



THE AMERICAN LEGION

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



WWW.LEGION.ORG



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Why We Belong



The American Legion was chartered in 1919 by Congress as a patriotic, war-time veterans organization and has since grown to be the nation's largest wartime organization founded on the values, contributions and sacrifices of those who answered the country's call to arms. We continue to reach out into over 14,000 communities today to still serve America by standing true to the four principles, or pillars, of this organization:

National Security

The American Legion believes that freedom is not free; it must be defended by the very best military fighting force in the world, able to respond at home and across the globe to protect America's interests.

We continually seek improvements in quality of life issues – pay, housing and medical care – to ensure that the government lives up to its commitment to our entire military family, which includes active military, retirees, National Guard and Reserves. Improvements in these quality of life issues enhance recruiting and retention of a quality and fully manned force.



Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

The American Legion serves military veterans in a variety of ways. Our local posts provide service officers to assist veterans and their family members in filing benefits claims. If needed, they can help to navigate the maze of regulations and laws while representing veterans denied benefits to which they feel they are entitled.

The American Legion etched a permanent place in history in 1944 by ushering into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act—better known as the GI Bill. As the decades unfolded, the benefit eroded with the changing times. The American Legion and Congress worked together for more than three years to overhaul the federal veterans' education benefits package and on June 30, 2008 the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act was signed into law.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is scheduled for implementation on August 1, 2009. Our service officers will have the up to date information to provide assistance to all eligible veterans.

The American Legion continues to support mandatory funding to assure quality VA medical care and Medicare reimbursement for VA medical services.



www.mygibill.org

The American Legion also assists the Department of Defense with the Heroes to Hometowns and Wounded Warriors programs; both outreach programs assist the returning hero veterans to adjust to a normal life after honorably serving their country.

The American Legion is a very active voice in the Employment and Small Businesses Task Force that assists veterans, transitioning from active duty to a new career field, to acquire skills and small business loans.

Children and Youth

President Lincoln coined the phrase, “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, for his widow and his orphan,” which encapsulates the essence of The American Legion’s work on behalf of America’s children. American Legion posts worldwide mentor, counsel, guide, teach and assist young people with their daily lives as well as provide numerous scholarships to help secure their future.

The family is the cornerstone of American society. However, modern society has placed demands on the family that didn't exist in years past, demands that can deteriorate family strength and unity.



For more than 85 years The American Legion at all levels has focused their time, talents and moneys on advocating for America's children, mentoring them as they grow to be strong, healthy adults.

Americanism

The founders of The American Legion, having faced the enemy on foreign soil, had a tremendous appreciation for the America they left behind, the America that too many of their "comrades" died defending. They realized that exercising the responsibilities of citizenship and enhancing loyalty to America were key ingredients in preserving what they fought for.

Our forefathers laid the foundation for a civilization that is the envy of the world. It has brought us greater spiritual and material wealth than any people has ever known. This is our heritage. The many Americanism programs of The American Legion are designed to acknowledge and preserve that heritage, recognizing all of the inalienable rights of man and preparing each generation to carry on true American values through such programs as flag education, Boy Scouts of America, American Legion Baseball, American Legion Boys State and Nation and The American Legion Oratorical Contest.

The following pages elaborate on the four pillars of The American Legion. We hope that after you read these you will see why we belong and you will come to know "Why You Should Belong" to The American Legion.





Troop Support Services

As the War on Terrorism continues, the number of active-duty, National Guard and Reserve units deployed will continue to rise. Many families unaccustomed to long separations will suddenly find themselves coping with an array of small problems that can become overwhelming.



We know from experience just how valuable a helping hand can be when it seems there is nowhere to turn.

Through Troop Support Services (TS2) The American Legion is there to assist. The TS2 program incorporates the Family Support Network, Reconnect and the Welcome Home brochure into one convenient package that serves as a resource guide for the service member being deployed and the family members left at home.

For more information call 800-504-4098.

Heroes to Hometowns

“Heroes to Hometowns” is a transition program for severely injured service members returning home from OEF/OIF. The “Heroes to Hometowns” program establishes a support network and coordinates resources for severely injured service members.

“Heroes to Hometowns” can provide a welcome home celebration, housing assistance, home and vehicle adaptation, government claims assistance, childcare, counseling, education assistance and family support.

For more information call 202-631-9924.





American Legion Racing

Join in the fun and excitement as The American Legion competes in the American Speed Association (ASA) series. Become a member and the #76 Freedom Car will be YOUR car. Imagine watching a car that you help to sponsor speeding across the finish line powered by the enthusiasm of 4,000,000 American Legion Family members.



Through our unique sponsorship with Team Johnson Motorsports, The American Legion's name is in front of over 75 million race fans with national television, radio and print exposure. Now is the time for every member of The American Legion to stand up and let our great nation know who The American Legion is and to salute our service men and women around the world by cheering on The American Legion's #76 Freedom Car.



**For more information visit www.legionracing.org
or e-mail freedomcar@legion.org**

The American Legion Riders

Today there are over one thousand American Legion Rider groups, organized by posts, districts or departments, in support of American Legion programs in 49 states and Germany and Okinawa. One of the fastest growing and most highly visible of the many activities offered by our posts, The American Legion Riders are as diverse as the programs that they support.





The American Legion Riders are members of The American Legion Family, including members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. So if you ride a motorcycle and are a Legion member, an Auxiliary member, or member of the Sons you are also eligible for membership in the Riders.



Contact a Riders group in your community or e-mail The American Legion Riders at legionriders@legion.org or visit www.legion.org.

National Emergency Fund

The National Emergency Fund (NEF), started in 1989 after Hurricane Hugo, is another way that The American Legion is actively involved in meeting the needs of both the community and individual American Legion family members.

Any current year paid member of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion is eligible to apply for temporary financial relief for losses sustained in a declared natural disaster.



Since October 1989, the NEF has provided more than \$7,000,000 in direct financial assistance to Legion family members and posts. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast area in 2005, more than \$2,000,000 was granted.

The NEF has kept posts from closing and enabled Legion family members to rebuild their homes and their lives.

All contributions made to the NEF are deposited in a special account and are used exclusively to meet out members' most urgent needs. Not one single contribution dollar is spent on fund raising, administrative costs or fulfillment.

For more information visit www.legion.org.



Americanism

Community and youth-oriented programs of The American Legion further a strong sense of patriotism and loyalty.

American Legion Baseball. One of our country's best known and most respected youth athletic programs, American Legion Baseball has been the training ground for many Major League stars. Each year, 90,000 athletes experience the benefits of good sportsmanship and team play.



Boys State/Boys Nation. American Legion posts select outstanding high school students for Boys State/Boys Nation every year. During the week long program participants receive instruction in citizenship and experience first-hand how their state and federal governments function.

High School Oratorical Competitions. High school students vie for college scholarships awarded by The American Legion by demonstrating their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution in public speaking contests at local, state and national levels.

Scouting Sponsorship. Seventy thousand young people are served each year through more than 2,700 post-sponsored Boy Scouts of America units. Four recipients are selected annually for The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year college scholarship.

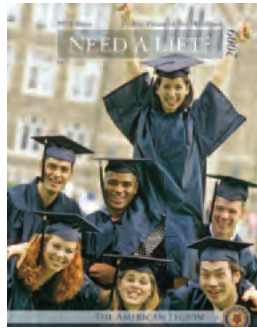


Flag Education. Through this program, our youth are taught flag etiquette and appreciation for the flag of the United States.





Scholarship Assistance. *Need a Lift?* is The American Legion's annual publication for students on the "hows and wheres" of obtaining college financial aid. The booklet is distributed nationally to public and private high schools. In addition, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship helps students who are direct descendants of U.S. wartime veterans. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship assists the children of America's military, to include the Guard and Reserve, who have died on active duty since September 11, 2001.



Junior Shooting Sports. The American Legion recognizes that guns are a part of sports and recreation in our society and strives to teach youngsters the proper use of firearms before accidents occur. Many local posts sponsor Junior Shooting clubs, which provide training in gun safety and marksmanship for junior shooters through the use of air rifles. The American Legion hosts a national air rifle tournament that draws more than 1,400 contestants annually.



Children & Youth

The American Legion has been a strong advocate for the children and youth of our nation since our founding in 1919. To date there exists no area of child welfare that has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion.

Children's Miracle Network. The American Legion helps Children's Miracle Network raise critically needed funds for 170 children's hospitals, which treat 17 million children annually in the United States and Canada. These hospitals treat children with all types of afflictions and injuries, rendering service based on need, not the ability to pay.



Ronald McDonald House Charities. The Ronald McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program, adopted by The American Legion, generates funds to help offset the costs associated with a family's stay while their child is receiving specialized treatment.

Family Support Network. In support of the War on Terrorism, National Guard and Reserve units have been activated in record numbers. Their families often find themselves unable to meet normal monthly household obligations. The American Legion maintains a nationwide toll-free telephone number, 1-800-504-4098, for service personnel and their families to call for assistance, or they may e-mail a request to familysupport@legion.org.

Operation: Military Kids. When Guard and Reserve parents are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs and lack the community support systems associated with active military installations. The American Legion, in cooperation with state and county Cooperative Extension offices, seeks to reach out to military youth before, during, and after their parents deploy to create a support network for these military kids.



Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA).

Through Temporary Financial Assistance, a post may call upon the National Headquarters for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs (shelter, food, utilities, medical) of veterans' children when the parents are unable to do so. Funds can be granted over a temporary period to eligible children when it has been determined that the child is in need and that sources are either unavailable, or inadequate. See also, Troop Support Services (TS2), described earlier in this brochure.





Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

The American Legion is an organization of veterans serving other veterans, their widows and widowers, and their children. To this end, The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly the Veterans Administration), is universally recognized as the originator of the G.I. Bill of Rights, and is constantly working to protect and preserve the rights and benefits veterans earned through service to their country.

Board of Veterans Appeals. The American Legion operates an Appeals Unit at the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, DC, that specializes in representation to veterans and claimants seeking satisfactory resolution of benefit claim determinations made by VA regional offices or VA medical centers.

National Field Services. To insure that veterans receive the quality of medical care they deserve and expect, The American Legion's National Field Services conducts on-site field visits to individual VA medical centers and to network offices. The information and data collected is used to support VA&R activities in both congressional testimony and personal contacts with members of Congress.

Persian Gulf Task Force. The American Legion's Persian Gulf Task Force was created out of concern for America's newest generation of wartime veterans, providing service to these veterans, their families and their advocates. The Task Force has undertaken rigorous clinical studies, Freedom of Information Act requests, site visits to VA and DoD Medical Centers, and VA regional Offices and the creation of an Internet site for Gulf War veterans in need of assistance. All this work is geared to help Gulf War veterans, in particular those who suffer with Gulf War illnesses.

For more information visit www.oefoif.va.gov.



Legislative

The American Legion is among those organizations that wield the greatest influence on the nation's legislative system. Through strong grass-roots lobbying and a dedicated professional staff, The American Legion's "official voice" in the Halls of Congress continues to advance the legislative mandates for veterans and their families.



National Security

The American Legion has National Security policies in the areas of Aerospace, Energy, Merchant Marine, Defense Civil Preparedness, Law and Order, and Military and Naval Affairs. Implementation of these policies is accomplished through legislative action and coordination with the Department of Defense, military services and other agencies.

Junior Law Cadet Program. Many Legion posts, working in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, have established programs to introduce high school students to law enforcement and to establish cadet camps.

ROTC Recognition Programs. Posts award American Legion ROTC Military Excellence and Scholastic Excellence Medals to outstanding high school and college ROTC students.

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award Programs. Presented annually at American Legion post, state, regional and national levels to recognize law enforcement officers for extraordinary performance to include superior community service.

Blood Donor Awards. Donating more blood than any other organization, The American Legion recognizes American Legion departments for their efforts in donating this "gift of life."





Employment and Economics

The American Legion has always been involved in issues that affect veterans economically. These issues include employment, job training, veterans preference, housing, small business and vocational rehabilitation. The National Economic Commission is responsible for ensuring that America's veterans have an opportunity to provide, with dignity and honor, the economic necessities of life for themselves and their families. The Commission lobbies Congress and works closely with many federal agencies. It also works very closely with private sector organizations such as the National Organization on Disability, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, the Veterans Organizations Homeless Council, and the Senior Corps of Retired Executives.



The American Legion Magazine

As a Legion member you receive a yearly subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*. This colorful monthly publication is packed full of general-interest features and updates on veterans benefits to keep you informed of changes that affect you as a veteran.



The Dispatch. A monthly, tabloid-style publication is issued to all 14,500 posts and the organization's leaders. *The American Legion Dispatch* focuses on current issues that are important to all veterans and their families. Personal subscriptions can be had for \$15 a year.

For more information call 317-630-1352.



Member Benefits

To learn more about The American Legion member benefits please call 1-800-433-3318 or visit www.legion.org.

Financial Benefits

First National Bank Omaha is proud to offer a variety of financial services to American Legion members. Members can choose from a variety of competitive products that are backed by First National Bank Omaha's outstanding customer service from the American Legion Visa Card to Certificates of Deposit and Money Market accounts.



**First National Bank
Omaha**

American Legion Certificates of Deposit offer a wide variety of terms combined with outstanding rates and FDIC insurance. For current rates or to open an American Legion CD, call toll free 1-877-709-FNBO (3626).

The American Legion Money Market Savings Account gives investors the flexibility of check writing and competitive rates. First National's FDIC-insured accounts offer tiered interest rates perfect for any investor. Plus, you can use your account to deposit interest from your American Legion CD. For current rates or to open an account, call toll free 1-877-709-FNBO (3626).

The American Legion Visa Card offers a low introductory APR for the first six billing cycles on new purchases and balance transfers and has no annual fee. For more information or to apply, call toll free 1-866-LGN-VISA (1-866-546-8472) and mention American Legion offer 48019.

Receipt of Dues

(Please Print)

From _____

\$ _____ for 20____ Post # _____

Recruiter's Name _____

Recruiter's Signature _____

Recruiter's Phone # _____

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 – cessation of hostilities as determined by U.S. Government
- Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990 U.S. Army
- Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984 U.S. Navy
- Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975 U.S. Air Force
- June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955 U.S. Marines
- Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946 U.S. Coast Guard
- April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918 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 (2008)



Local Contact