



THE AMERICAN LEGION

**WHY
YOU
SHOULD BELONG**



1780

ERIE COUNTY, NY

Why You Should Belong to The American Legion

The American Legion is the nation's largest and most influential network of U.S. wartime veterans, families and communities. From budget hearings to baseball diamonds, combat outposts to children's hospitals, the Legion has something for everyone under its four pillars of service:

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
National Security
Americanism
Children & Youth

With nearly 2.5 million members and some 14,000 community posts, The American Legion is truly a grassroots organization, guided by resolutions that spring from local Legionnaires and are advanced to the state and national levels. From there, American Legion resolutions help shape U.S. policy on many fronts, including veterans health care, national security, foreign affairs and the economy.

The American Legion brought into existence the modern VA, the GI Bill, and dozens of health-care benefits. It helped build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Legion is a national leader in military-to-civilian transition assistance and home-front support for our troops.

The American Legion is also fun. The Legion Riders motorcycle group raises millions of dollars to help children, veterans and families. Conventions, special events, volunteer activities, welcome-home dinners, concerts and holiday observances are among the many other ways Legionnaires make service a pleasure.

WHY I BELONG

"Our goal is to help veterans and their families, educate our community's children, keep our community safe, and lend a helping hand to those in need."

Diane Adair, Georgia Post 233



Photo by Sandy Huffaker

PILLAR ONE: VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation pillar is composed of programs, services and advocacy efforts that improve the lives of those who served, along with their families and dependents, after discharge from the military.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

The American Legion's advocacy for a well-funded, well-staffed VA health-care system includes budget testimony before Congress, recommendations to the White House and site visits and inspections at health-care facilities across the country. The Legion's research from System Worth Saving Task Force inspections is shared with the federal government to help guide the Veterans Health Administration.

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

The American Legion conducts, promotes and supports hundreds of career events nationwide each year. Working veteran-to-veteran with its American Legion Business Task Force, along with the Small Business Administration, Department of Labor, VA and corporate associates, the Legion helps veterans understand the federal contracting process and offers personal guidance for career-seeking veterans.

www.legion.org/careers

WHY I BELONG

"Here in Sparta, Hennessee-Baker Post 99 took me under its wings, helping me with much more than I could have ever thought a post would do."

John Hitchcock, Tennessee Post 99

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICERS

In every state, as well as many cities and counties, American Legion Service Officers help veterans file benefits claims, get answers about health care, understand their GI Bill benefits, look for jobs and more.

www.legion.org/departmentofficers

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For veterans and families disputing benefits decisions by VA, The American Legion has staff representatives in Washington D.C. who can help free of charge to the veteran.

VA VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Legion Family members donate millions of hours a year at health-care facilities, working through the VA Volunteer Services program. These volunteer hours save the federal government no less than an estimated \$18.5 million a year. Other Legion opportunities include Habitat for Humanity, Ride 2 Recovery, Operation Homefront, Veterans of Valor and VA's National Suicide Hotline.

www.legion.org/volunteers

WHY I BELONG

"A group of concerned citizens who believed in us donated a van so that we could transport veterans to the Dallas and Fort Worth VA facilities for their medical appointments."

JoAnn Cassidy, Texas Post 163

VETERANS EDUCATION AND THE GI BILL

The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of a new Post 9/11 GI Bill to provide veteran education benefits to meet today's needs. Following its passage, the Legion has continued to fight to make it more helpful to National Guardsmen, reservists and those pursuing online educations.

www.legion.org/mygibill

HEROES TO HOMETOWNS

The American Legion helps severely wounded military personnel adjust to new lives across the nation through Heroes to Hometowns. Legion staff members work closely with DoD and VA to connect today's wounded warriors with veterans in their local communities.

www.legion.org/heroes

DISCHARGE REVIEW

American Legion experts offer free assistance to those applying to their service branches for corrections to their military records and discharge status.

COMBATTING THE CLAIMS BACKLOG

VA and The American Legion work side-by-side to reverse a massive backlog of unresolved benefits claims. Through its Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) initiative, the Legion pinpoints problems and identifies best practices in claims management.

www.legion.org/veteransbenefits

HELP FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

At the local, state and national levels, The American Legion provides support for homeless veterans and programs and help them get back on their feet.

www.legion.org/homeless

FINAL RESPECTS

Legion honor guards salute their fallen comrades at funeral services throughout the country every day. Legion Riders provide motorcycle escorts and security at services for fallen troops and veterans. The Legion also works closely with the National Cemetery Administration, Arlington National Cemetery and the American Battle Monuments Commission to assure respect and honor are bestowed upon fallen service members, no matter where they are laid to rest. The American Legion's Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Fund supplies U.S. flags for graves of U.S. soldiers in European cemeteries.



PILLAR II: NATIONAL SECURITY

The organization's positions on national defense, homeland security, border control and military support are all part of the long-held Legion value that the key to peace and world stability is a strong, well-resourced defense.

TROOP SUPPORT

American Legion posts throughout the nation and around the world establish personal connections by adopting military units, delivering care packages, looking after families of the deployed and welcoming the troops home.

www.legion.org/troops

WHY I BELONG

“When a soldier returned home who lost both his leg and his job, and his wife left her job to take care of her husband, Post 15 members made a difference in their lives, offering several months of financial assistance and providing desperately needed home repairs before the harsh winter.”

Tony DuMosch, Colorado Post 15

OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

The American Legion raises funds, collects merchandise and delivers comfort items for U.S. troops recovering in military hospitals and transition units worldwide.

www.legion.org/ocw

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

At three U.S. military installations across the country – Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas and Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash. – The American Legion has staff in place to help troops work through the medical discharge process and to provide representation before medical examination boards to reconcile disability ratings.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

BLUE STAR BANNERS

The Blue Star Banner was resurrected by The American Legion after 9/11 to acknowledge U.S. families with loved ones serving in the Armed Forces during wartime. Each blue star represents one family member at war. A gold star indicates a family member who has made the ultimate sacrifice. American Legion Blue Star Salutes and other post-sponsored events honor these families.

www.legion.org/troops/bluestar

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The American Legion works with the Department of Homeland Security at the national, state and local levels to prepare for natural disasters. In many communities, American Legion posts serve as civil-defense shelters and havens of relief in the event of catastrophe or attack on U.S. soil.

http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/disaster_07.pdf

WHY I BELONG

"After Hurricane Charley devastated our island in 2004, we came together as a family and opened up our post to the community as a mess hall and drop-off point for essential supplies for the community."

Dick Thomas, South Carolina Post 136

BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM

The American Legion conducts state competitions throughout the country for posts that donate blood or host blood drives. Awards are given annually to those who make outstanding contributions.

www.legion.org/security/blood

BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The American Legion opposes illegal immigration and amnesty for those who came to the United States illegally. The Legion advocates for strict border and port security as a defense against invasion or attack by foreign

enemies, illegal drug trafficking and adverse economic impact. The Legion, however, strongly supports legal naturalization and in some communities offers classes and programs to help those seeking U.S. citizenship.

www.legion.org/citizenship/immigration

SUPPORT FOR TRICARE

The U.S. military's health-care system and medical insurance program frequently face challenges in Washington. The American Legion testifies on the need to keep TRICARE and TRICARE For Life viable and affordable benefits of military service.

CONCURRENT RECEIPT

The American Legion strongly opposes the "disabled veterans tax" which offsets a DoD retiree's pension by the same amount as one's VA disability compensation. Legion testimony and lobbying efforts in Washington have expanded benefits for some disabled military retirees, but not yet all who earned and deserve both.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

The American Legion's support of the U.S. military – from adequate funding for weapons systems to reasonable child-care services for deployed troops – is highly respected in the Pentagon, at the White House and on Capitol Hill. The Legion delivers resolution-driven testimony and provides guidance to top U.S. officials on the importance of providing a decent quality of life for those in uniform.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The American Legion maintains a strong working relationship with the U.S. State Department to promote peace, human rights and trade on a global scale. The organization's Foreign Relations Division also coordinates with U.S. military installations and activities overseas.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

MILITARY COMMUNITY COVENANT

The American Legion and the U.S. Army are united in a nationwide effort to pledge support for the military through the Military Community Covenant. By signing the covenant, a community commits to provide specific forms of support.

www.legion.org/troops/covenant

FULL ACCOUNTING OF POW/MIAs

The American Legion maintains unwavering support for the full accounting of all U.S. military personnel taken as prisoners of war, missing or killed in action on foreign soil. The Legion maintains close relationships with the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command and the National League of POW/MIA Families to assure they are properly funded and fulfilling their sacred duties.

www.legion.org/powmia

WHY I BELONG

“When I first joined our post, I thought it was nothing more than a social club. Boy, did I find out I was wrong. What a great group of veterans who care so much about other members and our community.”

Kim Henderson, Ohio Post 166



Photo by James V. Carroll



Photo by Stephen Mally

PILLAR THREE: AMERICANISM

Few organizations stack up to The American Legion's love of country. The Legion is the nation's foremost authority on U.S. flag display, education and protection. The Legion celebrates Americanism through wholesome activities for young people, voter registration drives, citizenship programs, educational opportunities and patriotic observances.

U.S. FLAG PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

The American Legion is the nation's leading supporter of a constitutional amendment to protect the U.S. flag from desecration. Since a 5-4 Supreme Court decision in 1989 defined flag burning as free speech, The American Legion has lobbied alongside members of Congress, the Citizens Flag Alliance and the majority of the American people to return to them the right to enact flag-protection laws. The Legion is also the nation's foremost authority on proper disposal of unserviceable U.S. flags.

www.legion.org/flag

WHY I BELONG

"Our post sponsors a baseball team, Boy Scout troop, attendees to Boys State, and school athletic and oratorical awards programs."

Tony Nardi, Wisconsin Post 10

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Each year, more than 100,000 young athletes compete for approximately 5,000 volunteer-coached American Legion Baseball teams nationwide.

www.legion.org/baseball

BOYS STATE/BOYS NATION

Young men from across America learn firsthand how government works through American Legion Boys State and American Legion Boys Nation. From each Boys State program, two delegates are selected to attend Boys Nation in Washington, D.C.

www.legion.org/boysnation

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

American Legion youth air-rifle teams compete throughout the country to earn a berth in the National Junior Shooting Sports Championships at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., each year.

www.legion.org/shooting

ORATORICAL COMPETITION

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program gives young people the opportunity to hone their speaking skills and learn about the U.S. Constitution. The National American Legion High School Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis awards more than \$138,000 in scholarships.

www.legion.org/oratorical

ROTC

The American Legion is actively involved in high school Junior ROTC and college ROTC programs nationwide.

www.legion.org/rotc

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

At the national, state and local levels, The American Legion provides access to dozens of scholarships and education programs. For a complete listing, visit

www.legion.org/scholarships

WHY I BELONG

"We try to observe every military holiday with a program/service and lunch or dinner, in honor of our veterans and military personnel."

Terri Ann Christie, Vermont Post 39

VOTER PARTICIPATION

American Legion posts conduct get-out-the-vote drives, serve as polling places, political debate venues and forums during campaigns.

www.legion.org/vote

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

American Legion posts nationwide sponsor more than 2,500 Scouting units and provide thousands of dollars in scholarships. The Legion offers a national scholarship for Eagle Scout of the Year and the Square Knot Award for Legionnaires who work diligently for the Scouting programs in their communities.

www.legion.org/scouting

LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Opportunities to attend college should not be out of reach of children left behind because a parent died on active duty. This is why The American Legion established The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which provides funds for the children of military personnel who lost their lives on duty after 9/11.

www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy

LEGION RIDERS

The Legion Riders, with more than 1,200 chapters, have raised over \$2.2 million for the Legacy Scholarship fund. The Riders also perform a number of services for Legion-supported causes and provide support at military funerals.

www.legion.org/riders



Photo by James V. Carroll



PILLAR 4: CHILDREN & YOUTH

The American Legion's Children & Youth pillar is guided by three main objectives: strengthen the family unit, support organizations that help children in need and provide communities with well-rounded programs to provide hope and opportunity for young people facing difficult challenges.

WHY I BELONG

"What I love about my post is the love and togetherness that The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and ladies Auxiliary members do for our community and each other."

Juanita B. Reaves, Pennsylvania Post 89

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Established during Operation Desert Storm, this program connects American Legion members with families struggling at home when a loved one is called to military duty. The program takes many shapes. Legion volunteers provide child-care services, yard work, car repairs or other forms of personal help. A dedicated hotline is available for families looking for assistance.

www.legion.org/fsn

(800) 504-4098

TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The American Legion provides temporary cash grants to needy families of veterans and military personnel with minor children at home.

www.legion.org/financialassistance

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION

Non-profit organizations that reach out to help young people in need are supported through American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants.

www.legion.org/childwelfare

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

SOCIAL ISSUES

The American Legion opposes attempts to weaken U.S. laws governing the production and distribution of pornographic materials and takes a zero-tolerance stance on sexual exploitation of children. The Legion also works with local programs, law-enforcement officials and schools to prevent substance abuse among young people in their communities. Other issues of Legion concern include Halloween safety, suicide prevention, support for children of deployed troops, and control over excessive use of violence in the entertainment media.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

With some 850,000 members and 9,500 units across the U.S., the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military and their families, both at home and abroad.

www.alaforveterans.org

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Open to male descendants of veteran parents or grandparents from any of the Legion eligibility dates, membership in the Sons exceeds 355,000 nationwide and with approximately 5,900 squadrons. The Sons participate in all Legion programs including Children & Youth, Americanism, and Veterans Rehabilitation.

www.sal.legion.org

Benefits of Legion Membership



AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

Members of The American Legion receive a free subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*, the largest veterans magazine in the nation. Every month, the magazine is loaded with interesting feature stories, interviews, graphics, photos, advertisements and illustrations of interest to Legionnaires.

www.legion.org/magazine

AMERICAN LEGION ONLINE UPDATE

Members are automatically invited to receive the weekly American Legion Online Update e-newsletter, which delivers a comprehensive portfolio of stories, photos, videos and other material straight to their computers. The Online Update also has strong Facebook and Twitter presences.

MYLEGION.ORG SOCIAL NETWORK

A social network just for Legionnaires is available through mylegion.org. The network is built for veterans who want to communicate better with each other and with their posts. It offers a variety of services, including membership administration tools.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Members stay up to date on congressional action related to American Legion resolutions and programs. Frequent legislative alerts, information about how to contact the media and elected officials, and much more, including an e-newsletter, are available.

www.legion.org/legislative

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Membership in The American Legion means discounts on a variety of products and services. Member discounts are available through participating businesses in automobile rental, home services, financial and insurance, medical, moving and relocation, travel and other industries.

www.legion.org/benefits

FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES

The American Legion and USAA have teamed up to connect the nation's largest veterans service organization with the nation's top-ranked insurance and financial services company. Legion members now have access to the full range of financial and insurance services and a dedicated credit card. For every USAA membership originating through the Legion-USAA web site (www.usaa.com/legion) or a special toll-free phone line – (877) 699-2654 – Legion programs receive assistance.

AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM SALES

Members of The American Legion family are always invited to review the Emblem Sales catalog for the latest in patriotic merchandise, American-made flags, and apparel. A catalog of products is shipped to members or they can visit Emblem Sales online anytime to safely place their orders.

www.emblem.legion.org

The American Legion Membership Application

(Name) _____ (Phone) _____

(Mailing Address) _____ (Date) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____ (Post #) _____

(Membership ID# former member) _____ (Email Address) _____ (Dues) _____

Please check appropriate eligibility dates and branch of service below

- Aug 2, 1990 – Present
- Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990
- Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984
- Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975
- June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955
- Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946
- April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918
- U.S. Army
- U.S. Navy
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Marines
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Merchant Marines 12/7/41 – 12/31/46 (only eligibility)



I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.

Signature of applicant

Name of recruiter

30-009 (2011)

Receipt of Dues

(Please Print)



From _____

\$ _____ for 20 ____ Post # _____

Recruiter's Name _____


Recruiter's Signature _____

Recruiter's Phone # _____



THE AMERICAN LEGION
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206
1-800-433-3318

 www.legion.org

Who to contact: