



“Proud Possessors of a Priceless Heritage”
Supporting the Principles of The American Legion Since 1932
Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Colorado
A 2X Triple Nickle Detachment
Home to Past National Commander Michael Moss
2022-23 National Vice Commander Michael Kirschner



Richard Humphrey, Commander
Colorado Sons Electronic Update February, 2023



This publication does not express the official position of the SAL Detachment of Colorado, The American Legion Department of Colorado or their respective National Organizations. It is a forum to share information about events and happenings within the Detachment of Colorado, the National Organization of the Sons of The American Legion, and information that is pertinent to the programs and four pillars of The American Legion. This publication is compiled and published as a volunteer service by Detachment Adjutant Mark A Kilstrom. Submit questions, comments, photos and stories to saladj@coloradolegion.org.

Commanders Mission Objective: Rekindle the Spark

Mission Statement: To not only honor our fathers, mothers and grandparents by our continued service to God And Country, but to rekindle the spark of our veterans and community with the ideas of patriotism, citizenship and the American Flag

In Yvonne's Memory

May 5, 2023 Indianapolis, IN

The American Legion
 JUN 01, 2023

SAL National Vice Commander Michael Kirschner affectionately refers to his late wife, Yvonne, as a “Navy brat.”

“Growing up in a patriotic family, she always cared about the men and women that serve this great country of ours and the children of America,” Kirschner said.

Yvonne (Barela) Kirschner, a member of Ovie Vernon Auxiliary Unit 2 in Pueblo, Colo., died Jan. 8.

“When she passed away, the kids and I sat down and tried to think of the best way to honor her memory,” Kirschner said. “Being that she lived her life via the Auxiliary motto of ‘service over self,’ we felt it was appropriate to have folks give money in her honor to a great cause.”

After some discussion, the Kirschner family settled on the Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF) because of its emphasis on helping veterans and their children, as well as it being the top fundraising project of American Legion National Commander Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola and SAL National Commander Christopher Carlton.

Family and friends raised \$3,000 in Yvonne’s honor for VCF, which Kirschner announced at the SAL National Executive Committee’s Spring Meetings.

But that wasn’t all.

“The vice commanders this year had chal-



lenge coins made, and we’ve been collecting donations from the challenge coins for the VCF,” NVC Ernie Laberge announced at the meetings. “And on behalf of the national vice commanders, and in memory of Yvonne Kirschner, the national vice commanders have collected so far \$11,140.”

“I was totally shocked, honored and humbled when my fellow NVCs chose to make the donation from funds raised for our challenge

coin in her name,” Kirschner said. “It truly made me tear up and feel the pride of serving with these great men.

“This is what the American Legion Family is truly about. Taking care of one another, our communities, our veterans, and the children of this nation. ... If each one of the 2 million-plus American Legion Family members do something similar, what a huge impact we as an organization could make to our veterans, community and youth.”

Kirschner said his wife of 23 years would be “embarrassed” by the attention. But he hopes the example set by those contributing to honor her echoes throughout the Legion Family.

“(We) have always held on to the belief that we do what we do because we want to and it’s the right thing, not because we want recognition,” Kirschner said. “There is a great quote from Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Francis S. Currey: ‘There are two kinds of people in this world — those who get things done and those who take credit for getting things done. Belong to the first group, there is much less competition.’

“(Yvonne) lived life by that motto and should be an inspiration to us all.”



Commander's Corner

Commander Richard Humphrey

A Belated HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY. First, I would like to thank those 7, yes 7, individuals who took the time to come to our Detachment Executive Meeting in Ignacio. Business was conducted and some training was done. PNC Rehbein, who was placed in command of the Department Convention was

very, very happy with the Detachments achievements this past year and stated openly that we will be able to continue to work as we have been. Our finances will not be touched by the National organization, our membership will not be controlled, and we will be able to function as we have in the past with the exception of not being able to have a seat at the National Convention. We are one of two Detachments in the Mid-West Region to have won the honor of the Triple Nickel Award: 5



new Squadrons, membership over 105% (ours as of June 30 was 106.47%) and 85% renewal rate (ours is 85.99%). Gentlemen, I congratulate you all for doing what you have done this year for your Detachment. But now, it is a new year and there is NO reason why we can’t keep up this great work and make our Detachment top gun again next year. You have already proven you can arise to the challenge, let’s go to even bigger heights and prove we are the best in the WEST and do it again.

My challenge to you this upcoming year is “SHAKE THE TREES AND GO FOR THREE”. This is a dual challenge; over 3000 in membership and a third 555. You already have the membership in your pocket for the renewal rate, just keep them involved in your Squadron and your Post. Get your fundraising activities going and get these members involved; hold your dinners at your

post, get them involved with Bingo operations, if you have it, if not see if you can start a small game one night a week or month. Place flags at grave sites for those who have fallen, Patriot Day is coming in September, which is not usually celebrated, but what a good time to place flags on our fallen comrades. Halloween in November is a great time to get the younger kids to your post for a “scary” afternoon event. And don’t forget December Christmas. Also remember our veterans living in nursing homes, any small treat or gift is something they will always remember. Set up membership tents at the Sporting goods stores in town, get your Auxiliary and Legion members involved. Make it a great family event. Hold some special events for the kids in the area to get them involved with your Squadron, bowling, horseshoe, air rifle shooting, bicycle safety, whatever it takes.

(Continued on page 2)

Your 2022-2023 Detachment Leadership



NEC (Assistant Adjutant)
 Scott Garrett
 123 Laura Ave
 Clifton, CO 81520
 (303) 257-8698
 ceilingmanjsg@yahoo.com
 Squadron 200



ANEC
 Nick Arceo
 7821 Owl Creek Cir
 Littleton, CO 80125
 (303) 903-5262
 nicrco@gmail.com
 Squadron 103



Commander
 Richard Humphrey
 1803 Carson St
 Aurora, CO 80011
 (720) 244-7389
 dandrich11@comcast.net
 Squadron 23



Sr. Vice Commander
 Wally Weld
 1187 E Berry Ave
 Englewood, CO 80111
 (303) 995.1739
 wwrmac24@msn.com
 Squadron 1



Jr. Vice Commander
 Robert Jones
 PO Box 815
 Durango, CO 81302
 (970) 749-7104
 norton85020@yahoo.com
 Squadron 28



Jr. Vice Commander
 Ron Noakes
 1477 3rd St
 Pueblo, CO 81007
 (719) 544-3284
 mrron14@yahoo.com
 Squadron 2



Jr. Vice Commander
 David Smith
 221 W. 8th St
 Loveland, CO 80537
 dueces65@gmail.com
 Squadron 1985



Jr. Vice Commander
 Robert Barry
 4245 Midlothian Ct
 Colorado Springs, CO 80909
 (719) 930-5725
 Colo.rsb@yahoo.com
 Squadron 209



Jr. Vice Commander
 Jim Gaddis
 1755 Road 3
 St Francis, KS 67756
 (720) 963-8343
 Jeremiah_579@yahoo.com
 Squadron 211



Jr. Vice Commander
 Randy Forsythe III
 12449 Wagon Wheel Rd,
 Eckert, CO 81418
 (970) 644-7811
 jax5203@gmail.com
 Squadron 65



Adjutant
 Mark A Kilstrom
 1870 River Dr
 Fountain, CO 80817
 (719) 640-6692
 sadadj@coloradolegion.org
 mark.kilstrom@comcast.net
 Squadron 2

Chaplain

Vacant



Sergeant-at-Arms
 Teddy Kuntz

 Contact Detachment Adjutant
 Squadron 68



Finance Officer
 Rick Baldessari
 P.O. Box 615
 Golden, CO 81230
 (303)423-1887
 rbaldessari@hotmail.com
 Squadron 21



Assistant Finance Officer
 Jim Gelwicks
 P.O. Box 539
 Gunnison, Co 81230
 (970) 641-1101
 jgelwicks@western.edu
 Squadron 54

Commander's Message *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

The National organization recently put out that only 9 Squadron Data Reports have been submitted from Colorado. That is unacceptable. This is a mandatory form that must be submitted every year whether there is a change in your status or not. The Detachment also needs to have a copy of this form so that we will know who the current officers are in your Squadron. I will need to know this so that I can contact you when I or my Vice Commanders would like to pay a visit to your Squadron. Yes, I will still be making visits. I would like to see how you are doing, what you are doing and if there is anything you need from me to help you with what you are doing or would like to do. I will seat with you at your membership booth, I will assist you with fundraising, I will help you with whatever and whenever you would like to have me with you and your Squadron. But you need to ask, and you

need to submit this CSR to the Detachment Adjutant as soon as possible. It isn't hard, it doesn't take but 5 minutes or less to fill it out, but it is VERY important. It also has a lot to do with your online membership renewals. So please, fill out the report and get it submitted to the Detachment Adjutant, Mark Kilstrom.

The other report that is VERY important is the Consolidated Squadron Report. What has your Squadron done this past year, how many hours have you dedicated to projects. This report is consolidated at National Headquarters and given to the National Commander when he appears before Congress. When the National Commander tells Congress that The American Legion donates umpteen Million dollars and Billions of hours to veterans and children and youth, you know they are going to listen. You say, we didn't do anything, well, that veteran you

helped in his home, those veterans you visited in the nursing home, those kids event you held over the summer, those Christmas baskets you gave away, are very much something. Pat yourselves on the back for what you do and tell the world.

Gentlemen, I again congratulate you on a great year. You have done great things this year and I hope you will keep up the great work. I look forward to visiting you all again this upcoming year and hope to see you at the Awards Banquet and CWF Banquet later. We have come a long way this year and we have a long way to go over the upcoming year. I know you have the ability to accomplish the task at hand and the willingness to see this through. So, remember

SHAKE THE TREES AND GO FOR THREE

**Richard Humphrey
 Detachment Commander**



!!!! TRIPLE NICKLE GOALS ACHIEVED !!!!

Aurora, Colorado May31, 2023

The National membership report as of June 29 reflects the Detachment of Colorado is sitting in 9th place nationally with 2,906 members and 106.49% of our national membership goal, and with a renewal rate of 85.99%. In January, at our Mid-year DEC meeting, Commander Richard Humphrey presented new Squadron Charters to Post 68 in Brush, and Post 2017 in

Limon. At the CWF Banquet in April which was held at Post 209 in Colorado Springs, the Commander presented a third new Squadron Charter to Post 109 in Windsor. At our meetings in Ignacio, the Commander presented two additional new Squadron Charters to Squadron 88 in Granby and 2572 in Bailey. With these five new Squadrons, exceeding 85% in renewals of last years membership and exceeding 105% of our membership

goal, all prior to 1 July, the Detachment has earned it's second Triple Nickle Award. This accomplishment is a testament to the hard work of all the Squadrons and their leadership throughout the Detachment, This is a true team effort that demonstrates that every single member counts and is important to the organization. Congratulations to all of you. Your efforts are truly appreciated and worth off this recognition.



20 August 2023

VETERANS FAMILY & FRIENDS BBQ

*The American Legion Family of Sagebrush Post / Unit 68
Cordially invite you and your family / friends to an
appreciation BBQ*



Where: Memorial Park
301 S Clayton St, Brush, CO 80723

When: 20 August 2023
11:00 AM

BBQ - Hamburger, Hot Dogs, Brauts

RSVP to Laurie.Auxiliary@yahoo.com
720.314.6998

Please provide # Attending
Veterans please provide: Name, Branch,
and years of service / conflicts

Appreciation and Recognition of
Veterans in the Community

- Appreciation of Members Service
 - > American Legion Auxiliary Unit 68
 - > American Legion Post 68
 - > VFW Post 3551

- Learn about
 - > The Sons of the American Legion
 - > American Legion Riders



The American Legion Library

The American Legion Library was established in 1923 and is located on the north end of the fourth floor of National Headquarters in Indianapolis. While the organization and building are not public, the library staff welcomes and strives to help Legionnaires, veterans and non-veterans alike.

Researchers, students and others who want access to the library should first inquire about their subjects through a telephone call, mail or email.

The library houses approximately 12,000 books covering the subjects of military and U.S. history, veterans affairs and literature. This wealth of historical information and knowledge is available to the public. Our military unit histories are just one of



many collections considered by many to be a major resource.

The library also maintains the archives and current correspondence filing. The minutes of every national meeting and convention

have been recorded. The library staff compiles digests for the national meetings, and copies of recent digests can be found in the [Digital Archive](#).

Publications such as booklets, brochures and pamphlets from divisions, commissions and committees are kept indefinitely. Department publications such as newspapers and minutes of meetings are available, but these holdings are not complete. No material can be loaned out of the building.

Contact Information

Library and Museum Director: Howard Trace
Phone: (317) 630-1366



Scenes From Ignacio



Commander Richard presented New Squadron Charters to Posts 2527 and 88. This completed the Five new Squadron Requirement for Colorado second Triple Nickle.



Commander Richard, Vice-commander Rob Barry and Sgt-at-Arms Teddy Kuntz presented 46 ALF dogs to Auxiliary Unit 22 President Skeeter Wilson who will give them to the Brown Bag Ministries which is a non-profit organization that helps homeless families with children. The ALF Dogs were purchased with funds raised by Teddy. His efforts raised over \$1,300.



Various members representing the leadership of Department, Auxiliary, Detachment, Jr. Auxiliary and District 10 gave summations of the accomplishment of the year and weekend and a bright outlook for the coming year.

Minnesota Legion Riders Chapter Uses July Fundraiser to Provide Holiday Season Help

The American Legion
JUL 18, 2023

For nine years, the North Branch American Legion Riders Chapter 85 had staged a Christmas in July Ride to raise funds for families of deployed military personnel in the community around the holidays. But two years ago, the numbers of Riders in the chapter had dropped off significantly, putting the annual event in jeopardy.

But up stepped Camille Wentz, a member of Auxiliary Unit 85, and Sons of The American Legion Squadron 85 member Andy Specht. Both Riders at the time assumed leadership positions within Chapter 85 – Wentz as the director, Specht as her assistant director. The pair, with the help of others, have been able to grow Chapter 85's numbers up to 34 in just two years. And the Christmas in July Ride continued, raising around \$5,000 in 2022 and

then taking place on July 8 this year. "We started completely over ... so we've really come quite a long way in the past two years," Wentz said. "Now it seems like everybody kind of has a passion, and we all started at the same level. When I went out recruiting people, I tried to tell them that there wasn't really a hierarchy in this group. We're all starting from the group up, and we're going to do this together. I think that was really appealing. People weren't intimidated coming into the group. We've kind of really formed a close bond, and this year's ride was really indicative of that." The ride provides financial assistance around the holidays for military families in the area, including those with a family member deployed elsewhere. "Life can be stressful for families of deployed military," Wentz said. "The ride started historically to support

family members of deployed soldiers during Christmastime. Since there aren't a whole lot of deployed people now, we've kind of broadened that to helping veterans and military families around the holidays. And we also want to get to the point where we're helping them throughout the entire year." Specht said the ride "originally started as making Christmas possible for deployed soldiers' children. Now, we're trying to help other (military and veteran) families. If it means to make Christmas possible by buying gifts ... then we'll help them out during their time of need." This year's ride was heavily promoted online and through social media. More than 140 people attended the 120-mile ride and live music at the post following the ride. Chapter 85 was able to get community sponsors and support,

(Continued on page 6)



2023 3rd **ANNUAL**
blues
brews
& BBQS
September 16, 2023 @ 10AM Westcliffe, Colorado

Blues Brews and BBQ

This 3rd annual event attracts blues enthusiasts from around the state with an outstanding line-up of musicians and bands. Bring chairs or blankets to make yourself comfortable in the park setting and enjoy fare from vendors featuring locally sourced food and craft beers.

This family-friendly blues festival is the annual and prime fundraiser for the American Legion Westcliffe Post 170, a local volunteer organization that provides physical and financial support to the area's veterans and veteran widows.

Incredible Bluesman John Long will be returning to the 3rd Annual Blues Festival. John Long (born 1950), is an American country blues singer, finger-style guitarist, harmonica player and songwriter. He performs in a pre-war acoustic blues style, although his material is contemporary and mainly composed by Long and his elder brother. His mentor and inspiration was Homesick James. In the mid-1970s, Muddy Waters stated that Long was "the best young country blues artist playing today."

Brews provided by Florence Brewing Company and Silverwest Feedstore.

Vendors are welcome to participate. For more info, call Richard Posadas at 719-242-3474

Visit American Legion Post 170 website: [Blues Brews and BBQ | American Legion Post 170 \(westcliffepost170.org\)](https://www.westcliffepost170.org)



American Legion Riders



Registration now live for 2023 Legacy Run

The American Legion

MAY 01, 2023

[Registration is now live](#) for the 2023 American Legion Legacy Run and will close Aug. 9. The five-day, 1,100-mile ride will leave American Legion Post 6 in Kokomo, Ind., on Aug. 20 and travel through Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee before the final stop at the Hendrick Motorsports campus in Concord, N.C., on Aug. 24. The annual motorcycle ride raises funds for [The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund](#), which provides financial assistance with college for children of U.S. military personnel killed while on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, as well as for children of post-9/11 veterans with a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Last year's ride raised a record \$1,324,548 – the eighth time the Legacy Run has surpassed \$1 million. Once online registration is complete, registrants will receive a copy of their medical and release forms in a confirmation email. Complete the medical form and bring it to check-

in; check the spam folder if no confirmation email is delivered. Those who would prefer to print and mail a registration form with a check or money order should complete the online registration process. Instructions are provided on the information review page to print the registration and mail payment. All riders must check in at Post 6 on Aug. 19 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to receive a check-in packet containing Legacy Run items and information. Later that day, a mandatory all-riders meeting will take place at 4:30 pm. The location will be provided at check-in. Unless otherwise notified, participants are responsible for booking and paying for their own lodging at each overnight stop. Riders are expected to start each day with a full tank of gas at their expense. From kick stands up until the next overnight point is reached, registration fees will cover fuel and one meal. For liability purposes, all riders must register for the Legacy Run for one or multiple days in order to participate. Non-registered riders will not be allowed to join in or ride with the main body of the Legacy Run. Personal pro-

tective equipment (eye protection, gloves, pants, boots, and helmet) is mandatory while participating in the Legacy Run, regardless of state laws. This is non-negotiable.

The following is a list of available hotel links by stop:

- August 18-19: [Hotel list in Kokomo, Ind.](#)
- August 20, Day 1: [Hotel List Day 1 - Garden City, Mich.](#)
- August 21, Day 2: [Hotel List Day 2 - Dayton, Ohio.](#)
- August 22, Day 3: [Hotel List Day 3 - Milton, W.Va.](#)
- August 23, Day 4: [Hotel List Day 4 - Bristol, Tenn.](#)
- August 24, Day 5: Consult with your department.

Those who want to register to support the Legacy Run will receive by mail a full check-in packet, the same packet riders receive upon check-in.

Keep checking the [Resources](#) page for the latest Legacy Run documents. For additional information, email legacyrun@legion.org.



Florida Legion Riders Help Bring Early Christmas to Boy With Terminal Cancer

The American Legion

JUL 25, 2023

Gabriel Bostwick, a 12-year-old who is in home hospice care while battling terminal cancer, wanted a chance to see Santa Claus and feel the holiday spirit one more time. His community, including multiple American Legion Riders, were more than happy to accommodate his wish.

On July 21, more than 70 motorcyclists joined with more than 200 other area residents to bring Christmas to Gabriel and his parents at their home in Navarre, Fla. Legion Family members from American Legion Post 382 in Navarre and Post 378 in Gulf Breeze were among the contingent, which sang Christmas carols, delivered presents, and provided a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, as well as some other North Pole inhabitants.

Ashley Correa, who works at the Studer Family Children's Hospital at Ascension Sacred Heart and is a member of the American Legion Family at Post 378, learned about Gabriel's wish and that an event had been planned. She contacted Post 382 Commander Jason Skobel, the past ALR director at the post, to share what was planned.

"He knows we do the ['Ride for the Claus'](#) during Christmas, and she said this family was wanting to do a Christmas in July for (Gabriel)," said Skobel, who also serves as District 1 first vice commander and Department of Florida Western Area ALR chairman. "I put the word out there in our district with our Riders, and ... we had overwhelming support for this kid."

Skobel said there were around seven different motorcycle organizations involved, including

at least four American Legion Riders chapters. "When we arrived there, there already were some members of the community and neighbors lined up along the street," he said. "But when they saw 75, 100 motorcycles pull up in front of their house, just seeing the look on the parents' faces and that kids face, just goosebumps, hair standing up all over. It was just, there were really no words to describe it. "Just seeing that little kid smile and his dad pushing his wheelchair just to take a look at all the bikes lined up on the street – I just kind of stood in the back for awhile and was watching all the riders. It's funny to see all these older, big gentlemen – the burly riders – flipping their sunglasses down so you can't see the tears coming out of their eyes."



Minnesota Legion Riders *continued*

(Continued from page 4)

while American Legion Posts 185 in Grantsburg and Post 51 in Pine City were stop sponsors, and American Legion Riders from Chapter 566 in Lino Lakes and Chapter 225 in Forest Lake assisted with the ride's road guard.

"The last few years I've been involved, it's been incredible to see all the different posts that come to support the ride itself," Wentz said. "It means a lot that other posts support us in multiple ways. Our own (post) supports us. And the community has been huge. A lot of local businesses did sponsorships. We had a local ATV dealership donate a pit bike that we were able to (raffle off). We had our own Riders donating items they had collected ... and we had a huge silent auction that raised money."

The combined effort resulted in more than triple what was raised in 2022, with nearly

\$17,000 brought in. "This year definitely blew us out of the water," Wentz said. "We incorporated a lot of different fundraising things that we hadn't done in the past. I guess all those little things added up." Events like the Christmas in July Ride have boosted not just Chapter 85's numbers, but they've also raised awareness – and membership – in Post 85's American Legion Family.

"Just drawing them into our group has brought quite a few members to the Legion, people that didn't realize the Legion had anything to offer besides what you see in brick and mortar," Wentz said. "I think it's been good for people to see ... there are different activities and a lot of new things going on. We're trying to recruit a younger crowd ... so that our legacy can continue."

Putting in the time and effort to do the Christmas in July Ride comes from Chapter 85's desire to "have funds to do things for the veterans," Wentz said. "Our group is mo-

torcycle enthusiasts, and that's what we love to do: riding motorcycles. And planning a big ride like this is exciting. And we've incorporated vehicles in the ride now. We're trying to go outside the motorcycle community to raise awareness about The American Legion. "The bottom line is to support the veterans. But secondary, we have a ton of fun doing it, and we've kind of formed a little family. It's fun. It doesn't seem like work. It is a lot of work, don't get me wrong ... but it's really a good time, and we all enjoy doing it." Seeing the effects of the July ride on local families is what motivates Specht to put in the work to make the event possible. "It's not something I can really put into words," he said of the experience. "To me, I'm completely humbled to see the gratification and the smiles on the faces that we're able to give to our families that we support. I feel it's a great accomplishment, what we're able to do, and that we have the ability to do it."



American Legion Riders National Chairman Mark Clark announces a new mission for American Legion Riders: Support of The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. The new mission will begin after the conclusion of the 2023 National Convention in Charlotte.

Watch the YouTube Video: [American Legion Riders take on new mission - YouTube](#)

Come Support Your Local Veterans!
100% of the Proceeds go to George
Beach Post #4

9TH ANNUAL

Pre-Registration is always appreciated

American Legion CAR SHOW

Registration:
9am-10am
Showtime:
10am-2pm

\$20 Donation
Trophies: Top 3,
People's Choice,
and Special Trophies
Door Prizes



50/50 Raffle
Purchase tickets
at American Legion
(Do NOT Need to Present to Win!)

Raffle Tickets Available
(Must Be Present to Win!)

Breakfast Burritos
Bloody Mary's
Hot Dogs w/ Chips
Brats w/ Chips
Water and Ice Tea

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5TH, 2023
GEORGE BEACH POST #4
2124 WEST COUNTY ROAD 54G
FORT COLLINS, CO 80524
QUESTIONS? CALL DENNY: (970)227-2070

Made with PosterMyWall.com

What is your Squadron/Post family up to? We all have events and activities that we do year round. Share your story with the rest of us. If you get this newsletter, you have a computer or other so called smart device that you can send and receive information on. We are all about sharing information. Get your event publicized to help make it a bigger success.

JM Post's 15th Annual Charity Golf Tournament.

Sign up Now!
Players and Sponsors!



Advocating for Military Spouses

The American Legion

JUL 25, 2023

Lydia Owiti, a military spouse born in Kenya, shares her story of reinventing herself after she came to America on this week's episode of [The American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast](#). She explains the difficulties she faced integrating into the American way of life. Her Army husband was deployed to Kuwait shortly after they arrived. Owiti learned that her law degree was not recognized, did not fully understand the challenges of military life and struggled to find employment.

"It was challenging emotionally," said Owiti, a member of The American Legion Auxiliary. "It was challenging financially. It was challenging in ways that I cannot even explain because there was so much going on with my husband being deployed out of the country and I was

left alone."

Having a masters degree in international development management didn't help either. "All my networks were back in my country." Now she has a fellowship as manager of the Military Spouse Professional Networks at Hiring Our Heroes. In this role, she advocates for military spouses and the challenges they face. Her goal is to make sure that no other military spouses face the same obstacles that she did.

"I am so driven to make sure that spouses feel as supported as possible, feel that someone has been there and is trying to do their best to remove these barriers, lessen these barriers, shorten the time that it takes for you to learn something."

Co-hosts Jeff Daly and Ashley Gutermuth also riff on:

- American Legion posts as a nightlife destination.
- The 50th anniversary of the all-volunteer force while the military branches battle recruiting woes.
- The Army's tactical bra and a joke by *The New Yorker* that went flat.
- VA Save training, hosted by an American Legion post, which is in lock step with [The American Legion's Be the One](#) initiative. Check out this week's episode, which is among nearly 190 Tango Alpha Lima podcasts available [in both audio and video formats here](#). You can also download episodes on iTunes, Google Play or other major podcast-hosting sites. The video version is available at [the Legion's YouTube channel](#).



Ship Military Care Packages to Help Be the One

The American Legion

JUL 25, 2023

American Legion Family members Rob and Michelle Williamson simplified the process of shipping for individuals and businesses in 2017 when they founded ShipThrifty, allowing shippers a cost-saving and hassle-free way to create, purchase and print their own shipping labels online with major carriers. A year later, they provided those same ShipThrifty benefits with military families to make shipping care packages to servicemembers overseas and stateside easy. Since then, hundreds of thousands of care packages have been delivered to America's military men and women "to boost morale and bring those away from home a piece of home," Michelle said.

ShipThrifty's mission to support servicemembers, veterans and their families falls in line with The American Legion's mission. Together, they have formed a partnership to continue caring for servicemembers through the shipping of care packages and the Legion's Be the One suicide prevention initiative.

Through this partnership, whether you are

shipping one package or 1,000, Legion members and posts can:

Save up to 60% on shipping with major carriers

Cut shipping time by 90% (no waiting in line or handwritten customs forms)

Protect servicemembers and collect addresses safely

Earn funds to offset future shipping costs

Reduce nonrefundable returned packages

To get started with ShipThrifty, create a free account today at [shipthrifty.com/rf/legion](#).

You also can call ShipThrifty at 800-544-4992 or send an email to contactus@shipthrifty.com.

The American Legion spoke with ShipThrifty about the benefits of shipping military care packages through them, how it works, and how ShipThrifty is supporting Be the One. With American Legion Be the One Days on the first of every month where posts are encouraged to raise awareness about Be the One, an idea is for posts to have a care package event and place Be the One brochures in the packages.

The American Legion: What impact do

care packages sent to our servicemembers have that you have heard?

Michelle: We've heard firsthand from chaplains that care packages are a tool for saving lives. Struggling servicemembers go to chaplains to get shampoo, a toothbrush or snacks which provides an opportunity for conversations and support when needed. The chaplains also save full boxes for folks they know are struggling or don't get care packages from home to remind them others are thinking about them. With the Be the One initiative, sending care packages is the perfect way to spread the message and get information into the hands of those who need it both here at home and for those serving far away. When the community is asked to be part of the initiative, the message may touch others struggling.

The other thing is the connections from those care packages. We have groups who have sent care packages that are still connected to the service members who got them and communicate and do stuff with them, and it's just a huge opportunity that way.

See more at [legion.org](#)



'It's extremely moving just to be here': Boys Nation 2023 Pays Respect to the Fallen

By [Andy Proffet](#)

JUL 25, 2023

The Sunday and Monday schedules each year at American Legion Boys Nation lend themselves to reflection on those we've lost, especially those who gave their "last full measure of devotion" in service to our freedom.

Here's how Boys Nation 2023 paid their respects.

Memorial service. Assistant activities director Bob Caudell opened Sunday morning's nondenominational memorial service with a point of personal privilege to remember three former Boys Nation staffers who had passed away: Kenneth Danilson of Iowa, Thane Chastain of Kansas, and Father Gary Gummersheimer of Illinois.

National Chaplain Mark Antal delivered the memorial message and read the flag folding ceremony, assisted by junior counselors Joe Pitts, Colby Lewis and Thomas Davies. Fellow junior counselor George Cecil led the senators in singing "Amazing Grace" and "God Bless America."

Boys Nation senators also participated in the service:

• Welcome and opening prayer: Thomas Fleming (Alabama)

• Reading from Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: Hillis Kopecky (Georgia)

• POW/MIA remembrance: Creytin San-

ner (Kansas) and Michael Bryant (Michigan)

• Wreath dedication: Ethan Nguyen (Nevada), Alex Chen (Pennsylvania), Chase Hoel (Arizona), Bahar Djour (Indiana), Ronald Spears II (Ohio) and Aidan Dong (South Carolina)

• Closing prayer: Ruben Mendes (Wisconsin).

The National Mall. Henry Pahlow of Wisconsin found the name he was looking for on the Vietnam Memorial Wall — Robert J. Schley, his father's second cousin and a Marine corporal who died in combat in 1967 at the age of 23.

"It's moving," Pahlow said of finding Schley's name. "I know he wasn't very closely related to me, but to see someone who knew people that I was related to ... it's kind of hard to process, but it also kind of puts a name and face to the war."

Pahlow and his fellow Boys Nation senators visited the memorials on the National Mall on Sunday night, including the Korean War and World War II memorials.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The wreath dedicated at Sunday morning's memorial service was laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during a ceremony Monday morning. New York senators Cole Bjornson and Ian Chung laid the wreath with National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola

and National Chaplain Mark Antal.

Afterwards, the senators roamed the cemetery, visiting the graves of notables and more personal figures alike. A group of them joined Antal at the grave of Col. Samuel Drew, a friend of his who was killed in Bosnia. "He was an aeronautical engineer; he was a pilot for the United States Air Force," Antal told them.

The group also visited the grave of Army Spc. Stephen Mace, who died during the COP Keating battle in Afghanistan in 2009.

"It's very sobering, seeing the miles and miles of graves of those who served," said Clint Ellison of Virginia, Mace's home state. "... It definitely hits close to home, because that's a young man in his 20s."

Although Rhode Island's Aidan Simao was visiting Arlington for the third time, it's still an impactful place.

"Just to think of all the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for this great nation, who rest here, it's extremely moving just to be here," Simao said.

Follow the happenings at American Legion Boys Nation at [legion.org/boysnation](#), on YouTube at [americanlegionHQ](#), and on social media on Twitter ([@ALBoysNation](#)) and Instagram ([@theamericanlegion](#)) with the hashtag [#BoysNation2023](#).





Volunteers for Hospitalized Veterans, Inc
Serving Colorado Veterans Since 1997

18121 E Hampden Ave, C-235
Aurora, Colorado 80013
v4hvets@gmail.com

Volunteers for Hospitalized Veterans (V4HV) has supported veterans of the Colorado VA for more than two decades, providing for veterans' well-being and financial needs.

Who we are

V4HV directors include members of various VAVS Committee organizations including The Sons of The American Legion, the Marine Corps League, The American Legion Auxiliary, the Marine Corps League Auxiliary as well as VA volunteers.

V4HV primary charitable activities

- Supply clothing for the inpatient mental health unit to benefit homeless veterans
- Host special events and support recreation therapy programs
- Finance specific needs of veterans facing hardships as identified and requested by VA staff

Donations are accepted through Square; use the QR code below or this link:

<https://square.link/u/9lpBCXLt>



V4HV's mission

To serve veterans at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center and other units of the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System to provide for their well-being as well as financial needs. In addition we will support units and programs for the homeless veteran population.

Legacy Scholarship Recipient Filled With Gratitude

By [Cameran Richardson](#)

JUL 25, 2023

It was during senior finals week in May when Colton Clay received word that he was a 2023 American Legion Legacy Scholarship recipient. "It was joy and excitement," said Clay of Colorado Springs, Colo., who will be an incoming freshman at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. "My dad's reaction was pretty proud because one, it helps with college and two, it's honoring his legacy and all the things he was able to do (during his military service)."

Clay was eligible for [The American Legion Legacy Scholarship](#) because of his father, Christopher, a Legionnaire who served 21 years in the U.S. Army and retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2016. Children whose parents lost their lives while honorably serving on active military duty on or after 9/11, as well as children of post-9/11 veterans with a combined Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating of 50% or higher, are eligible to apply for the Legacy Scholarship.

"I didn't necessarily appreciate my dad's military service until he moved back here to Colorado Springs (after retiring from the military) but now it means a lot," said Clay, who pinned the lieutenant colonel badge on his father during the promotion ceremony. "My parents divorced when I was in elementary school, but I



2023 American Legion Legacy Scholarship recipient Colton Clay of Colorado Springs, Colo.

Photo by Jennifer Blohm/The American Legion

stayed here (in Colorado Springs) and he moved around (for the military). I didn't get to appreciate him enough while he was gone; I didn't appreciate all the things he did for me (like fly in to watch Clay's soccer games or drive him to school). He sacrificed a lot not only military wise but for me to be in my life. I'm super thankful for him doing that and making me eligible for this scholarship."

Clay will be playing soccer at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology while majoring in geological engineering – ensuring those in the mining industry are safe. "I've always enjoyed math, that's how I ended up with engineering and I've always liked

rocks and things found in rocks, like bones and fossils," he said. "I was a dinosaur kid growing up, so I thought (geological engineering) was a good combination of the two things I enjoy. I remember visiting South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and the geology department had all of these rocks. They said they just collect them, and I thought, I do the same thing. I have a whole bunch of rocks and fossils just lying around. At that moment I realized this is what I wanted to do; it encompassed all the interests that I have."

Clay said the Legacy Scholarship will help ease the financial burden of college for his parents, especially since he has two older siblings who are both in college as well. And it's one he is very appreciative of.

"This scholarship is special because it helps honor my dad and his service and sacrifices that he's made. It's awesome that I'm able to represent him going forward through this scholarship," Clay said. "I want to say thank you to The American Legion. I really am appreciative of this opportunity and the support, and the belief that I can go on and do good things."

