd look around and see what needs

doing," he said. "And since we've had these giant snowstorms out here, most of what needed doing was plowing."

Kevin said 24 residences have been the recipients of the post's efforts over the course of two weeks, but because of blowing winds, those residences have needed to be plowed and shoveled again multiple times.

"The problem is it takes me two days to get 24 done," he said. "And at the end of the second day, you've got to start all over again because the wind hasn't stopped here. The drifts are almost worse than the snowstorms."

Auxiliary members field the phone calls. And there has been a trickle-down effect. Not only as the snow-plowing effort expanded

to other older widows in the community who are not members of the Legion Family, another community member wanted to assist the effort but wasn't eligible to join the Legion, so he's joined the Sons of The American Legion at a nearby squadron (Post 140 doesn't have an SAL squadron). But it's created an interest in forming a squadron at the post, Kevin said.

"It's having an impact where we're actually having community members who want to join the post," he said. "As soon as we get 10 guys we'll start a squadron, because we've got guys who want to help. And I can't tell you how many phone calls my wife

has gotten from people wanting to donate to the Auxiliary or join the Auxiliary to be a part of this team that takes care of families."

It's also reinvigorated the post. "Not only is it helping our Auxiliary members and our older and disabled members, some of the guys that never come to meetings ... they started showing up with shovels ready to shovel walkways and the porches and shovel out the cars," Kevin said. "It's had a real positive effect that way. And the guys that are showing up with shovels have full-time jobs. It's had more of an impact than I thought – and not just on our members, but also on the people that are helping out. A lot of guys have been stepping up. And this is hard work. But it's worked out really well."

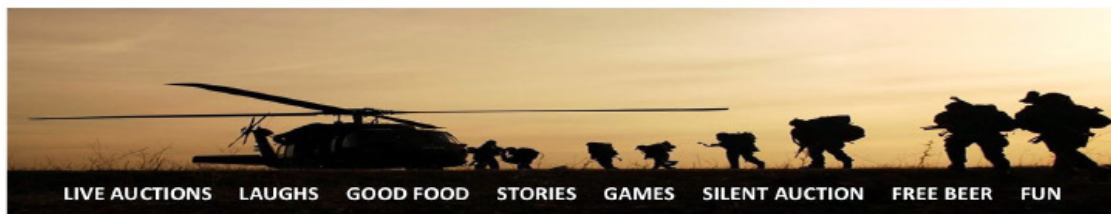


Photo courtesy of The American Legion

BE THE ONE



AMERICAN HEROES IN ACTION



2 COLORADO BANQUETS

Loveland - Saturday, February 24th

Embassy Suites Hotel

Denver - Saturday, April 27th

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Doors open at 4:30 PM

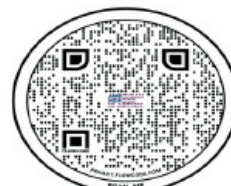
FREE BEER FROM COORS

Dinner served at 6:00 PM

Your choice - Steak or salmon

Live Auction at 7:00 PM

Tickets are just \$75 per person, or \$125 per couple,
Scan the QR Code and buy your tickets today!



2024 GUN RAFFLE

AMERICAN LEGION PAUL C. BECK POST 23

2 WINNERS TICKETS 1 /\$20 OR 3/ \$50

DRAWING JULY 13TH, 2024. NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN

Henry Big Boy Classic Side Gate 44 Mag. rifle. Retail value \$1,210



SIDE GATE LEVER ACTION RIFLE

Dan Wesson 357, 6 shot double action revolver with 36" holster

Retail Value \$725



For tickets mail check to

Post 23, PO Box 473758, Aurora, Colorado 80047

Tickets will be returned to you

(Multiyear Continued from Page 3)

Please note that the multiyear membership will work just like PUFL. Whatever rate the member renews at is what the post/department/national will receive for the duration of that timeframe. For example, if a member renews today (before national per-capita \$5 dues increase come July 1, 2024), National will receive \$18.50 for the next three years. For example, if a department's per capita is currently \$10 and is going to be raised to \$15 on July 1, 2024, then the department will receive the \$10 for the next three years. Once

the member renews after the three-year renewal is up, the renewal rate will adjust to the rate at that time.

A multiyear membership was approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion during the organization's Spring Meetings last May. Resolution 1: Purchase of Multiple Years of Membership approves "a five-year pilot program offering the purchase of three consecutive 12-month member terms at the then current dues rate."

Legion Riders Program

Over 425 American Legion Riders programs, organized by chapters, districts, or departments, support Americanism and Children and Youth programs in virtually every state in the nation, and more are organizing each month. One of the fastest growing and most highly visible of the many programs offered by The American Legion, The American Legion Riders are a very diverse group, and so are the programs that they support. What do American Legion Riders do? The activities are far too many to mention in this space, but here are a few examples:

American Legion Riders chapters and districts, nationally have become some of the most generous donors for the American Legacy Scholarship Fund, raising as much as \$5,000 or more in a single event.

Participate in the annual POW/MIA Rally held each Memorial weekend in Washington D.C. known as "Rolling Thunder".

Sponsor or participate in local and national charity events in support of the sponsoring American Legion Post.

Ride to raise money for such organizations as local VA Hospitals, Battered Women and Children's Centers, Varied Children and Youth Programs, a School for Blind Children, Veterans Relief, Needy Families and many, many others.



Founded a national movement called "Patriot Guard" (www.patriotguard.org) that honors and protects the sanctity of military funerals and memorial services.

Formed special motorcycle Honor Guards and ceremonial teams highlighting the special bonds formed in military service and the motorcycling community.

Teach motorcycle and driver safety in the community and in schools in co-operation with ABATE and other national motorcycling organizations.

Remember: American Legion Riders are a very dedicated group of Legion Family members. When your Post or district sponsors a new Riders organization, you create a win/win situation for your Post, District, and Department.

'An absolute tragedy'

By: The American Legion

Three U.S. servicemembers were killed — and at least 30 wounded — in an aerial drone attack Sunday night in northeast Jordan near the Syria border. This marks the first time U.S. troops were killed by enemy fire in the Mideast since the start of the Gaza War.

American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer condemned the attack, which is believed to have been carried out by Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq.

"We are in mourning for these American heroes, three servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country," Seehafer said. "It is an absolute tragedy, and we grieve with their families. We call upon Congress and the Department of Defense to do more to ensure that our deployed troops are equipped appropriately to protect them from future attacks."

Jordan is a key ally of the United States and has played a vital

role in cooperating with the U.S. military. For example, American troops have trained Jordanian soldiers and partnered with them on various exercises and operations.

"This act of aggression should not deter our resolve to protect U.S. interests at home and abroad," Seehafer said. "In fact, it should embolden us to honor the memories of the servicemembers we lost. We must remain steadfast to bring about peace in the Mideast through any means necessary." 'An absolute tragedy'



Legislative Report

By: Jim Stanko

This report was presented on January 27, 2024 during the Mid-Winter Conference.

The legislature convened on January 10th. With a little disturbance. There are 100 members in the Legislature, 35 Senators, 65 Representatives. 11 members of the legislature are veterans, and they have their own Caucus. 90 bills have been as of January 19 introduced in the House of Representatives and 65 bills in the Senate.

As of now only one bill in the House and one bill in the Senate directly impact veterans. The House Bill HB24-1076 Purple Star School Program. This bill would allow public schools to use a Department of Defense program to provide certain services to help military youth and families adjust to the school system.

Come back to the Senate Bill SB24-004

Bills that may affect veterans. Compact Bills, which will bring the state in line with Federal Legislation.

HB24-1002 Social Work Licensure Compact Enacts Social Service Licensure Compact. Allows transfer of certain social service licenses

SB24-10 Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact Allow transfer of License for these.

SB24-018 Physician Assistant Licensure Compact

Bills that will happen but not yet filed. But will be supported by UVC.

Sunset of VAG program in Sept. 2024. 1 million dollars for grants to 501c3 organizations that help veterans. Is part of Dept. Of Veterans Affairs budget so need to be aware of that budget request.

Legislation to prevent unethical conduct and improper collection of fees by persons advising or assisting any veteran with the filing of claims for disability benefits before the Dept. of Veterans Affairs. This is a state version of pending Federal Legislation.

There will be a bill to establish June 12 as Women's Veterans Day as a State holiday.

WHAT WILL NOT HAPPEN; For years, the UVC has tried to restore with interest the 3 million dollars that was the base for the Veterans Trust Fund and VTF grants. The grants will still happen, but there is no trust fund to continue grants when the tobacco money runs out.

No legislation to provide for no fee camping limited to 5 nights per month at State Parks for 100% disabled veterans.

Now for SB24-004 County Veterans Service Offices Administration.

This bill is the result of a Legislative Audit Committee which found that the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, which is part of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs headed by the Adjutant General and is a state cabinet position. This Audit found that the Division was in violation of several parts of Title 38 which governs the Department of Veterans Affairs. This bill was written by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and has the support of the Governor.

The bill makes 3 major changes in the way County Veterans Service Officers are administered by the State and the Counties.

First the bill changes the divisions duty from supervision of County VSO's to Monitor. This puts the performance of County VSO's on the County. This is good because both County Commissioners and the Department have done very little supervision, Now the County Commissioners will be mandated to supervise VSO's.

Second, Most Controversial, the bill changes procedures for the divisions payments to the Counties for the performance of VSO's. Under the current law a county is paid \$12,000 for a part time VSO and \$24,000 for a full time VSO per year, these funds did not necessarily go to VSO salaries, but were designated to fund a VSO office. The Audit said this was unequal in the division of funding with some counties getting more funds for less performance than counties with more performance. Payment will now be on hours worked by the VSO. Basically, what this does is that counties that file a lot of claims will get more than Counties that do not file a lot of claims. This will hurt small rural counties as they do not have the veteran population to file a lot of claims. Looking at an amendment, have a every county get a base amount and the remainder of allocated funds be distributed among counties with multiple VSO's. Haven't heard if this went through. Other suggestion, smaller counties share VSO's. Won't work but in the end may happen.

The Third involves accreditation. Two versions - Certified, by the State. Requires County VSO's to attend classes, can file claims, but have to go through VA accredit VSO. Most small counties only have certified VSO's. New rule would require that at least 1 VSO has to be accredited in a VSO office. The state has to recommend accreditation, then person has to take VA courses and pass a test. The other problem is that accredited VSO's must work at least 20 hours a week and 1,000 hours in a year to maintain accreditation. Right now, 57 out of 64 counties at least have a VSO work 20 hours but not necessarily 1,000 hours and no definition of what can make up those 1,000 hours.

Last and minor, the requirement that in the hiring of County VSO's. County veteran service organizations are to have input in the hiring process. Also, the candidate must have been an honorably discharged member of a branch of the armed forces. New wording is that this requirement will apply only to the main or accredited VSO. For assistant or staff they don't have to reach out, it is suggested that they reach out. Also, assistants do not have to be discharged members of the armed forces. It also adds the space force as a branch of the armed forces.

Several groups of County Commissioners and County VSO's have held meetings on this bill. The bill was heard in Committee on Wed. Jan. 24th. Several amendments that came out of these meetings were introduced that if accepted will greatly help at least clarify the intent of the bill. As of Thursday, have not heard what came out of the committee hearings. BUT THE BILL IS GOING TO PASS.

WHAT THIS MEANS THAT LOCAL POSTS NEED TO GET INVOLVED WITH THEIR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO MAKE VSO'S GET ACCREDITED AND CONTINUE TO SERVE VETERANS. THE BALL IS REALLY NOW IN THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT.

Resolution to salute the All-Volunteer Armed Forces. Is the anniversary of the switch from draft to all volunteer.



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 20 - 22, 2024

**DEPARTMENT OF COLORADO
AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION**



SKYUTE CASINO/HOTEL

**14324 HIGHWAY 172 NORTH,
IGNACIO, COLORADO**

