



California LEGIONNAIRE



THE AMERICAN LEGION
MEDIA ALLIANCE
1st Place Publication

APRIL 2021

Official Publication of The American Legion Department of California

CALEGION.ORG

Legion observes 'Children & Youth Month' in April

By Jared Morgan
Editor
The California Legionnaire

The American Legion's connection to child welfare is deep in its roots.

In 1924, some five years after the end of World War I, The American Legion began raising money for an endowment fund that would, among other things, feed the organization's efforts to care for the orphaned children of those military men lost to combat.

The goal was \$5 million (approximately \$74 million today) and it would work to benefit The Legion's efforts in child welfare and veteran rehab equally, author Thomas A. Rumer wrote in his book, "The American Legion: An Official History 1919-1989."

An ambitious plan was developed to house these orphan children. The American Legion bought the Otter Lake Billet for orphans in Michigan, another home was opened in New Jersey and one called "Legionville" was purposed on a plot of land in Kansas deeded to the organization.

The goal quickly shifted to get these orphans into foster homes. Some 72 children were being housed in these three orphanages and another 40 were living with their mothers and receiving financial assistance, Rumer wrote.

In January 1925, The American Legion News Service reported the organization had encouraged all of its 11,000 posts to appoint child welfare officers. Enthusiasm for the movement had crept into the Congress, which was made up of many World War veterans: 55 in the House, eight in the Senate. The support reached all the way to the White House, according to an editorial published in the March 20, 1925 edition of "The American Legion Weekly."

"The President of the United States not only has endorsed the Legion's effort but has accepted the position of chairman of the honorary committee of the Endowment campaign. This campaign has just begun, and success is prospering its early efforts."

In 1928, a national director and

five area directors were appointed to the Education and Vocational Training of War Orphans Committee, while department commanders created similar committee positions, according to an October 1930 digest of National Executive Committee minutes.

Congress eventually passed legislation to help pay for the education of war orphans upon them turning 18.

By 1930, 10 states had passed legislation to provide matching grants. The American Legion also partnered with schools to offer free and discounted tuition to the students.

In 1929, there were approximately 12,455 war orphans, of which 2,075 were 18 years or older, according to the NEC's accounting at the time.

Though the organization decided it wasn't best equipped to own and manage orphanages and ultimately either closed or gave them to other organizations, The American Legion carries on in its children & youth programs today.

Article first published in the April 2020 edition of The California Legionnaire.



1st place winner Regina Molitoris

Dept. oratorical contest winners announced

The American Legion Department of California held its annual oratorical contest on March 6, with participants being awarded \$8,600 in prize money.

First place winner Regina Molitoris was awarded \$1,200 from the Department and she also received a \$5,000 prize from the National organization, which opted not to hold a national competition this year because of the pandemic.

See ORATORICAL page 8

LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Application Deadline
APRIL 15

legion.org/scholarships/legacy

Portrait of Chelsea Briggs holding the photo of her grandfather, Staff Sgt. Raymond Briggs, in Wailuku, Hawaii on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016. Briggs, whose father passed when she was 12, is a recipient of The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship. (Photo: Lucas Carter/The American Legion)

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PUBLICATION POLICY

The California Legionnaire (PP 167) is published 6 times a year in February, April, June August, October, and December by:

Mid Valley Publishing Inc.

740 N. St., Sanger CA 93657-3114

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:

The California Legionnaire
1601 7th St., Sanger, CA 93657-2801
559-638-2244

SUBMISSIONS:

- Submissions can be made via email, online and mail
- Email print articles to: editor@caLegion.org with the words "California Legionnaire" in the subject line of your email so that it will not be overlooked
 - Submissions to The California Legionnaire must be made by the 6th of the month prior to the issue month (Example: To submit material for the February issue, submissions must be received by Jan. 6)
 - Submissions to the Department website can be made at any time by visiting caLegion.org/ugc (please email the editor to let them know you've submitted online)
 - Photos should be sent at the highest resolution possible
 - Do not embed photos in a Word.doc. Send photos as email attachments with photo captions either typed in a word document or in the email body. Images that are pulled off of websites will not reproduce well, if at all. PDFs must be saved as high resolution from their original document
 - All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework and omission. We are not responsible for lost items or misplaced material
 - Please send "Change of Address" and "Deceased Notifications" to: admin@caLegion.org or mail to headquarters (See address above). To publish an obituary, please copy the editor on your email or mark letters "ATTN: California Legionnaire Editor - Obituary"

**American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation**



CWF grants funded by donations

The American Legion's Commission on Children & Youth manages a pillar of service guided by three main objectives: to strengthen the family unit, to support quality organizations that provide services for children and youth, and to provide communities with well-rounded programs that meet the physical, educational, emotional and spiritual needs of young people.

The commission works to provide hope for children who face health, safety, discipline or home-life challenges, and provides opportunities for young people to succeed.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation provides more than \$500,000 in grants each year to nonprofit organizations that work to improve the lives of young people.

These grants have aided organ-donor campaigns, supported efforts to help military children cope with deployment or the loss of a parent, and funded projects that increased public awareness of Huntington's disease, autism, Reye's syndrome, meningitis, spina bifida, diabetes, cancer and other conditions.

The Commission on Children & Youth has focused recent attention on several important national programs, including the Children's Miracle Network, Ronald McDonald

House Charities, Special Olympics, youth-suicide prevention, Halloween safety, the Family Support Network, Temporary Financial Assistance, Operation: Military Kids, and others.

The American Legion has been a staunch supporter of the children and youth of our nation since its founding in 1919.

The commitment continues today for the National Commission on Children & Youth as it seeks to improve the well-being of all children.

Every generation of veterans knows that the key to the future of a free and prosperous country is held by the children and youth of today.

The Legion strongly supports traditional family values, assistance for at-risk children, and activities that promote their healthy and wholesome development.

While there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow, our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education and training that we, as parents and citizens, provide for young people today.

More on the Child Welfare Foundation

Child Welfare Foundation

In 1952, Dr. Garland D. Murphy Jr. gave to The

American Legion a large contribution that would benefit children.

The Legion and Murphy entered into a trust agreement that established the Child Welfare Foundation, approved by the National Executive Committee on Oct. 15, 1953.

Though created by the Legion, the Child Welfare Foundation, Inc., is a separate 501(c)3 corporation.

CWF accepts funding proposals from nonprofit organizations for projects that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children.

Grants are only given to entities that help U.S. children in a large geographic area; they are not awarded for day-to-day operating expenses or special operating expenses.

In 1955, the foundation made its first three grants, totaling \$22,500, to three organizations: the Delinquency Control Institute, the National Association for Retarded Children and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

To date, more than \$17 million has been awarded to assist our nation's children.

During CWF's annual board of directors meeting in Indianapolis on Oct. 13, 2019, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation awarded \$811,282 in grants to 19 nonprofits.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2021

By Seth Reeb
Legislative Advocate
Reeb Government Relations

Department sponsors legislation to combat GI bill abuse

This year American Legion is sponsoring SB 766, Private postsecondary education, introduced by Senator Susan Eggman (D-Stockton), which would prohibit private postsecondary educational institutions from enrolling California residents if it derived less than 10 percent of its revenues from sources other than federal financial assistance. Senator Eggman's bill will help protect veterans from dishonest post-secondary institutions.

After making profound sacrifices for their nation, veterans deserve to be able to pursue a college degree

using their GI Bill.

Well-documented evidence shows that many post-secondary colleges enrich themselves from veterans' one-time, GI Title 38 benefits through misleading statements, over-charges, and fraudulent misrepresentations.

Federal law allows colleges, including for-profits, to not count the GI Title 38 benefits as federal aid, even though the money comes from federal tax dollars.

Taxpayer-funded VA and Defense Department educational benefits were not explicitly included in the 90% cap, creating a loophole that led for-profit schools to target GI Bill beneficiaries.

This issue which is known as the 90/10 rule and is used to attack veterans. This is one of the American Legion National top priorities.

Grants

Four new rounds of grants available from the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program.

This is an extension of the January non-profit and small business state relief package which had the initial first two rounds of grants.

If you applied and are on the wait list you are eligible for round 3.

Round 4 is only for non-profit cultural institutions (museums and parks only).

Round 5 will be for current waitlisted small businesses and non-profits not selected in Rounds 1, 2, or 3 and new applicants.

The 6th round will be for current waitlisted small businesses and/or non-profits not selected in Rounds 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 and new applicants.

Round 6 date have not

been released at this time.

We have provided links below to a guide on how to apply as well as the press release from the Governor's office.

Link to the Governor's press release on the COVID-19 Relief Grant Program: www.gov.ca.gov/2021/02/23/governor-newsom-signs-legislative-package-providing-urgent-relief-to-californians-experiencing-pandemic-hardship

Link to the guide for nonprofits: carelifgrant.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CRG-Nonprofits-Program-and-Application-Guide-Public-Updated-02.09.21.pdf

The importance of Grassroots advocacy to veterans

Grassroots advocacy is the process of communicating with the general public and asking them to contact their local, state or federal officials regarding a certain issue.

In contrast to direct lobbying, grassroots advocacy is often citizen-based activism. A link is provided for you to reach out to your legislator (findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov).

One way veterans can take action is by meeting your legislator and creating relationships within your communities.

Legislation is still moving through the process of being vetted by Reeb Government Relations and will be sent out to the legislative commission for support and opposition positions.



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
2021 LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA**

Read about the national organization's legislative agenda

Visit <http://bit.ly/legion-agenda-2021>



PRACTICE THE A-B-Cs OF MAGNETIC MEMBERSHIP

By Jeff Daly
2nd Vice Commander
Hollywood Post 43

Springtime in the American Legion is membership time. It's a time when posts rush to meet their numbers to get to that 100% level of achievement. A lot of us prepped and primed in military culture respond to missions. Getting to 100% is validating, but I'm going to suggest a broader mission designed to increase new

membership and retention, while bolstering the brand of our organization.

If you listen to the Tango Alpha Lima podcast, you know that we touch on a lot of subjects and issues of interest to the veteran community. One topic that we have not yet tackled is how The American Legion handles the membership drive each year.

I'm first sharing these ideas with my fellow Legionnaires of The Department of California, so we can lead.

After months of thought, I'd like to introduce a new mission:

Magnetic Membership

In broad strokes, that means we need to think about what we do, in terms of "attraction" and "retention." The change in mindset requires that the membership committees work outside of the committee and integrate with the entire organization.

I am an officer at the post and district levels and I do some things with Department and even host the podcast for National. With my level of exposure, the sum total of membership training that I see is as follows:

1. Here is your goal number and here is where you are at. We need you to close that gap and get to 100%.
2. We know that's hard, so contact Post 1000 members and get them attached to your post.

3. Retention is also important. Convince your people to renew.

Please note that I am not suggesting we abandon those tactics, because those aims have value. What I am suggesting is that these are annual efforts at putting out the fire of meeting membership goals. What Magnetic Membership does is to make that job easier, while also creating an environment conducive to a more active membership. I want us to look at a bigger picture, down a longer road.

Let's talk specifics with simple A-B-C steps to get started:

Accessibility

People need to be able to find your post and to communicate with you. If you do not take care of the basics of keeping your

contact information up to date with The American Legion, you cannot expect to be found by people using the "Find A Post" feature online. Further, it is my belief that every single post, large or small, should have at least a basic Facebook page with accurate contact information and some pictures that describe what your post is about. It's even better if you publish your events with the included calendar feature. If they can find you, they will come.

Broadcasting

People like to belong to things with which they have something in common. The enviable problem that The American Legion has is we do so much that it is hard to communicate to a person, one specific pillar or

program that might appeal to them. What we can do is broadcast what we do.

If your post walks in a parade, you should issue a press release about your participation and how your post supports the organization that put on the parade, and how The American Legion supports your community.

Send pictures to your district and Department and you might end up on their Facebook page or website.

If your post doesn't have a media & communications committee or someone in charge of public information, consider adding those elements.

Find a hard charging younger vet to elevate your social media presence. Spread the word about your good work!

Creativity

Find ways to exist outside of your meeting by doing new things.

Perhaps you start something similar to the "Legion Service Corps," like Hollywood Post 43 member Simone Lara has done to increase volunteerism in the community.

If you do something like that and your volunteers are there in a group, wearing caps and/or tee shirts, you will gain attention.

Someone involved will be a veteran who now recognizes a common interest.

The idea here is to evolve our membership training so that new members find us versus us having to constantly find and convince them.

We want to ATTRACT members.

This A-B-C list is just the start. These things don't cost money, so we really should be motivated to get these things rolling as soon as possible.

As this principle develops a culture change, you'll find more ways to integrate this thinking into all areas of your post.

Do you have people who officially welcome guests

and give tours and introduce guests to members? Are you interacting with every committee to see if they have newsworthy activities to share via Facebook or the media?

Are your members taking advantage of training and information to adhere them to the organization?

For the really ambitious, here are two more things that can be done:

Digital Capsules

These are like the historian yearbook but done digitally. Create a digital book showcasing the year's activities.

A digital copy can be sent to every member and to prospective members. This could be a great tool in retention and attraction.

I'm working with the Department media & communications team to establish a contest for digital capsules.

Basic Training

The American Legion National Headquarters has a really well done (and FREE) course, called basic training or the American Legion Extension Institute, that will give members a casual history of the organization and our main missions.

You even earn the right to wear a pin after you pass the test.

Having that kind of awareness of the organization encourages member retention and excitement when talking about the organization, thus assisting attraction.

Membership development is more about people than it is about numbers.

We can control the A-B-C aspect of this.

We can also use the numbers to see that our efforts are trending in the right direction.

Ultimately though, we want to shift the paradigm towards promoting the Mission: Magnetic Membership.

American Legion California Boys State Update

By **Tim Aboudara, Sr.**
Chief Counselor
California Boys State

The 83rd Session of The American Legion California Boys State Program will commence on our virtual platform on June 19.

We are expecting at least 800 delegates, which, while lower this year because of the impact of the pandemic, is nonetheless very exciting for all of us.

The Boys State Virtual Task Force has done a phenomenal job pivoting

this year's session from our in-person format to a very dynamic virtual platform.

The only aspects of the program that have been eliminated for 2021 are the trip to the State Capitol, the athletic program, and the Boys State Band.

A description of how this year's program will function, and the detailed tentative schedule is available at our website: boysstatecalifornia.org.

Virtual District Orientations are beginning this week in place of the normal in-person gatherings. To

better familiarize this year's Delegates on how the program will function, we will be conducting the Virtual Orientations on the same platform as the delegates will see when they begin the program on June 19.

We are again offering the pre-session package that was offered in 2019. This package is available only online and in advance. This year's package is \$40 and includes a lifetime membership in The American Legion California Boys State Alumni Association and a special city T-shirt.

This package was extremely popular in 2019 and we expect that to be the case again this year. If a post chooses to purchase the package for their delegates, please reach out to Assistant Chief Counselor Bill Denson (rp.bill@yahoo.com) for instructions on how to complete the purchase. Please do not send your order and check to Department Headquarters.

Because this year's program is being conducted virtually, delegates will be receiving the shirts and material they will

need for participating via Priority Mail by June 17. This year, delegates will be required to wear a Boys State "branded" shirt each day while "in front of the camera."

While this year's session will be different because it's virtual, it will be very robust and dynamic.

We encourage the entire Legion Family to visit the program website and "take a peek" at the plans and follow the activities there from the beginning of the session to its conclusion on June 25.



'Boys State' wins Cinema Eye Audience Choice award

By **American Legion National**

The documentary "Boys State" added another award on March 9 as the film won the Audience Choice Award during the 14th annual Cinema Eye Honors.

The award was the result of online fan voting leading up to the virtual ceremony.

On Twitter, co-director Jesse Moss (@djessemoss) thanked "documentary fans and (Cinema Eye Honors) for honoring ("Boys State") with the Audience Choice

Prize and bringing us together to celebrate documentary filmmaking - we loved seeing your smiling faces."

"Boys State" has also been nominated in the Directors Guild of America (DGA) awards; winners will be announced in a private ceremony for DGA members on April 10.

The documentary, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, is also on the shortlist for Best Documentary Feature for the 93rd Academy Awards.

Nominations for the five finalists will be announced March 15; the 93rd Academy Awards will be presented on ABC on April 25.

Also March 9, in advance of the next day's deadline for nomination voting for the Academy Awards, an online screening of "Boys State" was presented by the Motion Picture Association and Apple TV+.

That event also included a Q&A with co-directors Moss and Amanda McBaine and star Steven Garza, as well as comments from Boys State alumni

Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont.; Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C.; and Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I.

"As a former Boys Stater myself, I am glad to see this program getting the national attention it deserves," said Daines, who attended Montana Boys State in 1979. "Boys State is a way to meet lifelong friends, introduce yourself to different viewpoints, learn about leadership, and be a part of something really special, and this film gives you a taste of what it's like."

Newsom proclaims March 15-21 as Women's Military History Week

By **Christian Southards**
Contributing Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared in a March 15 press release that March 15-21 will officially be recognized as Women's Military History Week in California.

In the release, Gov. Newsom notes there are over 163,000 women veterans currently living in California and that women veterans are the fastest growing demographic among veterans.

"This week we salute our women veterans for their courage and significant

contributions to our nation's armed forces, and recognize that we owe all military women and men our deepest appreciation and respect," he said.

Newsom also referenced a Department of Defense policy that was made official in 2016 that allowed women to serve in all combat roles without exception.

In California, the third week of every March earns this distinction, complimenting Women's History Month. The latter of which originated in Sonoma, California before being nationally recognized in 1987 by Congress.



Post 603 Distributes Food to Veterans

By **Nestor Aliga**
Post 603 Historian

Many communities in California have been economically ravaged by the pandemic and many of our veterans have sadly suffered, too.

In Vallejo, local veterans have been getting assistance from Rebuilding Together Solano County (RTSC). A partnership

with the Vallejo Costco and the Solano Contra Costa Food Bank (as part of Feeding America), the RTSC Food Pantry program has been operational since April 2018.

Like most non-profits, RTSC relies heavily on volunteers. The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 of Vallejo stepped up to the plate with many of their members volunteering up to 20 hours

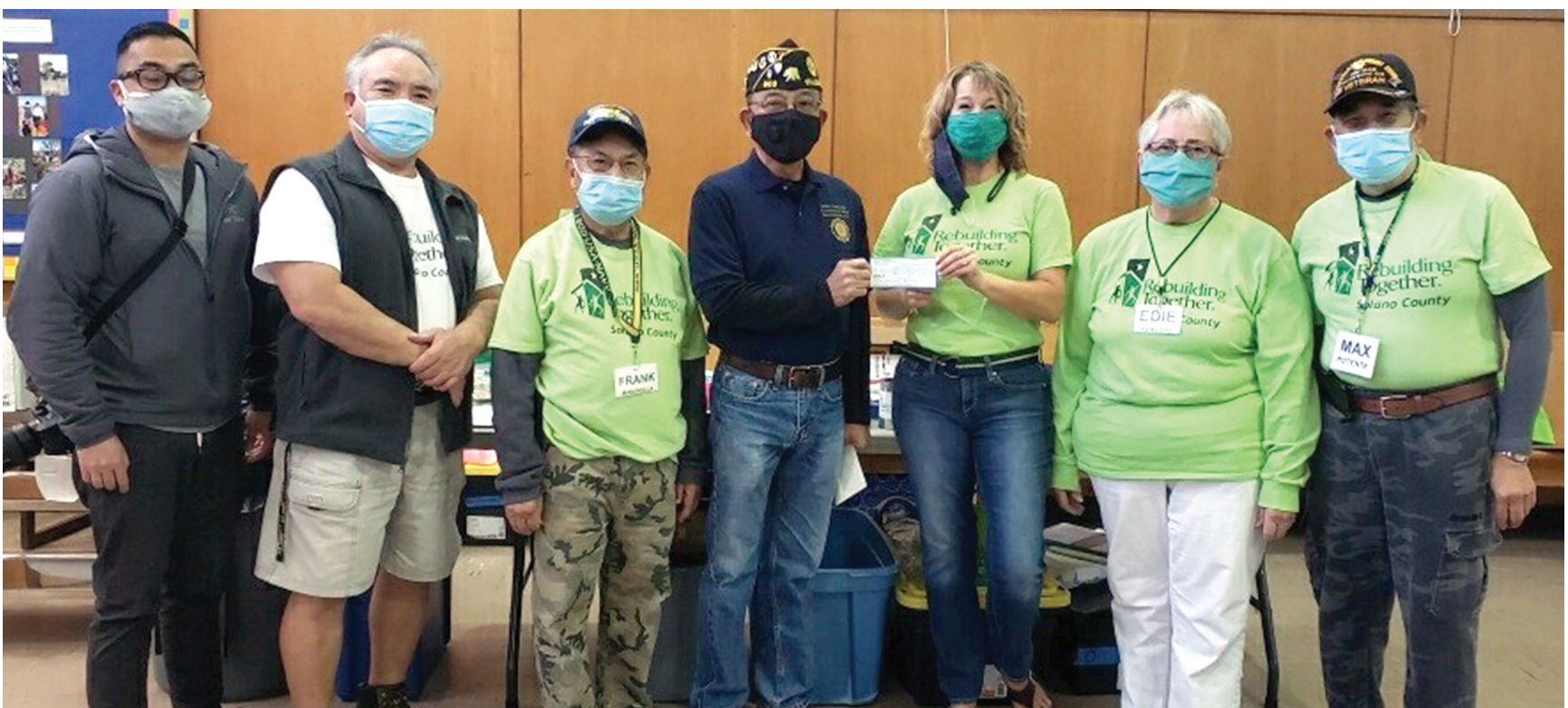
every week in the last three years.

"Since COVID-19, the number of low-income veterans, disabled, and seniors suffering from food insecurity increased from 140 to 1,200 households a month," said RTSC Executive Director Elizabeth Hoffman. "We had to expand our Food Pantry beyond our only site in Vallejo to eleven distribution sites that includes

deliveries to low-income mobile home parks in Solano County and an elementary school. Since the pandemic began, the amount of food that RTSC and our volunteers deliver increased from 750 pounds a week to more than 10,400 pounds a week."

"Every day is a great day to help our fellow veterans," said Arles De Mayo, Post 603 Commander, and a US Air Force retiree.

"While helping our fellow veterans, we try to joke about our good old days using military slang. We veterans have a brotherhood that non-veterans may never really know which is another reason we enjoy sharing our time, talents, and treasures," added Post 603 Sergeant-at-Arms, Joselito Lagman, a US Army Combat Infantry Badge awardee.



The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 of Vallejo recently donated much-needed funds for the Food Pantry program of [RebuildingTogetherSolanoCounty.org](https://www.rebuildingtogether.org), which helps many local veterans. From left are Charles Palmares, Joselito Lagman, Frank Manansala, Post 603 Commander Arles DeMayo, RTSC Executive Director Elizabeth Hoffman, RTSC Board Member Edie Parsons, and Max Potente.



Veterans vaccinated at LA-area American Legion posts

By Jeric Wilhelmsen
For American Legion HQ

As the quantity of COVID-19 vaccinations increases, distribution logistics have been a challenge in many parts of the country. The Department of Veterans Affairs and several American Legion posts have taken on that challenge by joining forces to vaccinate veterans “where veterans are,”

explained a Los Angeles-area VA official.

On Saturday, March 6, American Legion Post 790 in West Covina, Calif., provided facilities for the VA Medical Center of Greater Los Angeles to conduct a vaccination clinic for veterans.

Rob Merchant, executive director of ambulatory care for the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System put the alliance this way:

“We are making an effort ... with The American Legion here to bring the vaccines where veterans are, not where the VA is.”

The March 6 clinic was the first among several planned for the San Gabriel Valley region of Los Angeles County over the next month. Most of the vaccination events will be conducted at American Legion posts, such as Post 261 in El Monte this week.

The West Covina event was open to all veterans enrolled in the VA health-care system, without age restrictions. Merchant said his team expected to vaccinate nearly 300 veterans who called in advance to schedule appointments at Post 790. Follow-up appointments for the second shot were also set. “There’s no question as to when you’ll be getting that second dose,” Merchant

said. “Our supply of the vaccine is steady. We’re getting it directly from VA national, down through our network and to our facilities.”

Post 790 member Auggie Galaviz, 1st Vice Commander for The American Legion Department of California’s 18th District, occupied a display table at the vaccination clinic March 6 that provided veterans with brochures and information about the organization. “I got to speak with many veterans who are not members, and they were impressed with the coalition with Veterans Affairs, the county supervisor ... and they were willing to take these forms and they wanted to know more about The American Legion.”

Galaviz used the opportunity for he and his wife to get their vaccinations, as well. “It’s real simple,” he said. “It’s real quick. They are very efficient. VA – they got it down to the moment. You go in there... boom, boom, boom and you’re out of there.”

Article originally published on Legion.org

How L.A., Santa Maria, Bakersfield veterans can get a COVID-19 vaccination

By Jared Morgan
Editor
The California Legionnaire

The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System has set up more COVID-19 vaccination sites for those veterans not previously eligible, a VA representative told The California Legionnaire on March 20.

All veterans registered with the Los Angeles VA can receive the vaccination, which means those individuals under 55 and who fall outside of the “essential” category can now schedule an appointment by calling VA’s Downtown Los Angeles clinic at 310-268-4900.

Last month, the VA had

initially set up vaccination sites at West Covina and El Monte, but are now only offering vaccinations in Watts, Downtown Los Angeles, East L.A., Oxnard, Lancaster, Santa Maria and Bakersfield.

The VA representative told The Legionnaire there were “too many available vaccination appointments to count.”

Be sure to schedule your appointment first by calling the VA.

Once on site for your appointment, you will be required to be wearing a short-sleeved shirt.

You will also have to wait 15-20 minutes so medical personnel can monitor your reaction to the vaccine.

The new vaccinations were made available by the VA in February, a medical support assistant with the VA’s Downtown Los Angeles clinic said.

“There are about 12-15 available appointments per timeslot, spaced out every 15 minutes,” she told The

Legionnaire.

That would mean the VA could have designated upwards of 500 doses of the vaccine for previously ineligible veterans.

A spokesperson with VA healthcare could not be reached by article publication.

Anyone with information on vaccination appointments available for veterans outside of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, please contact the editor at 310-750-9782 or editor@caLegion.org so we can get that information out to our members.



Your post can receive a credit for each dollar spent on the purchase of American Flags from Emblem Sales.

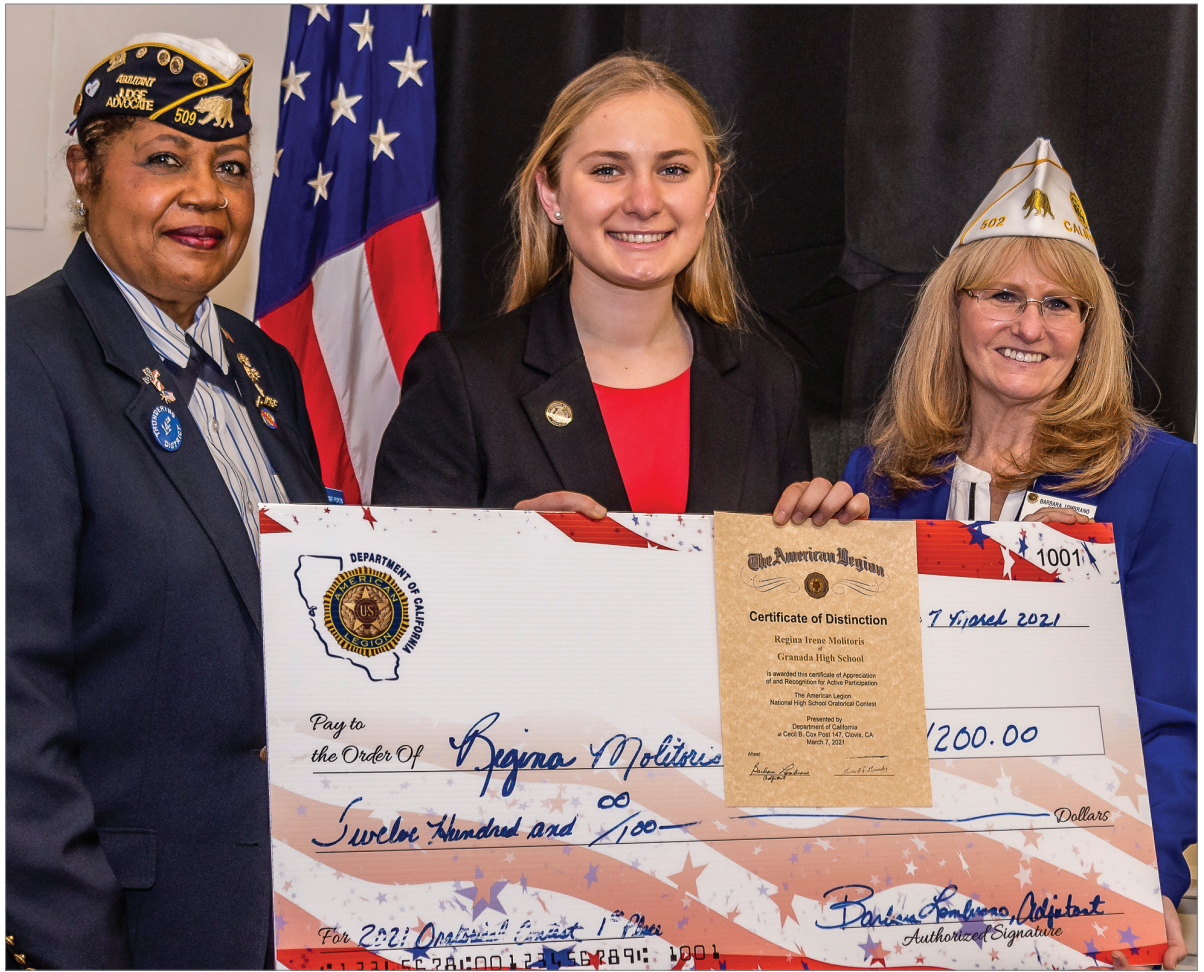
[Legion.org/dispatch/flag](https://legion.org/dispatch/flag)

Department oratorical contest winners receive \$8,600

Photos by Fred Shacklett
Dept. of California Historian



Department of California Adjutant Barbara Lombrano signs a ceremonial check.



Department of California oratorical contest first place winner Regina Molitoris poses for a photo with Area 3 Oratorical Commissioner Mildred S. Wright-Pearson (left) and Department Adjutant Barbara Lombrano on Saturday, March 6, 2021. Molitoris won \$1,200 from Department, plus an additional \$5,000 from National.



From left: Oratorical winners Ilana Tran, Regina Molitoris, Brandon True, Jonah Wong, and Oratorical Chair Bill Boles



Oratorical contest winner Brandon True won second place and \$1,000 prize.



From left: Contest judges George Steese of Disabled American Veterans, Josephine Llano (FCC), Robert Torrez (FCC)



Third place went to Jonah Wong, who also received a \$700 prize.



From left: Frank Ducar (P147), Will McCullough (VA), Jerry Hayden (P147), Chris Hoffman (Cdr P147), and Oratorical Chair Bill Boles



Ilana Tran came in fourth place and received a \$700 prize.



From left: Post 362 Commander Patricia Lovisone, Post 233 member James Burton, contestant Ilana Tran, Department Historian Fred Shacklett, Training Committee Chairman Autrey James

POST EVERLASTING

John ‘Doc’ Bart was an active Legionnaire

John “Doc” Randall Bart

Post Everlasting

Give your condolences and share your memories of the departed online at www.caLegion.org/categories/obituary.
Email obituaries to editor@caLegion.org.

A memorial and celebration of life will be held for John “Doc” Randall Bart at American Legion California Department Headquarters, 1601 7th St., Sanger at 11 a.m. on April 10. There will be a BBQ luncheon to follow, catered by Ma & Pa’s BBQ.

Bart passed away at his home in Moyers, Oklahoma on Feb. 25.

John was born Sept. 20, 1954 to John H. Bart and Billie Jean (Knight) Bart.

He grew up in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, graduating from Broken Arrow High School.

Bart began his service to his country and communities at age 17 when he joined the United States Navy and served as a Navy Corpsman assigned to the Marine Corps for eight years.

Upon leaving the Navy, he joined the Oceanside Police Department. After serving in Angels’ Camp and Corcoran, he retired after 20 years as Chief of Police in Sanger, California.

He was a tenured instructor at West Hill College in Coalinga, California. John was a lifetime member of the American Legion, serving in many positions including judge advocate and adjutant for the

Department of California.

Bart was a member of the Sanger Masonic Lodge and served in numerous callings in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He returned to Oklahoma to live in Moyers, OK.

He is survived by his wife Anita Bart (Gough); sons: John P. Bart and wife Linnea, and Phillip A. Bart and wife Emily; daughter: Kalia Takabayashi; brother: Woody Bart and wife Tammie; stepfather: Don Calaway; stepsons: Benjamin Noyce and wife Michelle, Gregory Noyce and wife Judy, and Andrew Noyce and wife Jaqueline; 12 grandchildren; and aunt Nancy Bart Smith and husband Dennis.

He was preceded in death by his parents: John H. Bart and Billie Jean Bart (Knight). Services were held on Friday, March 5 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Chapel in Broken Arrow.

An online fundraiser was established on Feb. 27 to help fund funeral expenses and end of life medical expenses. As of article publication, just over \$4,000 has been raised of the \$10,000 goal.

To donate, visit:
<https://gofund.me/5564ebc9>

Four Chaplains story retold online by District 24

By Donna Callaway
Chaplain, District 24

District 24 held its virtual Four Chaplains program on Feb. 21 to honor the servicemen who gave their lives to save others on the sinking USS Dorchester some 78 years ago.

It was early morning on Feb. 3 1943, when the passenger steamship Dorchester began to sink in the cold Atlantic, just off the coast of Newfoundland.

The four chaplains provided calm and courage to the 902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers on the Army transport vessel, which had been converted from a luxury coastal liner.

This year, due to Covid-19, the District could not hold the event in person, so it pivoted — producing a video which was shown at its virtual meeting

to honor this story of heroism.

District 24 and Hollywood Post 43 Chaplain Donna Callaway led the project, and Sons Squadron 43 Commander Ryan Pratt, Vice Commander Chad McMurray, and Sons Squadron 2 member Matt Kiddie made it into a beautiful and memorable video.

Even in the midst of uncertain times, District 24 was able to use this situation and program to unify the posts in the district and all parts of the Legion family — with members from almost every post, veterans/members of many eras, branches, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds — reflecting the unity of the four chaplains.

The video features chaplains from many of the posts in District 24, including chaplains from post 43 (Donna Callaway, Jimmy Weldon, and



Jim Bentley), 283 (Joe Ramirez), 46 (Dino Davis), 109 (Sylvester Shigg), and Sons Squadron 43 (Eric Swelstad).

It has been Chaplain Donna’s goal to bring together the chaplains of the district for this

program — and with the help of District 24 Commander Jere Romano, and the commanders of the posts in the district, it was made possible.

You can view the video at the Youtube channel: “Hollywood Post 43 Media

& Communication.”

The video is titled “California District 24 presents: The Four Chaplains Program” and it can be watched at this direct link: https://youtu.be/heM_qG0nsC4



From left: American Legion Baseball: Area 5 Commissioner Peter-Rolf Ohnstad; Spokesperson and Director of Contributions Judy Leonardi; Advisory Board Member Brian Grana

San Diego County American Legion ready to play ball!

By **Judy Leonardi**
Dir. of Contributions
District 22 Baseball

San Diego County American Legion Baseball offers an abundance of elite level High School athletes that compete at the highest levels for San Diego District Championship and California State Championship. Historically, San Diego has been a prominent region for American Legion Baseball nationwide. San Diego teams have been crowned National Champions in 1938, 1941 and 1954. In the 1980's the league inexplicably disbanded in San Diego.

San Diego County American Legion Baseball

is honored to announce that we are bringing back the league. The 2018 inaugural season provided a tremendous foundation for our future growth in redeveloping this highly competitive league. Our campaign to "Restore the Legacy" is a year-round endeavor encompassing the support of American Legion Posts across the County, the District, and the American Legion Department of California.

The American Legion continues to steadfastly stand behind the traditional values upon which it was founded in 1925. Over the years it has taught hundreds of thousands of young Americans the importance

of sportsmanship, good health, and active citizenship. The American Legion Baseball Program is also a strong promoter of equality, making teammates out of young athletes regardless of their income levels or social standings.

Over the past two seasons, San Diego County American Legion Baseball has been supported by various sponsors and donors such as The Randy Jones Foundation and the San Diego Padres Baseball Club. The Padres provided considerable support across the league and directly sponsored the Hoover High School baseball team and has committed to do so for the 2021 season as well.

In order to compete with travel ball leagues and tournaments, the American Legion decided to make our league accessible to County youth and without concern of the financial burden placed on players or their families by adopting and embracing the "No Pay to Play" philosophy.

We currently have 28 teams interested in playing in our league in 2021, so having the funds to run an organized season is essential. "The goal has always been to provide a place to play baseball free of charge," District 22 American Legion Baseball Commissioner Peter-Rolf Ohnstad said. "This isn't club ball. This isn't pay-to-play ball."

San Diego American Legion Baseball covers the cost of insurance, umpires, baseballs, uniforms and travel expenses associated with top teams playing in the State Championship Tournament.

Based on the success of our 2019 season, we know that 2021 will have increased expenses and can safely project that each team will cost \$3,000. San Diego County American Legion Baseball is seeking "League Sponsors" and encourages any interested parties to contact us immediately. Please know the request for financial assistance is not for veterans, it's to strengthen our communities and to allow our youth a platform to "PLAY BALL".

"This is NOT a veteran organization to raise money for veterans. It IS a veteran organization that raises money for the YOUTH in our County"

FACT: 75+% of American Legion Baseball players go on to play college baseball.

FACT: 51% of MLB played American Legion Baseball

A key element of the fundraising effort that supports "No Pay to Play," San Diego County American Legion Baseball held

its inaugural charity golf tournament on Sept. 25 at Twin Oaks Golf Course in San Marcos. Thirty-two teams consisting of 128 golfers participated and enjoyed a COVID-compliant beautiful day out on the golf course to raise funds for our 2021 San Diego County American Legion Baseball season.

This extremely successful tournament would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors and volunteers from a variety of Legion posts, who supported the planning, preparation and game-day event activities.

Thank you all for supporting our cause, participating in our comradery, and making a positive contribution to youth baseball in San Diego County.

Our thanks go to Brian Brady Realty Capital; Cutwater Spirits; Integra Golf Equipment; Lori Puterbaugh Real Estate; Patriot Golf Equipment; The Randy Jones Foundation; and San Diego Gulls Hockey Team.

The winning foursome of our inaugural Charity Golf Tournament 2020 was Holly Shafner, Mike Miller, Dale Bergman and Trevor Young representing Team Honor Flight and San Diego Veterans Magazine.

They will be the defending champions in next year's tournament and have qualified for the Randy Jones Invitational Golf Tournament.

There were over 70 items donated for fundraising during the event auction and raffles ranging from a Tony Gwynn autographed baseball bat, to a private aerial tour to hotel stay packages.

San Diego County American Legion Baseball continues to prepare now for the moment when youth sports are authorized by public health policy to return to competitive play in 2021.

Article originally published in San Diego Veterans Magazine.



Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Cornett received his Purple Heart and Bronze Star Feb. 22 at American Legion Post 84 in Auburn, 77 years after the actions that warranted the awards. (Army)

WWII vet finally gets his medals

By Todd South
Military Times

Shaky but sturdy, retired Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Cornett stood tall in a uniform he hadn't worn in more than half a century to receive an overlooked award he'd been due since 1944.

Donning his "Eisenhower jacket," a green, waist-length jacket worn by the famous general in the later stages of World War II, a garrison cap and matching trousers, Cornett was the center of attention at American Legion Post 84, in Auburn, California, Feb. 22 for an outdoor ceremony in which he finally received his Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal.

Cornett, 99, came in not an inch shorter or a pound heavier than in his fighting shape of three-quarters of a century past, when he stood 5-foot-2-inches tall and carried 110 pounds on his frame.

More than 77 years ago, after having helped capture Sicily, completing a nighttime combat jump in the rain and seeing heavy combat during the Allied invasion of Italy, Cornett was wounded during a combat assault at Anzio on Jan. 31, 1944, which pulled him from the front lines.

His wounds, severe

enough to send him home, were listed in unit paperwork. But in the blur of wartime bureaucracy, they were lost.

Members of the 82nd Airborne, along with other active duty and retired military members, were on hand to see Cornett get the awards he was due at the outdoor ceremony in California. Maj. Gen. Christopher Donahue, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, spoke with Cornett on a remote video call during the ceremony.

Recounting Cornett's wartime and post-war service — along with the anecdote that until a few years ago, the man still regularly did 100 pushups a day — Donahue made an offer.

"If you want to come back, come on back," Donahue said. "We need men like you."

Cornett served in Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne.

"You represent everything that is great with this country. You represent everything that is great with paratroopers," Donahue said. "You are the 82nd Airborne Division."

After his injury, Cornett was sent back to Fort

Benning, Ga., to serve as an instructor at the Army's Airborne School. It was there he met and fell in love with a new kind of soldier, Eloyce Miller of the Women's Army Corps, who'd come to the base to work as a rigger, packing parachutes for the airborne training school.

He had recently bought a surplus Army Harley Davidson motorcycle.

"My mother saw him on that and that was it," Cornett's daughter, Jan Mendoza, told Army Times.

After three months courting they married, and shortly after the war ended he left the Army. But not for long. Cornett returned to uniform in 1947, serving mostly in motor transport and later recruiting while raising a family before retiring in 1968.

He'd joined the Army in early 1941, before the Pearl Harbor attacks, leaving his coal mining, eastern Kentucky home to see the world, live in Europe and eventually settle in California, where he went on to a second career with the California Highway Patrol after the Army.

Mendoza said her father did 100 pushups and ran six miles a day before sunrise for most of his adult life. He proudly flew

an 82nd Airborne Division flag in front of their home, wore a hat and planted a fresh division bumper sticker on his car to honor his storied unit.

But details of his service were always hard to come by.

Mendoza knew he'd been in World War II. She knew that her parents had met in the Army and her mother was a soldier, too. But beyond that, not much else.

"He never talked about World War II," she said.

She and her older sister didn't even know what medals her father had received until a few years ago when he had to enter assisted living and after their mother passed in 2017.

They found a green Army footlocker with his parachute jump pants, a Nazi sword, bayonet from the Italian Army and a Nazi belt buckle, all souvenirs from his time in combat, and a box of medals.

"I had no idea what he had," Mendoza said.

Mendoza had done work in media and years before had sat both of her parents down, asking them to write their own life stories.

She then gathered video footage, still images and interviews, along with her own narration, to make a short online documentary she put on YouTube titled "The Green Box: A Paratrooper's Story."

And that seemed to be the end of it. A fitting way to wrap up her parents' service and story.

Until, looking around online last year, Mendoza came across a video about the women parachute riggers.

It had been put together by retired Army Lt. Col. William Lynn, who now runs Heritage Arsenal, a military museum consulting company.

The two connected on the shared history between Mendoza's mother and Lynn's online project.

Mendoza told Lynn about her father's

decorations. But one seemed to be missing.

She knew her father had been wounded in combat and that was why he was sent home. He'd even gotten assistance from the Veterans Administration when his injuries nagged him later in life.

But there was no Purple Heart in the green Army box, nor the ribbon on his still-fitting uniform.

With Lynn's help, she submitted a claim for the award, but it was kicked back, requiring more documentation.

Lynn knew that the day's actions and status of troops often was reflected in a unit's "morning report."

Another paratrooper, also a veteran of the 82nd Airborne, who does military research for books found the report naming Cornett as having been injured in the mortar attack. With that and other documents, they reapplied and made a few calls to key leaders.

Mendoza had told her dad late last year that she was pursuing it. He appreciated her concern but had accepted long ago he'd likely never see that award.

A man next to him in the attack had died. Who was he to get a medal for surviving?

In addition to the Purple Heart, Cornett also merited the Bronze Star for having earned a Combat Infantry Badge during the war. That was an official decree made in 1947, nearly two years after he'd left the service the first time.

After a nearly an eight-decade delay, surrounded by his family, both medals were pinned to his chest on a sunny California day.

His daughter, Jan, offered a short comment on her father and these long-overdue awards.

"Like many combat veterans who had buddies who didn't make it home, he didn't think he deserved it," she said. "Daddy, you deserve it."

History of American Legion Baseball

American Legion Baseball is a national institution, having thrived through a world war, several national tragedies, and times of great prosperity as well as great despair.

The league still stands behind the traditional values upon which it was founded in 1925. American Legion Baseball has taught hundreds of thousands of young Americans the importance of sportsmanship, good health and active citizenship. The program is also a promoter of equality, making teammates out of young athletes regardless of their income levels or social standings. American Legion Baseball has been, and continues to be, a stepping stone to manhood for millions of young men who have gone on to serve their country or community, raise families or play the sport at the highest level.

A modest beginning

Community service has always been a core value of The American Legion. In 1925, this commitment was furthered to include a baseball program.

The league was first proposed at an American Legion state convention in Milbank, S.D., when Sioux Falls attorney and Department Commander Frank G. McCormick invited his close friend, Maj. John L. Griffith, to address the convention. Instead of a traditional speech, Griffith, who was also the collegiate commissioner of the Western Conference (now the Big Ten), spoke about the role athletics can play in the development of youth.

"The American Legion could well consider the advisability of assisting in the training of young Americans through our athletic games," Griffith said. Athletic competition teaches courage and respect for others, fostering their growth into active citizens, he explained.

The South Dakota convention agreed and passed a resolution urging the Legion to create an organized summer baseball league that started each June. National Commander James A. Drain backed the resolution, which passed that fall at the Legion's national convention in Omaha, Neb. It read:

"RESOLVED: That The American Legion ... inaugurate and conduct baseball leagues and tournaments for local championships, and that local champions determined by the competitions be given opportunity to compete in departmental, sectional and regional tournaments, and that a junior world series championship baseball series be conducted at each national convention ..."

The first program in the world to provide a national baseball tournament for teenagers, American Legion Baseball was born.

In 1926, posts in 15 states began to make Griffith's vision a reality. They organized and sponsored teams, drafted local schedules and conducted championship tournaments. Postseason tournaments at the state, sectional and regional levels culminated with a national championship. Only a few changes have been made to the format over the years. The tournament still has a similar setup: 64 teams play at eight regional sites, with eight teams going on to the World Series. The winning team receives a trip to Major League Baseball's World Series, a tradition dating back to 1926.

A little help from their friends

The first American Legion Baseball World Series was held in Philadelphia in 1926. Yonkers, N.Y. Post 321 beat a team from Pocatello, Idaho, capping off what appeared to be a successful first season.

The league, however, hit a few growing pains in its second year. In 1927, the Legion's national convention convened in Paris. With the organization's financial coffers stretched thin from the trip's expenses, the Legion couldn't fund a World Series. No champion was named and the future of American Legion Baseball looked bleak, as the inaugural season wound up costing more than originally planned.

But the Legion's Americanism director, Dan Sowers, worked to keep the league afloat.

The tournament format needed \$50,000, and Sowers was determined to raise it.

See **BASEBALL** page 16

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Fitness trainer and Hollywood Post 43 Commander Jennifer Campbell

How to Start and Stick to a Fitness Plan

By Jennifer Campbell
Commander
Hollywood Post 43

We all know fitness is an important piece of a healthy lifestyle, but are we taking the steps to improve our health? Overweight and obesity increasingly contribute to disease burden among military populations. In fact, studies found that overweight (body mass index > or = 25 kg/m²) prevalence in veterans was 73.3% for males and 53.6% for females.

Obesity (body mass index > or = 30 kg/m²) prevalence in veterans was 25.3% for males and 21.2% for females. While these are startling statistics, there are several ways to take charge of your weight and health today.

Getting started can be confusing and overwhelming, but I have some advice on how to start a workout plan, whether you've fallen off the wagon because of COVID or if this is a new journey for you.

The first step is to take some baseline measurements and assessments.

It's an important tool in understanding limitations and tracking progress. It will be helpful to retest

every 4 to 8 weeks.

Take your pulse rate before and immediately after walking 1 mile.

Measure how long it takes to walk 1 mile, or how long it takes to run 1.5 miles.

How many standard or modified push ups can you do at a time?

Hamstring flexibility – how far you can reach forward while seated on the floor with your legs in front of you.

Measure your waist circumference.

Record your body mass index. BMI = weight (lb) / [height (in)]² x 703.

When building a fitness plan, first consider your fitness goals. Are you starting a fitness program to lose weight or are there other motivations, such as preparing for a race or the National Commander's upcoming 100 Miles for Hope challenge? Having specific goals can help you tailor your plan.

Trainer Tip: Put your plan and progress on paper. Seeing progress can reinforce your goals, encouraging you to stay on track.

Creating a balanced routine also means staying consistent.

For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of the two.

Guidelines suggest that spreading out the exercise lead over the course of a week and of course, more exercise provides even greater health benefits. Don't worry if you can't meet the suggested guidelines, even small amounts of physical activity are helpful.

Being active for short

periods of time throughout the day can add up to provide health benefits and you should work toward goals that are appropriate for your current fitness level.

Trainer Tip: I tell my clients to try to get an hour of brisk walking in per day. If you can't do a full hour, aim for two 30 minute sessions throughout the day. If 30 minutes isn't feasible, break it up into four 15 minutes sessions.

Get a broad range of exercise in your fitness program.

Strength Training:
Adding strength or

resistance training to your routine will help build muscle, which in turn, helps burn fat. Weight-bearing exercises force you to work against gravity, increasing bone density and reducing the risk of osteoporosis.

Cardio: Steady state cardio (ie: walking, jogging, biking, swimming) where you maintain a steady heart rate range is a staple in cardiovascular health and also targets a heart rate to put you in a fat burning zone.

HIIT: In high-interval intensity training, you perform short bursts of high-intensity activity separated by recovery periods of low-intensity activity. Make sure you are choosing a heart rate range that is appropriate for your physical condition.

Trainer Tip: Start conservatively and progress slowly. If exercise is new to you or you've taken a long hiatus, start cautiously and progress slowly. If you have an injury or a medical condition, consult your doctor or an exercise therapist for help designing a fitness program that gradually improves your mobility, strength and endurance.

Allow time for recovery. Good intentions can often be the downfall of fitness progress. Working out too long or too intensely — and give up when their muscles and joints become sore or injured.

Lace up your walking shoes and get ready to donate your hustle. The American Legion 100 Miles for Hope Challenge will begin April 1 and pre-registration is open now! Go to www.legion.org/100miles to get started.

VA SPOTLIGHT

GAO forces VA to reevaluate Electronic Record launch

By **Christian Southards**
Contributing Writer

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced on March 19 that it is issuing a strategic review of its Electronic Health Record Modernization program after a Feb. 2021 Government Accountability Office report recommended that the VA delay the program's launch until existing issues are fixed or provided workarounds.

The VA's EHRM program began over 10 years ago and has cost over \$16B thus far. In the March 19 press release, VA Secretary Denis McDonough says the program "is essential in the delivery of lifetime, world-class health care for our veterans."

The program is intended to consolidate several different recordkeeping measures into a single system that will enable efficient record access. Also, the Department of

Defense intends to make its health records available to the VA's system so servicemembers and VA health care workers can easily access records once they retire.

Over the years, the program has faced several delays, mostly due to its ambitious and large-scale implementation. However, the system was successfully launched in Oct. 2020 in Spokane, WA without any major problems—but only after the launch

was delayed twice: once for additional training, then again because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, the February GAO report says that its investigation uncovered several potential causes for both system-wide and less critical failures that should be addressed before the VA launches the program in new locations.

The VA says that it does not currently expect to change the EHRM launch for its next site in

Columbus, OH. However, if the 12-week strategic review it's conducting discovers anything critical it may delay or alter the schedule for additional launch sites.

Currently, the EHRM program is supposed to roll out over a 10-year period ending in 2028. Neither the VA nor EHRM program leaders have released any kind of definitive schedule and it remains unclear when or if the program will launch in California.



Tanya Bradsher is one of five newly confirmed appointees to a VA leadership position. (Photo: DHS.gov)

VA Adds Diversity to Senior Leadership Positions

By **Christian Southards**
Contributing Writer

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced on March 15 that it had filled additional leadership posts in line with President Joe Biden's new administration.

Among the new appointees are Tanya Bradsher, Chief of Staff at the Office of the Secretary; Melissa Bryant, Deputy Assistant

Secretary at the Office of Public Affairs; and Shawn Turner, Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement at the Office of the Secretary.

The new appointees come at a time when there have been calls for the VA to include more diversity in senior leadership positions.

As recently as Jan. 14, the Black Veterans Empowerment Council, which is composed of several black veterans organizations,

sent an open letter to the Biden-Harris administration asking for more representation for black veterans in the VA.

The appointment confirmation also comes after Black Veterans Project filed Freedom of Information Act requests against the VA citing multiple independent studies and numerous accounts of discriminatory behavior at even the highest levels of the department.

VA seeks to remove 'barriers' to women receiving benefits

By **Christian Southards**
Contributing Writer

The VA launched a new Women's Health Transition Training course in an attempt to address gender "barriers" to VA benefits outlined in a 2017 study, the agency announced March 8.

The Department of Veterans Affairs said the course is intended to better help women veterans learn about VA health care, noting that a substantial number of women veterans are not enrolled.

"Women are the

fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Veteran population, but only 40% of eligible women veterans are enrolled in VA health care," VA stated in a March 8 press release.

While the VA already has a Transition Assistance Program in place, women veterans have historically been less likely to enroll for healthcare benefits.

The Study of Barriers for Women Veterans to VA Health Care, which was jointly conducted by the VA and the Department of Defense and published in 2017, found numerous obstacles for women

attempting to enroll in and receive VA health care services, including poor information outreach, stigmas, and a lack of "gender sensitivity" regarding services offered.

Of those broader categories, communication and sexual trauma were identified to be among the largest barriers, with only about two-thirds of women veterans being aware of gender-specific VA health care services and approximately 41% of servicewomen being the recipient of "uninvited or unwanted sexual attention."

The 2017 study outlined several avenues for the VA to improve women veterans' care and overall experience, most notably via a concerted effort to provide servicewomen with the proper tools and resources before and after they transition from the armed forces, which the recent launch of the women veterans-specific online TAP course attempts to address.

However, the 2017 study also emphasizes that women who have been victims of sexual assault during their military service are "more inclined to

avoid VA for their mental health needs, yet this is a population with significant need for these services."

A separate and more recent DoD report published in 2020 found that a culture of sexual assault, victimizing both men and women, is rampant in the armed forces.

While the DoD contends in the report that steps are being taken to reduce and eliminate sexual assault in the military, accusations of unfair policies regarding military sexual assault have made national headlines as recently as late February.

Making history for American Legion Baseball

From **BASEBALL** page 13

Early in 1928, he went to an executive meeting for professional baseball, hoping to reach a sympathetic ear.

He found one in Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who pledged a \$50,000 annual donation from Major League Baseball. Legion Baseball resumed in 1928, and by 1929 participants were coming from every state and the District of Columbia.

Still, the program wasn't in the clear.

Like other institutions, Legion Baseball fell on tough times during the Great Depression.

In 1933, MLB's funds were sapped dry, and Legion Baseball was left without a sponsor.

The annual \$50,000 donation was pulled, and it looked likely the national tournament would be abandoned indefinitely.

Again, Sowers set out to find a generous sponsor.



Initially, he hounded big corporations, but he was concerned they'd treat to his fledgling baseball league as a public-relations arm. He turned to Frank Knox, a newspaper publisher and former department commander. Knox, who originally

cautioned Sowers against using corporate sponsorship, contributed \$5,000 and gave Sowers letters of introduction to several other newspaper publishers. An additional \$28,500 was raised in donations from the Chicago Daily News, the Omaha

World-Tribune, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Indianapolis News, the New Orleans Item-Tribune and the Atlanta Journal. Sowers received the final \$6,500 from his own boss, Col. Henry L. Doherty, president of Cities Services.

Legion Baseball also has a reputation for serving the young people who play for it.

In college scholarships, the league annually awards a total of \$25,000 - \$500 for a player selected from each department based upon leadership, character, scholarship and financial need.

Recently, the Legion passed a resolution allowing corporate sponsorship, in the hope of creating more financial aid for college. Diamond Sports currently funds \$25,000 in scholarships for the American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team.

Eight players receive a \$2,500 scholarship and the "Captain" of the All Academic Team receives a \$5,000 scholarship.

In 1949, the national player of the year was first named through the arrangement of Robert Quinn, director of The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

Fittingly, winners receive a trip to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., making them the only amateur athletes invited to the exhibit.

The award is now named after George W. Rulon, who served as program coordinator from 1961 to 1987.



Redwood City Post 105 restoring yearbook of 1957 Commander Leo W. Crawford

By **Michael Toschak**
Web Editor
Redwood City Post 105

American Legion Post 105 found a scrapbook from the State Commander, Leo Crawford 1956-1957 in the Club Room of the Post 105.

These books were in bad shape and slowly deteriorating from old age and are

being restored by Michael Toschak, American Legion Post 105 member.

Commander Crawford was from American Legion Post 828 in Menlo Park.

The Post closed in 2009 and at that time they merged with Post 105 in Redwood City, Romie Bassetto was commander of Post 105 at the time.

These books were then

placed in a corner of Post 105 and forgotten only to slowly rot over time.

One mistake was the glue they used to paste to the pages of the scrapbook, it dried and all the reports and name tags were loose.

The name tags were reglued to the appropriate photos and reports have all been salvaged and placed in archival plastic sleeves.

Also the backing of the photos was made of construction paper, Patriot Blue.

This paper was starting to show it's age and was replaced by acid free paper of the same color.

Besides the pages being restored, the scrapbook bindings were restored and a spine was added for extra support.

There are many historical photos in these books and many are one of a kind. Post 105 will post these pictures to caLegion.org, including the portraits of every state commander since 1919 to 1957.