

EVERGREEN PARK POST 0854: "THE HOSPITALITY
POST"



The American Legion Family

THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 0854

"The Hospitality Post"

9707 South Kedzie Ave

Evergreen Park, Illinois 60805

708.422.9513

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

Commander	Chuck McKeating	Sr Vice Commander	Bruce Petersen
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Adjutant	Rick Mitchell	Service Officer	Maria Scruggs
Sgt at Arms/Historian	Richard Venckus	SAL Commander	Ed Isbell
Legion Riders Director	DISBANDED		

COMMANDER:CHUCK MCKEATING

As I was perusing over some Legion material to get some ideas as what to put in my first Commander's newsletter, it came to me that going back to the beginning would or could be my starting point. The beginning, in this case, of the American Legion!

In brief the American Legion was founded March 15 - 17, 1919, by members of the American Expeditionary Forces still stationed in Europe and awaiting passage home. Their experiences and what was called the "war to end all wars" would shape an enduring agenda for the nation's largest organization of U.S. military veterans.

Many of the Legion's founders voluntarily drilled in civilian - military camps before the United States entered the first world war. Trained in the "Preparedness Movement", several future legion founders were commissioned as officers when the United States entered the war and discovered first hand the nation's deficiencies in defense, citizenship, and education. Soon after the war's end, they realized how poorly prepared the nation was to assist disabled and unemployed veterans who faced uncertain futures in their communities, states and the nation after discharge.

The American Legion's emergence and the rise to prominence was based on a mission to

strengthen the nation, veteran or not, through programs, services and advocacy that have helped millions for over a century.

The American Legion built its legacy with a vision to make the nation prouder, stronger, smarter and more respectful of those who have sacrificed some or all in defense of the nation.

Let us always remember our association in this organization is to be held in esteem, something to be treasured and honored.

Following the four pillars of the American Legion, the road map set for us by our early comrades.

We cannot and will not fail them or us. Thank you.

SR VICE COMMANDER-BRUCE PETERSEN

In the Spring of 1936, some students at Princeton University attempted to form an organization called "The Veterans of Future Wars". They sought Vet's benefits in anticipation of any upcoming wars - even going so far as establishing the Future Gold Star Mothers of future veterans, whose unborn sons would rest in honor in the future. The American Legion declined to do more than laugh along with the college students. A downstate Post in Illinois even prepared a store front display of supplies for these "future vets" - diapers and kiddie cars.

By 1945, they were to become American vets, with at least eight of the former students serving as officers during WWII.

In the years since, innumerable men and women have taken the oath to serve. The citizen soldier became the American standard of Duty, Sacrifice, and Service.

While our numbers decline, we commit ourselves to the four pillars - Veteran's Affairs, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Maintain your membership - submit your 2027 dues soon.

Observe November 11th as Veteran's Day and fly your flag.

FINANCE OFFICER-MARIA SCRUGGS

Gather Around the Table: Upcoming Community Events at Post 854

As the cooler months approach, nothing brings our community together quite like good food, great company, and shared tradition. We are excited to announce two fantastic family-friendly events coming up at American Legion Post 854: our annual Community Spaghetti Dinner and the beloved Breakfast with Santa!

Whether you are looking for a hearty night out or a festive morning with the family, these gatherings are the perfect way to connect with friends and neighbors while supporting our local programs and veteran initiatives.

Community Spaghetti Dinner: A Night of Good Food & Fellowship

Take a night off from cooking and join us for a classic, homemade Italian feast. It's an evening dedicated to warm comfort food, friendly faces, and community camaraderie.

- When: October 16 | 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM]
- Where: American Legion Post 854 Banquet Hall
- Tickets: \$12 Adults | \$6 Children under 12 and seniors over 65 | Free for kids under 5.

Bring your family, invite your friends, and help fill the hall for a relaxing, delicious evening. Carry-out options will also be available for those on the run!

Breakfast with Santa: Holiday Cheer for the Entire Family

Kick off the holiday season with a magical morning for the little ones! Santa Claus is taking a break from the North Pole to share pancakes, listen to holiday wish lists, and spread festive cheer.

- When: December 13 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Where: American Legion Post 854 Banquet Hall
- Highlights:
 - Meet & Greet with Santa: Bring your cameras—every child will have the opportunity to sit with Santa for photos!
 - Holiday Fun: Festive coloring stations and holiday music throughout the morning.
- Tickets: \$12 Adults | \$6 Children under 12 and seniors over 65 | Free for kids under 5.

Get Your Tickets Today!

- Online: Visit our website at americanlegion854.org
- In Person: Stop by the Post bar during regular hours

We look forward to breaking bread with you this season!

SERVICE OFFICER-MARIA SCRUGGS

The Living Story of Veterans Day

Every November 11th, our community gathers to applaud local veterans, wave flags, and share a moment of gratitude. While Memorial Day asks us to mourn those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service, Veterans Day celebrates all living men and women who wore the uniform.

Yet behind the annual parades and speeches lies a deeper history: the holiday itself was shaped alongside a long, determined fight to secure the rights, healthcare, and economic dignity that returning service members were promised.

The Broken Promises of 1918

The holiday's origins date back to November 11, 1918—the “eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month”—when an armistice ended the fighting in World War I. Originally commemorated as Armistice Day to celebrate international peace, returning soldiers faced a reality far from peaceful.

During the Great Depression, thousands of impoverished World War I veterans marched on Washington, D.C., as the “Bonus Army,” demanding early redemption of service certificates they had been promised for their sacrifice. Instead of aid, they faced eviction by federal troops. The tragedy made one truth undeniable: a nation cannot offer parades while ignoring the tangible, everyday needs of its veterans.

From Armistice to Action: The G.I. Bill

Determined to correct that injustice as World War II neared its end, veterans' advocates mobilized. In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (the G.I. Bill). Rather than hollow bonuses, this legislation provided direct paths back into civilian life:

Education: Tuition support and stipends that sent millions of service members to college and vocational training.

Homeownership: Low-cost VA home loans that helped build the modern middle class.

Healthcare: Broad expansions to medical support and veteran rehabilitation services.

A decade later, in 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially replaced “Armistice” with Veterans Day, transforming the observance from a commemoration of one European treaty into a salute to veterans of all generations.

Continuing the Covenant in Our Community

The evolution of veterans' support didn't stop in the 1950s. Decades of persistence by Vietnam veterans expanded care for illnesses linked to Agent Orange. More recently, post-9/11 veterans championed the 2022 PACT Act, securing vital healthcare for service members exposed to toxic burn pits.

This ongoing journey reminds us that honoring our veterans isn't a once-a-year event—it is a year-round community responsibility.

Ways You Can Support Local Veterans This Month:

Connect Veterans to Benefits: Many service members are unaware of recent expansions under the PACT Act or local assistance programs. Point veterans and their families toward local service officers and VA liaisons.

Volunteer Locally: Reach out to local veterans' posts,

ivic organizations, or transitional housing groups to see where a helping hand or meal prep is needed.

Listen to Their Stories: Take an hour to sit down with a veteran in your neighborhood, family, or senior center.

Veterans Day celebrates courage in uniform, but our true strength as a community lies in honoring the promises made to our service members every day of the year.

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COLOR GUARD: LEN WANTROBA

Hello everyone,

Legion Member Len Wantroba has stepped up and is trying to keep the color guard together. Thank you Len! He cannot do this alone. He needs YOUR help! Do you still remember how to march? If so, the Color Guard needs you and your particular talent.

Our Color Guard represents our Post as honorably as is possible. It is the face of our Post people most remember long after the particular ceremony is done.

It's not unusual for the Color Guard to earn exemplary reviews and praise from those in attendance.

Whether you are a male or a female Veteran, please consider becoming a part of this team.

Younger Veterans please join this vital group. You are our future.

YOUR POST NEEDS YOU TO STEP UP!

CHAPLAIN: CHUCK MCKEATING

From the Chaplain's Corner -

A prayer for Peace -

O God, we pray for countries experiencing the



turmoil of conflict and political instability. We ask for peace to be restored.

Please grant wisdom and integrity to world leaders so that they will work for the good of the people they govern and serve. We pray that citizens everywhere would have their rights preserved, so they can live peacefully, free from fear.

Amen

BLUE CAP CORNER

When we look at our membership numbers, a troubling trend is clear-and it demands our immediate attention.

From last year to this year, we lost 59 members. Fifty-nine!

If this decline continues, it may not be long before we are unable to maintain our Post. Too many members are NOT involved in Post activities and may not realize how serious this problem has become.

Many of us know veterans who are eligible to join the American Legion, but we have not taken the simple step of inviting them.

Please help us reverse this trend. Talk to veterans you know, invite them to attend a meeting, a Post activity, and ask them to become members.

The future of our Post depends on all of us. Working together, we can rebuild our membership and keep our Post strong for years to come.

HAPPENINGS:

10/05/2026-SAL Meeting, 1830 hours
 10/05/2026-Trivia Night, 1830 hours
 10/11/2026-Chili Cookoff, during the Bears - Packers game
 10/12/2026-Columbus Day
 10/13/2026-Finance Meeting, 1800 hours
 10/13/2026-Executive Board, 1830 hours
 10/16/2026-Spaghetti Dinner, 1800 till 2100 hours
 10/17/2026-Old Gold, Front Bar, 2000 till 2300 hours

10/20/2026-General Meeting, 1930 hours
 10/24(2024-Smokin' Joe, Karaoke, 2000 till 2300 hours
 10/27/2026-Navy Day
 10/30(2026-Trunk or Treat, 1700 till 2100 hours
 10/31/2026-Halloween
 11-01-2026-Daylight Savings time
 11/02/2026-SAL Meeting, 1830 hours
 11/03/2026-Election Day
 11/10/2026-Finance Meeting, 1800 hours
 11/10/2026-Executive Board, 1830 hours
 11/17/2026-General Meeting, 1930 hours
 11/26/2026-Thanksgiving
 11/27/2026-Black Friday
 12/07/2026-SAL Meeting, 1830 hours
 12/08/2026-Finance Meeting, 1800 hours
 12/08/2026-Executive Board, 1830 hours
 12/15/2026-General Meeting, 1930 hours
 12/24/2026-Christmas Eve
 12/25/2026-Christmas Day
 12/31/2026-New Year's Eve

SERGEANT AT ARMS-R.VENCKUS

Why Did US Forces Bury Osama Bin Laden's Body at Sea?

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of 9/11...the day America was attacked by radical Islamists. New York City itself was the central target...The tallest skyscrapers in the world...the 110 story Twin Towers were hit by two commercial airliners that had been hijacked by terrorists intent on killing as many Americans as possible. Nearly 3,000 Americans died including hundreds of NYC police and firemen attempting to save citizens trapped in the Twin Towers.

On May 2, 2011, the United States military killed and buried Osama Bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader behind the 9/11 attacks. US Special Operations Seal Team Six found him during a military raid on the in compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where he and some of his family were hiding out. After identifying his body, a special crew aboard the USS Carl Vinson buried him in the northern Arabian Sea the same day.

The U.S. took political, religious, and practical actors into consideration when deciding how to bury Bin Laden's body. There was concern that it

f would make a grave on land a shrine for his followers. There was a need to observe Islamic funeral practices, including the custom of burying a body as it looked at the time of his death, when photos were taken. Should the U.S. take photos or provide some sort of visual proof that he was truly dead?

The U.S. officials did fear that his grave would become an Islamic shrine. When Bin Laden was found and killed, he was 54, the U.S. government's explanation for why it didn't bury him in the ground were a little misleading; articles quoted American officials on and off the record who said that the U.S. didn't want him to have a physical grave because it might be desecrated or many countries...unnamed... had declined to accept his body. Articles speculated that the country was Saudi Arabia, where Bin Laden was born.

"I'm not sure where this rumor comes from, but I would not give it much credence," says Ambassador Akbar Ahmed, Chair of Islamic Studies in Pakistan; he was a former Pakistani High Commissioner to the U.K. and Ireland.

"The Saudis are inclined towards a form of Islam called Wahhabism," he says, which rejects shrines of prominent people. The fact that Saudi Arabia didn't want his grave to become a shrine for pilgrimages, combined with the fact that Bin Laden was extremely critical of Saudi Arabia, makes Ahmed think that if the U.S. asked a country to receive Bin Laden's body," they asked out of ignorance."

Burying Bin Laden's body in northwest Pakistan, where Special Forces killed him, wouldn't be ideal from a U.S. perspective either, since shrines are also not looked upon positively in that region, as well; nor is the U.S. looked upon very positively, neither. To avoid Bin Laden's grave becoming an important symbol to his followers, the U.S. made the decision to bury him at sea; which deviates from the way most Muslim burials occur. However, U.S. officials insisted it took steps to bury him according to Islamic funeral practices.

Bin Laden's body was cleaned, wrapped, and buried in a small funeral ceremony. At the White House press briefing on Osama Bin Laden's

killing and burial, John Brennan - then assistant to the president for homeland security - said U.S. officials had "consulted the appropriate specialists and experts" so that "the burial of Bin Laden's remains was done in strict conformations and practices." This involved washing Bin Laden's body, wrapping him in white cloth, saying a ritual prayer with the aid of an Arabic translator within hours of his death.

Muslim leaders and scholars had varying opinions on the appropriateness of burying him at sea. Some argued that sea burials should only happen at sea if that's where his death occurred; otherwise, the body should be buried in the ground with the head pointed towards Mecca, the birthplace of the prophet Mohammad. Other scholars made it a practical outcome that makes allowances for special circumstances and that sea burial was permissible given bin Laden's notoriety and the concern about it becoming a shrine.

Although the funeral service for Bin Laden took place aboard a large Navy aircraft carrier with thousands of crew members, only a small group of fewer than a dozen of the leaders of the Carl Vinson knew that the burial was even happening, according to military emails the Department of Defense released in response to a Freedom of Information lawsuit.

When the U.S. announced Bin Laden's death, there was a question of whether to release photos of his body - which officials claim could result in counter conspiracy theories that Bin Laden was still alive. In an interview on 60 Minutes on CBS, President Obama explained why he ordered no photos of Bin Laden's dead body released.

"It's important for us to make sure that very graphic photos of somebody who was shot in the head are not floating around as an incitement or as a propaganda tool," he said. "That's not who we are. We don't trot this stuff out as trophies."

This being the 25th Anniversary of 9/11, most all of us can remember with exacting specificity the details of where we were and what our reactions were. Regardless, we can all take a moment of silence in thoughtful prayer when that fateful day arrives.

ADJUTANT-RICK MITCHELL

I really do not have much to say at this time, but here's the latest. The Post 854 Legion Riders have disbanded for now because of lack of members. If we have more people wanting to start again we will try. We did accomplish a great deal and was able to donate \$5000.00 to the update of our Eternal Flame for our Post.

After double checking with the Manteno Veterans Home, our next trip will be October 17th. We will gather at the Post around 12 P.M. and leave by 12:30 P.M. I do not know at this time if we will be able to get the bus for the trip. I will update you when I can. Please come out and join us for the Bingo with the Vets. They really look forward for us being there. They don't get the chance to enjoy the comradeship very often and it really makes their day. It can be quite for felling for those volunteers that can show up and help also.

I must apologize for not doing more at the Post, but because of my health issues, I do what I can and will always fight for the rights of our Vets and our integrity of our Post. We may all be a dying breed of patriots that still be leaves in our great Nation and its principals of justice and the American way of life. Our Nation needs us more than ever to stand united in its future.

May God bless us all and please be safe.

MEMBERSHIP

We are slowly progressing with our renewals. Some of you fail to see the importance of renewing as soon as you get your renewal notice. Without members, we won't have an American Legion. We need you to be concerned about renewing your membership. If you have not renewed, PLEASE RENEW TODAY!!!

E-MAIL ADDRESS`

Post 0854 would like to enter the 21st Century and we would like to send our newsletter to you via email. If you would like to receive a FUTURE newsletter simply send an email to:

Postmanager@americanlegion854.org

You can view our web-address at:

americanlegion854.org

WORLD WAR II HISTORY

October

Oct. 7, 1940 – German troops enter Romania: Germany increased its military presence in southeastern Europe.

Oct. 23–24, 1942 – Second Battle of El Alamein begins: British forces under Gen. Bernard Montgomery attacked Axis forces led by Erwin Rommel in Egypt. The eventual Allied victory was a major turning point in North Africa.

Oct. 23–26, 1944 – Battle of Leyte Gulf: U.S. and Allied forces fought the Japanese Navy around the Philippines. It is generally regarded as the largest naval battle of World War II.

Oct. 20, 1944 – MacArthur returns to the Philippines: Gen. Douglas MacArthur landed on Leyte, fulfilling his famous promise, "I shall return."

November

Nov. 8, 1942 – Operation Torch: American and British forces landed in French North Africa, opening another major front against Axis forces.

Nov. 12–15, 1942 – Naval Battle of Guadalcanal: A series of fierce naval and air engagements prevented Japan from reinforcing Guadalcanal effectively.

Nov. 19, 1942 – Soviet Operation Uranus begins: Soviet forces launched a huge counteroffensive around Stalingrad, eventually surrounding the German Sixth Army.

Nov. 20–23, 1943 – Battle of Tarawa: U.S. Marines assaulted the heavily fortified Japanese-held island of Betio in the Gilbert Islands. More than 1,000 Americans were killed in just 76 hours.

Nov. 24, 1944 – B-29 raids on Tokyo: American B-29 Superfortress bombers conducted a major bombing mission against Tokyo from bases in the Mariana Islands.

December

Dec. 7, 1941 – Attack on Pearl Harbor: Japan attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaii. More than 2,400 Americans were killed, and the United States entered World War II.

Dec. 8, 1941 – U.S. declares war on Japan: President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed Congress following what he called "*a date which will live in infamy.*"

Dec. 11, 1941 – Germany and Italy declare war on the United States: The United States was now formally at war with the major Axis powers.

Dec. 16, 1944 – Battle of the Bulge begins: Germany launched its last major offensive in Western Europe through the Ardennes. It became the largest and bloodiest single battle fought by the United States during WWII.

Dec. 22, 1944 – Bastogne surrender demand: Surrounded German forces demanded the surrender of American troops at Bastogne. Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe famously replied: **“NUTS!”**

Dec. 26, 1944 – Bastogne relieved: Elements of Gen. George S. Patton’s Third Army broke through to the surrounded American defenders.

REQUEST

If a member wishes to attend a meeting, we may be able to get a ride for you. If you call the Post, it is possible to

arrange transportation for you. Please call 708-422-9513.

NOTICE

Unfortunately, the calendars are not quite as complete as we would have liked. Our Post Manager was kind enough to provide the Editor with a complete listing, but somehow, that list has managed to disappear into the mysterious black hole where important paperwork often goes.

To make matters worse, the Editor was unable to reach the Post Manager to request another copy. Apparently, the calendar gods were not on our side this month.

We apologize for the incomplete calendars and any confusion they may cause. We promise we're not trying to keep upcoming events a secret!



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Director
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www.OnceandAlways.org

a proud tradition & activity supporting Marine units and its Veterans in the Chicagoland area

The “Once & Always” continuing to march the veterans’ agenda forward for those who proudly served. In the Air, on Land and C’ ya on the beachhead. charlie-mike out.

Semper Fidelis
Chicago MARINES






Birthday Gift Coupon

Your birthday during the month? Congratulations...Enjoy a drink on us!

Have a valid paid Membership card and a photo ID with your birthdate, show it to our Bartender along with this coupon, and the drink is yours!

The American Legion Post 854
“The Hospitality Post”
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The “Hospitality Post” newsletter is the official publication of Evergreen Park Post #0854 of The American Legion. It is published quarterly and distributed by email to all Post members, Legion Riders, and SAL Members who currently have an updated email address.
Jim Quintavalle, Editor

Website Address: AmericanLegion854.org
E-Mail Address: Postmanager@americanlegion854.org



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OCTOBER 2026

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