

Greetings Fellow Legionnaires,

I trust spring is going well for everyone and that you all are doing well tracking down those last couple of membership holdouts!

The Commander and I request each post have representative(s) at the next District meeting at Post 461 (500 Morris Ave, Boswell PA 15531), on Sunday, 24 April, at 1400hrs. Everyone has input at these meetings and your concerns and ideas are very important! To be heard at the Western Section and Department meetings, you need to attend the district meeting so the District Commander can take ideas and concerns further up the chain. Please consider attending so the voice of your post can be heard.

The commander plans to discuss the following:

New Business:

1. Resolutions to be presented at the upcoming DEC;
2. District 21 By-laws (hopefully first vote to approve)

Old Business:

1. A report on the Essay contest
2. Updates on Resolution 1124 (insurance issues)
3. The commander also hopes to report on Legion basic training which is an internet program for all members to use.

Finally, we need to remind you that 21st District pays that 20.00 per post that Western Section is requesting. You can certainly send them a donation to help, but we use some of our Wing Fest money to pay that request also, so every post in our district is covered. We certainly hope to see you all or your representatives at this meeting in Boswell.

The next meeting (please put this on your calendars) will be at Post 113 Bedford on 26 Jun 22, District caucus 1300 hrs., District meeting 1400 hrs., thank you for your support.

For God, Country, and Veterans,

Kirk S. Moore

21st Dist. Adjutant

## Commanders

As you may know by now that Dawn, our Department membership supervisor has gone to great lengths to make your job easier and more manageable, she has consolidated each districts delinquent list into Post order for you to send to the post by which ever means at your disposal, if you have a post that is not computer savvy then find a way to get them their portion of the list ASAP so they may act on it immediately, **PLEASE** dont sit on it till a district meeting and hand them out and then hope they act on it, every day that passes is another day an inactive legionnaire will wait till July or later and get their 23 card and save whatever the dues are, with the fuel cost rising almost daily that is a real possibility. This list that Dawn has assembled is a fantastic tool that can get your districts and posts back on track **PLEASE** dont waste it by waiting or not reacting on this opportunity, my plan for me is this: ill have 2-3 people assist the calls and "buddy check" and request renewal, but converse with them to see how they are and where have they been, dont just beat the dues out of them, if they cant get in to renew go get the dues and hand them their 22 card, go that extra mile to get them back, they like it believe me we've done and it works, most will say no thanks ill drop it off or ill mail it now but at least you offered it and it carries alot of weight with them.

This is the chance to get moving again, Ill give you another example, Johna McCormick and Jim Fulton from the west are calling the post commanders in their assigned districts and briefing them on the list and asking them if they need any help at all whether it be computer or manpower or whatever but the offer goes out, that is what it takes for the District Commanders to do if your not already doing it, they do a couple every evening but its getting done and its then in the hands of the post to move quickly with the conviction that **WE** need to get this done.

**Section Commanders**, I ask you to follow up on this with your District Commanders and push them and their Vices to reach out with these lists and get them in the hands of those that will make the time to complete the lists, the numbers tell the story on whos actually taking the time and effort to meet their commitment to membership retention. Were 5000 behind right now, as of monday we've slipped to 13th in the Nation needing 3008 to make the national target by COB today, lets take action now and get the job done, at least try before it too late, Ill be calling Districts and I will be asking the Vice Chairs to call as well and get progress reports, District Commanders I highly suggest you do the same with all your assigned posts, feel free to email or call your status to your membership team so we can help in other area that need it, with the high fuel costs any trip for us is hundreds of miles and hours of travel, help us by keeping us in the loop.

Problems, issue, call the membership team, we are on call 24 hrs a day every day!

John Fritz  
Chairman Membership Team  
email: jflf3110@comcast.net  
cell: 814-603-3477





# Military Service and Social Security

Earnings for active duty military service or active duty training have been covered under Social Security since 1957.

If you served in the military before 1957, you didn't pay Social Security taxes, but we gave you special credit for some of your service.

You can get both Social Security benefits and military retirement benefits. Generally, there is no reduction of Social Security benefits because of your military retirement benefits. You'll get your Social Security benefit based on your earnings and the age you choose to start receiving benefits.

## Social Security and Medicare taxes

While you're in military service, you pay Social Security taxes, just as civilian employees do. You currently pay a 6.2% Social Security tax on up to \$147,000 of your earnings. The Medicare tax rate is 1.45% on all wages. High-income earners pay an additional 0.9% on earnings above certain amounts.

## How your work qualifies you for Social Security

To qualify for benefits, you must earn credits by working and paying Social Security taxes. The number of credits you need to qualify depends on your age and the type of benefit for which you're eligible. In 2022, you receive one credit for each \$1,510 of earnings, up to the maximum of four credits per year. The amount of earnings needed to get credit for your work goes up each year. No one needs more than 10 years of work, or 40 credits.

## Extra earnings

Your Social Security benefit depends on your earnings, averaged over your working lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes.

The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

If you served in the military after 1956, you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the armed forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by us.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for periods of active duty from 1957 through 2001 can also be credited to your Social Security earnings record.

- **From 1957 through 1967**, we will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- **From 1968 through 2001**, you don't need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.
- **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

The information that follows explains how you can get credit for special extra earnings. This applies only to active duty military service earnings from **1957 through 2001**.

**From 1957 through 1977**, you're credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

**From 1978 through 2001**, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you're credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with us for details.

**If you served in the military from 1940 through 1956**, you didn't pay Social Security taxes, but we gave you special credit for some of your service.



**NOTE:** In all cases, the additional earnings are credited to the earnings that we average over your working lifetime, not directly to your monthly benefit amount.

## Your benefits

In addition to retirement benefits, we pay survivors benefits to your family when you die. You also can get benefits for you and your family if you develop a disability. For more information about these benefits, read *Understanding the Benefits* (Publication No. 05-10024).

If you developed a disability while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, visit [www.ssa.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.ssa.gov/woundedwarriors) to find out how you can receive expedited processing of your disability claim.

When you apply for Social Security benefits, you'll be asked for proof of your military service (DD Form 214) or information about your Reserve or National Guard service.

## When you are eligible for Medicare

If you have health care insurance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or under the TRICARE or CHAMPVA program, your health benefits may change or end when you become eligible for Medicare. You should contact the VA, the Department of Defense or a military health benefits advisor for more information.

## You can work and get retirement benefits

You can retire as early as age 62. But if you do, your Social Security benefits will be permanently reduced. If you decide to apply for benefits before your full retirement age, you can work and still get some Social Security benefits. There are limits on how much you can earn without losing some or all your retirement benefits. These limits can change each year. When you apply for benefits, we'll tell you what the limits are at that time and whether work will affect your monthly benefits.

When you reach your full retirement age, we will not withhold your Social Security benefits, no matter how much you earn. If some of your retirement benefits were withheld due to your earnings, we will recalculate your benefit amount to give you credit for the months we reduced or withheld benefits due to your excess earnings.

The full retirement age is 66 for people born from 1943 through 1954, and it will gradually increase to age 67 for those born in 1960 and later. To help you decide the best time to retire, read *Your Retirement Checklist* (Publication No. 05-10377).

## Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to do business with us is to visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) to get information and use our online services. There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to frequently asked questions.

When you open a personal *my* Social Security account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and get estimates of future benefits. You can also print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S, and request a replacement Social Security card (if you have no changes and your state participates). Access to your personal *my* Social Security account may be limited for users outside the United States.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so you do not need to speak with a representative. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

A member of our staff can answer your call from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. **Wait times to speak to a representative are typically shorter Wednesdays through Fridays or later in the day.**



Securing today  
and tomorrow

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# THE FOUR PILLARS

THE VALUE OF AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP  
IS BUILT AROUND FOUR MAJOR MISSIONS.

In southern California, a Vietnam War veteran who knows firsthand the cruel realities of homelessness now leads one of the nation's most dynamic efforts to help severely wounded troops find their way home from war, sometimes with missing limbs, mental illness or broken families.

In a courtroom at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, a Chinese-American veteran from New York City closely monitors legal proceedings to assure that detainees from the war on terror are given fair opportunities to plead their cases.

In a college corridor in Maine, a patriotic veteran stands with his arms folded and stops students from walking across a U.S. Flag laid out on the floor. He is threatened with arrest before the so-called "art" project is removed.

A group of veterans in Alabama takes an annual motorcycle ride to a summer camp for children with cancer. Terminally ill youngsters thrill to the rumble of the big bikes. They try on helmets. They twist the throttles. The veterans drop off a check for \$10,000 before heading out.

These are some extraordinary veterans.

They are also members of The American Legion.

And their stories can be multiplied thousands of times over, across the nation and around the world. They abide by the preamble of a constitution nearly 90 years ago, words that are held aloft on four main pillars of service and advocacy:

- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- National Security
- Americanism
- Children & Youth

Last spring, I asked our National Headquarters staff to prepare a "white-paper" report to provide information for the leading presidential candidates this year. Its intent was to spell out The American Legion's positions on VA health

care, veterans benefits claims, the GI Bill, jobs and business opportunities, adjustment assistance for wounded warriors returning home, and other important issues taken up by our Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission. These are, indeed, major aspects of what we do.

But that's not all we do. And so, the report needed to be expanded.

The new commander in chief also needs to understand The American Legion's ongoing commitment to success in the global war on terrorism – that we support the troops *and* their mission.

The candidates need to know that The American Legion opposes illegal immigration and amnesty for illegal aliens, but fully supports opportunities for *legal* immigration. The candidates need to know that a full accounting of our POW/MIAs is a sacred priority, as is a decent quality of life for military personnel and their families. The candidates need to know that the strength of American Legion conviction on issues we include within the pillar known as National Security.

No candidate should ever question our patriotism. Upon the pillar of Americanism, this organization promotes obedience to law and order, and respect for the U.S. Flag. The American Legion builds enthusiasm for public service among



**National Commander**

Marty Conatser



young people through such programs as Boys Nation and the National Oratorical Contest. We will never abandon Boy Scouts of America as it fights disingenuous lawsuits filed by profit-minded legal organizations. We believe God deserves a place in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America, and in the town square, too.

The roots of the fourth pillar – Children & Youth – reach back to the combat-weary doughboys who founded The American Legion. They survived trench warfare, machine-gun firefights, mid-air dogfights and mustard gas. When they called their first caucus at Paris in 1919, they focused not on themselves but on the children and youth of America. They knew that children were made orphans by the war, and that many had little chance to succeed without help. The slogan they coined resonates today: “A Square Deal for Every Child.” Millions of dollars have since been raised and innumerable hours have been volunteered by Legionnaires, in order to help children who are sick or in need, or simply looking for opportunities to achieve their goals. The American Legion has advocated on their behalf, fighting against such social ills as child pornography, teen suicide, drug abuse and violence at home.

The American Legion, with 2.7 million members and more than 14,000 posts, has flourished since 1919 because of these pillars, these values. The pillars are us, and we are them. As you read the following pages, take pride. You are among millions of extraordinary veterans who call themselves Legionnaires, past, present and future. And it is our duty to keep strengthening the pillars.

*Mark Conaker*



## PREAMBLE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION CONSTITUTION

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, WE  
ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR  
THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- to maintain law and order;
- to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
- to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
- to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
- to make right the master of might;
- to promote peace and good will on earth;
- to safeguard and transmit to Posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
- to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.