



*American Legion*  
*Department of Vermont*  
*Monthly Bulletin*

December 2021

*"For God and Country"*



**DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT COMMANDER**

*Catherine M. Tester*

grams and community.

Each post is unique and my Sgt at Arms and I look forward to visiting the remaining Posts over the next several months.

Dear Legionnaires,

Happy Holidays!

As I travel around the state visiting posts either at a function or at a membership meeting, I realize why I love this organization and how proud I am to be a legion member in the State of Vermont. I have visited 26 posts so far as the Department Commander. I have attended dinners, monument dedications, installations, presentation ceremonies and membership meetings and have heard how our legions support the four pillars of The American Legion.

In my travels I have found a great diner in St. Albans, a sandwich shop in Chelsea, and driven over Brandon gap in a snowstorm, but the best part is meeting dedicated legionnaires who support our pro-

Mid-Winter Conference will be on January 21 and 22. National Vice Commander Bates will be attending and I hope that you will plan to attend. There will be training on Friday, January 21 for all Legionnaires starting at 1:00 pm.

Oratorical, Boy's State, Law Cadet and Baseball are all working on their programs and look forward to hearing about their updates as well as all the other reports at Mid-Winter.

May the blessings of this season fill your heart with peace, love and laughter. Happy Holidays.

For God and Country,

Catherine M. Tester  
Department Commander



Wallingford Post 52  
December 7, 2021



Creller-Landon Post 60 (Enosburgh)  
December 1, 2021



Heath- Doyle Post 61 (Chelsea)  
November 30, 2021

*"Have a goal for tomorrow,  
A plan for today,  
And remember the lessons  
of yesterday."*

## The American Legion – Department of Vermont



**May the warmth and love that is all around us at Christmas  
time fill your heart with joy; today and always.  
Best Wishes in the New Year - - 2022!**

**From the Officers and Staff of The American Legion  
Department of Vermont**

*Catherine M. Tester, Dept. Commander*

*Thomas Scanlon, Sr. Vice Commander*

*Mark Cloutier No. Area Cmdr. & William Ferman, So. Area Cmdr.*

*Brian Markwell, Adjutant*

*NECman, Ron LaRose*

*Alt. NEC, David Woodward*

*Lawrence Thompson, Dept. Service Officer*

*Rebecca Otey, Department Judge Advocate*

*Dennis Minoli, Finance Officer*

*Silas Loomis, Dept. Sgt.-at-Arms*

*Kenneth Coonradt, Dept. Chaplain*

*Victor Stone, Department Historian*

*Melodie Ashford, Exec. Admin*



# PAUL E. DILLARD

## NATIONAL COMMANDER

### AMERICAN LEGION



Dear American Legion Family Members and Friends,  
It's disheartening to know there are still World War II veterans who do not have access to VA benefits. The American Legion is fighting to correct this lapse with legislation pending in Congress. [Here's how you can contact your representative.](#)

Our World War II veterans halted the spread of tyranny, securing our democracy for generations to come. As of last month, fewer than 240,330 WWII veterans remain and hundreds pass away every day.

Of those still living, not all of them receive the VA health-care

services they earned through their service. As a grateful nation, we must fulfill our promises to the Greatest Generation to ensure they receive all the benefits they deserve.

To rectify this issue, Rep. Josh Harder, D-Calif., introduced H.R. 5562, the WWII means test bill. The legislation would exempt WWII veterans from the means test needed to receive VA health-care services. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., has supported these efforts by introducing S.1040, the Senate companion to this bill. The Senate bill has 10 bipartisan cosponsors while the House version has three. But little progress has been made in the past few months.

Time is literally running out for these veterans. It is critically important that one of these bills is enacted into law as soon as possible. The American Legion vociferously supports this legislation. Congress has been down this road

before. In 1996, the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act exempted all veterans who served during the Mexican Border Period and World War I from the means test required to enter the VA health-care system. Let's do the same for our World War II veterans before it is too late.

For God and Country,

Paul E. Dillard,  
National Commander



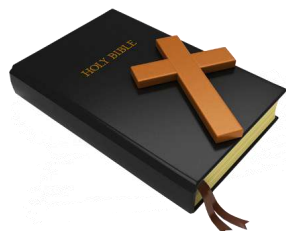
*This is the new  
American Legion  
logo*

 **AMERICAN  
LEGION**



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## DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN

*Ken Coonradt*

Howdy Legionnaires,

Praise the Lord, I'm home. Thank you to each and every one for the prayers, cards and calls. The doctors tell me it will be a while before I get a substantial amount of energy back. I went back to Dartmouth yesterday, November 18<sup>th</sup> for another bone marrow biopsy. In a few days we should know the results which will indicate to the doctors if the past treatment is working, or if I need another set of treatments. I know the Lord has me on the path to recovery and I give Him all the glory.

You are probably aware that Commander Tester has taken on the Vermont Veterans Home "Chapel Bell Project" as her Commander's Project. I have been concerned for years about the fact that the original Chapel Bell has been sitting out in the elements with no protection. When the original Chapel was torn down to make room for our Civil War heroes, the Chapel bell became a foster child. It has been placed here-and-there on the Home grounds over the years. When Commander Tester came looking for a project to serve the Veterans Home I suggested a permanent enclosure for the Chapel bell, that this would serve to preserve a piece of the Veterans

Home history. The enclosure will be placed near the main entrance close to where the original Chapel had been built. When our new Chapel was built it failed to accommodate a place for the bell. I hope you will all support this project with your donations and prayers. We estimate the cost will be about \$15,000. Thank you in advance for your support.

I hope everybody has a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving. Please pray for our troops serving around the world. Thank you again for your thoughts and prayers.

God Bless,  
Chaplain Ken



## SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

### *Tom Scanlon*

I would like to wish all members of the

American Legion Family and their families a most wonderful Christmas and the best for the New Year. I would ask that we remember our veterans and those on active duty as well. We must additionally remember our emergency service workers at this time of year, in that many will be away from their families and working to protect and help all of use. Our police, fire, emergency response, medical personnel and hospital workers work tirelessly throughout the year and have been spread thin during the past two years dealing with Covid. They deserve our prayers and a special thank you, particularly during this holiday season.

#### **LAW CADET PROGRAM:**

Letters have gone out to all the high schools with information concerning the law cadet program in October. The program which is run at the new Hampshire Police Cadet Training Academy (a program of the NH Troopers Foundation, Inc.) in Concord, New Hampshire on the campus of the New Hampshire Institute of Technology, where the New Hampshire Police Academy is also situated. The 2022 Session is tentatively scheduled for June 18 through June 24, 2022. The program is open to young men and women who have

completed one year of high school and are 14 years of age or older.

This is an intensive week-long residential program for young men and women ages 14-20. This program began in 1973 and has continuously operated each summer since, maintaining its rich tradition and excellence. This academy has a curriculum with a focus on Law Enforcement. Cadets will enjoy a regimented paramilitary structure. The mission of the academy is to build qualities such as self-discipline, self-respect, self-esteem, and pride in one's self through respect, discipline, teamwork and motivation. Cadets will participate in physical training, formations, marching and other military etiquette. Police Cadets will follow very specific guidelines and orders for dormitory/living arrangements. Training and classroom sessions will cover an assortment of law enforcement related topics. Police Cadets will be mentored and served by a variety of law enforcement officers and other related personnel and staff. The program is staffed by full time city, municipal, county, and state law enforcement personnel who have been carefully selected as well as a full time RN. There has even been an active duty Army MP on staff.

Applications are not yet available but you can get the word out. There are sponsorships available if a post is unable to fund a local student who wishes to attend. Hope-

fully there will be a program this year, however variants of Covid are rearing their ugly heads and again becoming problematic. Let's hope and pray times get better and there will be programs for those wanting to attend.

#### **CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT (CPR):**

While these reports are not due for a few months we must start thinking about them and compiling information now. We can't let the wonderful things the posts have accomplished, and organizations and programs supported be left unnoticed. Did you know that the Department consolidates all the information in the submitted reports and then forwards this consolidation to National HQ. National distills all the information and the same is submitted to Congress. Department should be sending our consolidation to all the Vermont legislators. We must "tell our story" and let our elected officials know what we do. Put it on your radar now so you will have all the information to make your CPR as comprehensive as possible.

*For God, Country & Community*

*Have a Happy, Safe & Healthy New Year*

Tom Scanlon





## NORTHERN AREA COMMANDER

### *Mark Cloutier*

Welcome fellow Legionnaires.

December is here and that means Midwinter Conference is not too far away. I am looking forward to seeing everyone as I missed being at fall conference in person.

On Veterans Day I Corrinna and I visited the Josh's House in Colchester. For those of you that don't know Josh Pollatta was a GWOT veteran who lost his battle with PTSD. This was the most humbling experience that I have ever had. We were met with open arms and immediately felt at home. Josh's House VT is a wellness and recreational center that include traditional, complementary, and alternative healing modalities such as aromatherapy, massage, Reiki, yoga, integrative health and wellness coaching, healing touch, acupuncture and more. Josh's house is the idea of his mother to help other veterans that are also dealing with PTSD. This place is amazing in what they do. Josh's House VT is a Veteran-designed recreation space

complete with video games, a gym, meeting and study spaces and a large communal kitchen. You can visit their website here and possibly donate to the Josh Pollatta fund to help keep this incredible place open for years to come. <https://joshpollottafund.org/joshs-house/>

Recently a veteran from Craftsbury donated an electric wheelchair to Hardwick Post 7. This was no ordinary electric wheelchair. This chair actually brings the veteran to a standing position. Post 7 decided to donate the wheelchair to the Vermont Veterans Home and they gladly accepted it. Corrinna and I loaded it in the back of my pickup and drove the 6-hour round trip to deliver it and, I am forever grateful for the veteran that donated it and post 7 for giving it to the VVH.

Membership is doing ok but it looks like we may have missed our target of 75%. I know that I preach this every month but there are still a couple posts in the northern area that are still way below the target. Please Commanders and Adjutants let's get those memberships processed. If you are having trouble with mylegion.org please reach out to myself to Melodie ad

Dept HQ. If you have members that are not renewing please reach out to them and find out why. Ask them what it is that you can do for them. If you know of any GWOT veterans that are not yet members, talk to them and find out what it is that they would like to see from the legion and how we can help them. The younger veterans are our future and without them, our membership base is dwindling. National Commander Dillard's motto for this year is "No Veteran Left Behind" so please if you know of a veteran that is struggling please reach out to them just to say, "Hey how are you doing?"

I hope all of you have a great holiday season and get to spend time with your loved ones.

Be safe and stay healthy!

I can be reached at **802-371-8097**, by email [post7adj@gmail.com](mailto:post7adj@gmail.com), or just shoot me a message on Facebook.

Mark Cloutier

Northern Area Commander  
Department of Vermont  
***For God and Country***

## SUICIDE

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, please call the crisis line at 1-800-273-8255, press 1 for veterans. You could also text at **838255**.





# RECONNECT PROGRAM

Mark Cloutier, Chairperson

The Department has been represented at Army and Air National Guard Deployment Ceremonies, wherein each was presented with a Blue Star Banner as well as information on Temporary Financial Assistance. In the future individuals from these entities will be deployed once again, and we will be there to support them.

Both the **Family Support Network** and **Temporary Financial Assistance** play an integral role in the American Legion Reconnect Program. Through the Family Support Network the American Legion provides a broad range of services to help families cope with the unique challenges of deployment. Temporary Financial Assistance provides for immediate, short-term financial needs, for families of deployed personnel who have minor children at home, upon application for cash grants. Local posts play an integral role in both these programs and providing other services as well. More information can be found at [www.legion.org/fsn](http://www.legion.org/fsn) and [www.legion.org/](http://www.legion.org/)

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financial assistance . It would be worth ones while to be familiar with these programs in the event you may get a call for assistance

During any period of deployments many posts will be sending care or comfort packages to individuals or units. This is also an integral part of the Reconnect Program. Anything, or any interaction, with active duty personnel, even at a NG or Army Reserve facility counts, or hosting a dinner, breakfast or other event counts for Reconnect and as such is reportable both to the Department and to National Headquarters. If you or your post (American Legion Family), to include the Sons, and Auxiliary, are doing anything in this area give me a call or an email and I will do the reporting though Department to National. I just need the who, what, when and where. I would also need an approximate number of military personnel attending or being sent care items. This is important for the Department's involvement and to facilitate tracking. I can be reached at (802) 371-8097 or at [post7adj@gmail.com](mailto:post7adj@gmail.com) . Please put "Reconnect" in the subject box to call my immediate attention to the correspondence. Remember, Reconnect efforts are important.



Brattleboro Post 5 Honor Guard honoring Sue McAllister who retired after serving as Color Guard Commander for three years.

Thank you for your service!

## Norwich Scout Troop 253 called into action at Hillside Cemetery

Every year just after Veterans day, weather permitting, the American flags at the cemeteries are removed from the gravestones and stored for the winter or recycled.

Usually a group of American legion veterans from Post # 8 in Norwich show up at a designated time and remove the flags which number over 200. This chore generally takes us a couple of hours as we like to chit chat along the way.

I had the opportunity to witness first hand the Norwich Scout troop 253 in action at the Hillside cemetery the other day. A small group of scouts showed up and tackled the job in a little over a half an hour leaving their scoutmaster some time to visit with the legion members on hand. Legion members on hand to supervise the event were Commander Jim Harlow, Gary De Gasta, and Demo Sofronas.

The scouts in the photos are Ben Wellborn, Aiden Powell, and Dorian Powell.

Here is some more information about Troop 253 just in case you know someone who may want to be a scout.

Norwich Troop 253 meets on Wednesdays from 7:00 – 8:20 pm at the American Legion Hall (228 Beaver Meadow Rd, Norwich, VT 05055).

Troop 253 troop offers a scouting experience for youth in the fifth grade through high school. Service, community engagement, and leadership development are important parts of the program as scouts lead their own activities and work their way toward earning Scouting's highest rank, Eagle Scout. Troop activities include camping, overnight hiking trips, sailing adventures, and fun troop meeting activities aimed at developing each scout's personal leadership capability.



## THIRD DISTRICT COMMANDER

*Joe Zickmund*

Greetings from District 3,

I would like to wish you all a very happy holiday season. It's my prayer that your holidays and new year are blessed with good health and much happiness.

I was visiting a post within District 3 and was surprised to see Commander Tester in attendance, as well. She was hard at work visiting posts as she strives to visit each one in the Department. One of the points of her message was about community. The importance of being a positive and active part of it and being an example to others. Letting our light shine....so to speak. This reminded me of an event recently held at my home Post. It was by all accounts, a community effort that included The

Barre Partnership, the Barre Elks, our Barre Post 10 Legion, Sons of the American Legion and many others. The event was the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Granite City 5K for Veterans. I am pleased to report a donation of \$22,000 was made to The Veteran's Place in Northfield.

Many Posts have programs that benefit the community they belong to. I encourage all of you to find ways to help and be seen. It's good for the Legion, the community and will likely be good for you. Veterans serving veterans...and the communities we live in.

My Best,

Joe Zickmund  
District 3



## Department Historian Victor Stone



**WO1 Matthew Tatro**



There is nothing quite like a well-rehearsed, tightly configured, and nicely orchestrated band playing seasonal music to propel one into the holiday spirit and that's just what the Vermont National Guard's 40th Army Band provided at St. Alban's City Hall on Sunday December 5th. Led by WO1 Matthew Tatro, Commander and Bandmaster, and First Sergeant Erin Graham, the 25 members of the band treated the audience to an assortment of ten tunes celebrating the holiday season. The program was greatly enjoyed by all in attendance and further demonstrated the quality of service provided by the Guard to the citizens of our great State.

With that as background, I'd like to wish you all a very blessed and delightful holiday season and may the New Year bring you prosperity and joy.....Victor



**First Sergeant Erin Graham**



**40th Army Band**

# *upcoming* **EVENTS**

Dates		Event/meeting	Location
2022			
January	21-22	Mid-Winter Conference	Double Tree, Burlington
	21	Mid-Winter Banquet 5:00pm	
	22	Department Executive Committee Meeting (DEC)	following Mid-Winter Conference
April	10	Department Executive Committee Meeting (DEC)	Montpelier Post
June	19 – 24	Boys State	Northern Vermont University – Lyndon



## **FIFTH DISTRICT COMMANDER**

*Lewis Graham*

It is great to see District 5 in third place with membership! Six Posts have met the December 75% goal and some of the smaller posts are close to 100% already. Thank you for the good work and focus.

Please make plans to attend Mid-Winter conference. We will be halfway through the year by then and have some important work to do. I plan to have a short District Caucus after the conference to discuss our issues with obtaining a quorum and which pro-

grams to support with our district funds. We can use some new ideas on what needs are out there for our veterans and our communities and possible fundraising efforts for our programs.

I am asking everyone who has past District organizational records such as the constitution and bylaws, minutes and especially financial records to bring them to the caucus. It is important for the records to be consolidated and available for reference during each fiscal year to the new administrations. The minutes for financial actions such as approving

the establishment of the CD account and authorizing expenditures are of particular importance.

Please report events that your post is having to me or to the program chairs so our good work can be announced in the bulletin and be counted in the end of year report.

See you in January.

For God and Country,

Lew Graham, Jr.



## ADDISON COUNTY COMMANDER

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*Alan M. Smith*

Evaluations complete and  
Addison County Posts doing great.

Now membership renewals and recruitment become much harder. Good time to contact members and wish them Happy Holidays and inquire as to their health and any questions they may have. Some Posts when they mail a member his or her new membership card send the card only, I've found that if you enclose a letter or note thanking them for their service along with a personal message it generates a good response. Recently a member told me he appreciated the little messages that were sent with his

membership card.

Mid-Winter conference is January 21-22 at the Doubletree Hotel in South Burlington. Hope to see all Addison County Posts represented. Meal has to be selected prior to January 20

Alan M. Smith



## CALEDONIA COUNTY COMMANDER

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*David Perron*

December is among us,  
Snow has arrived. Hope all Post

have a very Merry Christmas and Post activities go off as planned, let's take the opportunity to help others that are in need or maybe just alone. It's the time of year to help all in our community.

Membership starts with you!!!!!! Let's make are Post stronger and healthy. Everyone's job!!!!!

Keep up the good work with all actives throughout all Post.

Mid-winter is coming fast, let's have a good turnout. Start planning and marking your calendar. All INFO is in Nov Newsletter.

Please let me know if I can do anything to help with anything you folks need.

COUNTY COMMANDERS- Evaluations are getting close to being overdue please get out there and eval your Post. **Also please update phone numbers and**

**e-mail in Directory. Having trouble reaching out to some.**

**Membership, Membership WE CAN DO THIS.**

Thank you all for serving.

Contact #'s Home-525-3895  
Cell 272-2793

[Perrondavid323@yahoo.com](mailto:Perrondavid323@yahoo.com)

Thank you,

David W Perron

Caledonia Country Commander







## N.E.C. MAN

*Ron LaRose PDC*

### IDAHO TO ARIZONA TO VERMONT PURPLE HEART IS REUNITED WITH FAMILY

I had the pleasure of presenting a long lost Purple Heart Medal to an uncle of an MIA/KIA in WWII on Veterans Day. This story is unique and I would like to share it with you.

While my wife and I were preparing to go the American Legion National Convention in Phoenix, I received a call from a Legion Commander in Maricopa, AZ stating they have come across a PHM, done their research and found the only living family members with the same last name of the MIA/KIA service member in my ZIP Code and wanted to know how they can send this PHM to me. I told him I will be in his backyard in a few days and can receive it personally.

My wife and I had planned to stay in Arizona over Labor Day Weekend to travel around and see the sights. The day after the convention this Commander sent his SGT at Arms to pick my wife and me up to bring us to Maricopa, about 30 miles south of Phoenix. Post Commander to Post Commander, I expected to travel to his Legion, but we pulled up in front of a Tattoo Parlor. This surprised us but we will let the story unravel from here.

Inside, we met the Post Commander, the Artist, his receptionist, and another Legionnaire along with a TV crew from the local FOX Station. This is where the story gets interesting. Back in the mid 90s, the Artist did some work for an individual who had a cash flow problem but he offered a medal in exchange for his services. This medal was the PHM. The Artist agreed to accept the medal, he put it in a box with 8-track tapes and there it sat until around 2015 when the Artist bought the building we were in and hired a receptionist, who was a veteran.

The receptionist started organizing the office and came across a box of 8-track tapes and the PHM. I don't know when the military started issuing medals in the little medal box that we have all received for our medals in but this PHM, over 75 years old, was still in this little metal box. She could tell it was an original as it was engraved on the back "Clay D. Darling, ARM3c, USNR", and she knew she needed to find the family it belonged to. She went onto her Veteran Face Book page and started inquiring about how to find this family. The other Legionnaire in the room with us did an extensive research and found Wayne Darling, nephew of the MIA/KIA in my ZIP Code.

Clay was only born and raised in Idaho and was only 20 years old when he became MIA/KIA on July 26, 1946, less than three weeks prior to Japan's surrender.

## DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT

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802-223-7131

[vtlegion.org](http://vtlegion.org)

Melodie Ashford

Executive Administrator

[Finalvt@talofvt.com](mailto:Finalvt@talofvt.com)

Department of  
Veterans Affairs

800-827-1000

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

American Legion  
Headquarters

317-630-1200

[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

Vermont Office of  
Veterans Affairs

802-828-3379

[www.veterans.vermont.gov](http://www.veterans.vermont.gov)

VA Hospital  
White River Jct., Vermont

802-259-9363

Benefits  
800-827-1000 or,  
802-296-5177

Scheduling  
802-296-5160

Dept. Service Officer

Larry Thompson

479-3686

[thompsonl@myfairpoint.net](mailto:thompsonl@myfairpoint.net)

Clay served on the USS Randolph in the Pacific Theater and making his last known flight over the Inland Sea of Japan.

Talking to Wayne, he says he can remember his grandmother and other family members talking about Clay, but Wayne was born after Clay perished. He knew his grandmother was presented the PHM and after she passed the PHM probably passed

through many family hands to get to Arizona, but there is no knowledge of just how this PHM went from Idaho to Arizona.

On Veterans Day 2021 at Bristol Post 19, there were many in attendance for this presentation to include Wayne and his wife, his sister and her family, many veterans curious about this story, and WCAX and WPTZ reported it for us. The Darling Family is

very pleased to have this medal as their only connection to Uncle Clay they never knew.

In the two years as your Department Commander, I had the opportunity to participate in many unique events, but this has to rate near the top of my list.

Ron LaRose  
NECman, PDC

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## A special award for two Norwich Richmond Middle schoolchildren.

They both went out of their way to organize an event to help veterans.

Good evening Norwich,

The American Legion Post # 8 held our regular meeting on December 6, 2021, however this meeting was far from regular, in fact it was a very special evening.

We had The Department of Vermont State Commander, Catherine M. Tester and Department of Vermont Sergeant of Arms Silas Loomis visit our post and they

participated in a very special presentation along with our post Commander

Jim Harlow. We also officially welcomed in a new member. And now for the rest of the story.

On November 11, 2021 while the American legion Post # 8 was having our Veterans day ceremony, two

Norwich residents and Richmond middle school students were organizing and conducting a Veterans day run/walk at the Richmond School field. The purpose of this event was to raise money for veterans.

Ella Rom Tesone and Jack Myers co-organized this event and made it a huge success.

They and their classmates went beyond the call of duty and raised \$4,963.75. They decided to donate it to the Veterans Project and The Veterans Place Inc., two fine organization that help veterans.

Congratulations Ella and Jack on a job well done.

Photo credits for this story, belong to Gary De Gasta, Emily Myers, Manu Tesone and Demo Sofronas.



Dept. Commander Tester, Jack Myers, Ella Rom Tesone and Post Commander Ellis "Jim" Harlow





# ATTN: VETERANS & ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBERS

Were you exposed to Burn Pits while deployed?

Sign up for the VA Burn Pit registry today.

## ★ IS THIS FOR ME?

Veterans and Service members who have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990 as well as those who have deployed to Afghanistan or Djibouti after September 11, 2001 can use the registry.

## ★ WHY SIGN UP?

- Document your exposures and health concerns.
- Improve awareness of long-term health for you and all Veterans.
- Learn about follow up care at the VA.
- Satisfaction from helping other Veterans and Service members.

## ★ VA MEDICAL CENTER, VT



For assistance with enrollment call your local Vermont Veterans Outreach Specialist:

**888-607-8773**

VT MILITARY & FAMILY  
SUPPORT CENTER

24/7



**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
White River Junction Healthcare System

163 Veterans Drive  
White River Junction, VT 05009  
802-295-9363 | 866-687-8387

Scan QR Code with your smartphone camera to sign up for the VA Burn Pit registry OR visit:



★ [veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home](https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home)





# MID WINTER CONFERENCE



FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

JANUARY 21 - 22, 2022

DOUBLETREE HOTEL - SOUTH BURLINGTON

870 Williston Road, South Burlington, VT

## BANQUET - FRIDAY NIGHT



*Tossed Garden Salad  
Rolls & Butter  
Dijon Chicken Breast  
Ham*

*Penne Pasta w/ Red Sauce  
Garlic Roasted Red Potatoes  
Roasted Vegetables  
Chefs Choice Dessert Table  
Coffee & Lemonade*

**\$35.00 Inclusive**

## HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS



*Room rate is \$115.00 per night plus tax  
(breakfast not included)*

**800-445-8667**

*Mention 2022 Legion Mid-Winter Conference*

*If you are asked for a code it is (ALW)*

THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT

**2022 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE BANQUET**

DOUBLETREE by HILTON, Williston Rd., SO. BURLINGTON VT

**Friday, January 21, 2022**

**COCKTAILS – 6:00 P.M**

**DINNER – 6:30 P.M.**



Baked Ham or Dijon Chicken Breast

The above will be served with Fresh Tossed Garden Salad (Plated), Rolls and Butter,  
Roasted Red Potatoes, Penne Pasta with Red Sauce, Roasted Vegetables, Chef's Choice Dessert Table  
Coffee and Lemonade

**\$35.00 per person – All Inclusive**

**Make Checks Payable to American Legion Department of Vermont and**

**SEND CHECKS TO:**

**Dept. HQ, P.O. Box 396, Montpelier, VT 05601-0396**

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS: January 10, 2022**



**PLEASE RESERVE:**

Baked Ham# \_\_\_\_\_

Dijon Chicken Breast # \_\_\_\_\_

**AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**NAME: \_\_\_\_\_**

**(Circle) POST AUX S.A.L.**



## LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN

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*PDC Dick Farmer*

Hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving. I wrestled with a 17 lb. turkey and almost lost. It was a hard year in many ways, but we still had many reasons to give thanks.

You should have had the opportunity to sign the petition in support of tax exemption on military retirement pay. Don't be afraid to make a phone call to your representative to show you exist and you support this issue.

It is so easy to become so involved with the many activities of the season that we forget what the holiday is all about. Let's step back and think of our family, friends and loved ones. Let's check on our Legion Family, who may need a Christmas Blessing. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Hanukkahs.

For God and County,

Legislative Chairman

Dick Farmer, PDC

### WHITE PAPER

Legislation to exempt military retirement pay from Vermont State Income Tax

Vermont Governor's Veterans Advisory Council (GVAC)

November 2021

Proposals to exempt Military Retiree Pay from Vermont state income tax are not new and date to the Kunin administration. While various proposals have been presented to state legislators and the governors of both parties over the last three decades, the risk-aversion rationale for non-support from both the legislature and incumbent governors has basically remained unchanged. The top key arguments for non-support are the loss of revenues for the state and worry that "other groups" will expect the same consideration (teachers, police, firemen and other first responders).

There are undoubtedly potential risks associated with reducing tax revenues in the short term with the promise of financial dividends in the long term. Vermont remains only one of a handful of states that does not exempt all or some retirement pay from state income taxes. Nearly every other state in the country has concluded the benefits outweigh the risks and have passed such legislation!

Why the loss of retirees? For many, Vermont has routinely ranked near the bottom of states for its



support to retirees and their families. In 2021, for example, Vermont was named the 5<sup>th</sup> Least Tax-Friendly State for Retirees (and not just veteran retirees) by Kiplinger.com. A second article titled "The 10 Least Tax-Friendly States for Military Retirees", puts Vermont as the 2<sup>nd</sup> least friendly of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. While some progress has been made, Vermont continues to be in an unenviable position to attract or retain military retirees. In FY 2021, Vermont military retirees brought a gross annual sum of over \$85,500,000 in federal dollars into the state. These individuals and their families can and do help Vermont's economy because of their acquired skills and work ethic.

Eliminating state income tax for military retirees is not a silver bullet and will not resolve all issues. However, stemming the exodus of military retirees from the state, as well as attracting new retirees, offer the potential to increase the inflow of millions of federal dollars to the Vermont economy.

The passage of legislation to exempt military retirement pay from State Income Tax in 2022 would send an important message to veterans looking to stay in or return to the state, or those considering moving here from other states--Vermont really does care about and supports veterans and their families and the Green Mountain State welcomes them!

<https://www.kiplinger.com/retirement/601815/least-tax-friendly-states-for-retirees>

<https://www.kiplinger.com/slideshow/retirement/t055-s003-least-tax-friendly-states-for-military-retirees/index.html>

<https://actuary.defense.gov/Portals/15/Documents/CONGDIST%202020.pdf?ver=K-VK9g8wsGfsvAaJz2xCGQ%3d%3d>

## Department Service Officer Hours

The Department of Vermont Service Officer Larry Thompson has established the following schedule:

Tuesday – Thursday in White River Office from 8-4:30. If the light is on I'm in the building, I may be checking the mail or helping a Veteran, but I'm in.

Monday and Friday I'm home doing research. I try to answer emails and phone messages, but most of my time is doing research for claims.





Department  
Commander  
Catherine M. Tester

# DEPARTMENT COMMANDER'S PROJECT

*Preserving a piece of the  
Veterans Home history*

**Project:** To build a permanent structure to house the original chapel bell at the Vermont Veterans Home.

**Goal:** To raise \$15,000.00 for this project.

**History:** The Vermont Veterans Home came into being in 1884. In 1890, a chapel was built entirely with donations from the Grand Army of the Republic. The bell for the chapel was donated by Major A. B. Valentine, a prominent businessman in Bennington at this time.

During the period 1967 - 1976, several renovations and building projects were completed and the original chapel was taken down. A new chapel was built along with a large community room. The Chapel Bell was kept but not built into the new chapel. Instead, it was affixed to a 4' high wooden post structure and parked outside the chapel building. Over the years, the Bell had rusted badly and was in poor condition.



In 2016, the Bennington Rotary Club arranged for the Bell to be refurbished. The metal pitting was repaired, and the Bell proper was repaired and resurfaced. However, it still resides atop the 4' wooden posts and is now placed at the memorial area on the Home grounds. This method of display leaves the Bell open to the elements and more evidence of metal pitting and deterioration of the Bell proper is occurring.

**The Plan:** The project entails the Bell being removed from the wooden posts and placed in a permanent structure that would protect it from the elements and place it on display with a plaque giving the history of the Chapel Bell.

The structure will be placed in the grassy area just in front of the main entrance of the Veterans Home and resemble the original architecture of the Veterans Home. The Bell would be hung inside the structure rather than set on a base.

A stamped concrete walkway would lead to the Bell display with a wrought iron fence around the structure.

Local contractors have already been contacted and have signed on for the project.



## How to

**Donate:** This project is being funded 100 percent by donations to the Commander's Project. Donations are gladly accepted from individuals, Posts, Squadrons, Units, business's or departments.

Donations can be made to the Chapel Bell Project in two ways:

1. Mail your donation to the Department of Vermont at P.O. Box 396, Montpelier, VT, 05601. Make the check out to the "Department of Vermont". Please put *Commander's Project* in the memo line.
2. You can present your check in person to Department Commander Tester at any event that she is attending.



# ORATORICAL PROGRAM

My life as I knew it came to a screeching halt on Nov. 1 when I took a tumble at my home and fell onto a cement ramp outside my barn. This resulted in a fractured (L) femoral neck, 9 days in the hospital, 7 days in rehab and endless days at home trying how to figure out how to resurrect my life and keep a commitment to the Oratorical Program. So publicity for the Oratorical Contest hasn't been what I envisioned and I need your help. In the last Bulletin was a summary of the program and an application for students to complete for participation. Please spread the word to any teacher, parent or high school student. You can also find the same information on the Department website.

Well worth your time, consider **Volunteering at the 2022 National Oratorical Contest**. Meet dynamic high school students who can speak eloquently about our Constitution. Meet dedicated Legion Family members that support Legion youth programs. See Indianapolis in the **Spring**.

The American Legion is looking for volunteers to help with the 2022 National High School Oratorical Contest Finals in Indianapolis, April 23-24. Needed volunteer positions include judges, escorts, and holding room and assigned topic room monitors.

The contest is held is at the Wyndham Indianapolis West hotel where more than 53 high school youth from across the country deliver a speech on the U.S. Constitution. The support of many volunteers is needed to conduct the contest, which will provide more than \$203,500 in college scholarships.

Volunteers will be provided with specific contest details, a job responsibility and training. All expenses related to volunteering with the contest, such as travel, housing and food, are paid for by the volunteer.

Background checks will be done and easier accomplished when you volunteer early.

To volunteer, fill out the form online.

For God and Country,

Karlene DeVine, Chair

Department of VT Oratorical Program





**The American Legion High School Oratorical Program**  
**"A Constitutional Speech Contest"**  
**2022 APPLICATION**

(To be completed by student with sponsorship of American Legion Post)

Contestant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a United States Citizen? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If no, are you a resident alien? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Day Time Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## SCHOOL REPORT

High School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I first became interested in the Oratorical Contest when: \_\_\_\_\_

I will abide by all the rules of the Department of Vermont and The National High School Oratorical Contest Committee and follow the instructions of contest sponsors and chairman. I hereby attest that my Prepared Oration and Assigned Topic presentations are my original work.

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by American Legion Post or District: \_\_\_\_\_

Post or District Chairman or Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\***Must be postmarked no later than December 28, 2021**\*\*\*\*\*

Mail Application to:  
**THE AMERICAN LEGION**

Department Oratorical Contest

126 State Street, PO Box 396

Montpelier, VT 05601-0396

Or

FAX to:  
**(802) 223-0318**



## BOYS STATE CHAIRMAN

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*Dave Cobb*

December, 2021

Season Greetings, Legionnaires!

Your Boys' State crew is getting back in the swing of things as we prepare for GMBS 2022!

We have been reviewing the entire weekly program from 2019 – the last year we were able to run our full program without COVID-19 restraints.

We are working on creating all pertinent documents and information in digital formats – both .PDF and Google Docs, so they may be easily transmitted to schools and the Department of Vermont web site.

We are contacting our long-time supporting high schools, in order to have updated contact information and to learn more about how these schools function with respect to COVID rules and policies.

It is our intention to return to visiting as many schools as possible in-person to review and maintain how we can best work together toward a robust enrollment for 2022.

These topics and others are on the agenda for our **Winter Planning Meeting, December 11, 2021 at 10 AM. Location: Middlebury Post 27, 49 Wilson Road (off Rt. 7 South).** Many thanks to Commander Laura Flint and Adjutant Tom Scanlon for securing the location.

Legion members are welcome to attend if you would

like to learn more about Boys' State. If you would like to attend, please notify GMBS Director Dave Cobb so we can make proper arrangements. Typically, the meeting lasts about 90 minutes.

**DATES for 2022: Sunday, June 19 – Friday, June 24, at Northern Vermont University – Lyndon**

**Stay tuned to your monthly newsletter for timely updates on recruiting and programming** – as we work to provide a program of the highest quality for our young men. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, or any good ideas!!!!

For God and Country,

Dave Cobb

Director

Note: We received a very nice "Thank You" note from Melissa Jackson, CEO of the Vermont Veterans Home for our donation of Boys' State face masks from 2021. Always ready to help when we can!

D



**American Legion Auxiliary**  
**Department of Vermont President**  
**Francisca Massey**

**“President’s Project – Vermont Paws & Boots”**

Vermont Paws & Boots Mission Statement: “Vermont Paws & Boots assists disabled Veterans and First Responders by teaming them with rescue dogs and creating a bond allowing each to thrive again”

Vermont Paws & Boots



**\$10.00 per ticket – Many chances to Win! All Proceeds will go to Vermont Paws & Boots**



**1<sup>st</sup> Prize – Vermont Teddy Bear Co. - Cuddle Puppy (\*T-Shirt with Aux Emblem included)**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – Doggie Gift Basket with Gift Certificates**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – Handmade Full Size  
Patriotic Blanket**



**And Several More Surprises to Be Drawn!!!**

**To Purchase Tickets: Send Payment to ALA HQ – “President’s Project” – PO Box 192,  
Montpelier VT 05601**

**Drawing will be held at Department Convention June 2022**



# POST EVERLASTING



MORRISSETTE, GAETAN	03
PERREAULT, MICHAEL	10
MALLORY, JAMES	13
VESPER, BRIAN M	13
SWENOR, REGINALD J	19
NEWTON, LYNN R	23
HUTCHINS, HARRY G	26
GATES, JOHN W	26
DENTE, JAMES M	39
HAIGHT, WILLIAM G	49
TOWLE, CHARLIE	50
BENNETT JR., GEORGE A	58
DODGE, WALTER N	58
BOVAT, ROBERT	91
GIROUX, ROGER	91
PRIM, IRVIN	91



*“Whereas, we humbly bow to the will of Devine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts the memory of distinguished service to our country and outstanding contributions to American Legion comradeship. The American Legion does mourn the passing of these comrades. “*

# SON's Commanders Project

## Pathways Vermont Supportive Services for Veteran Families

### 2021 FACT SHEET

In partnership with



The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program is a national initiative funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs to address homelessness among veterans in the United States.

The SSVF program is housed in Vermont Veteran Services at the University of Vermont, with case management and housing services provided by Pathways Vermont. The program helps very-low income veteran households who are homeless or imminently at risk of homelessness gain and retain stable housing.

Services provided include needs assessment, intensive housing case management, assistance accessing VA benefits and financial assistance.

#### PROGRAM SERVICES

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families program provides short-term supportive services to participants to help them obtain and/or retain stable housing in 90 days. The program uses a Rapid Rehousing approach, meaning the program's priority is to support participants in developing a permanent housing option.

Intensive case management is the primary service provided. In certain cases, case management may be augmented by temporary financial assistance. This assistance is used to help with expenses related to securing housing, for example rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits and other related expenses. It should be noted that financial assistance is limited in amount and cannot be guaranteed.

#### FY22 FUNDING

In 2014 Pathways Vermont was awarded a subcontract from SSVF at UVM to provide case management and housing services for a Supportive Services for Veteran Families grant awarded by the Department of Veteran Affairs. The SSVF program operates in all 14 counties in Vermont and 6 counties in the eastern Adirondacks. We have to raise \$15,000 to cover expenses that the grant does not cover.

Source of funds	Amount
SSVF at UVM Department of Veterans Affairs Grant	\$48,000
Fundraising	15,000

#### FAST FACTS\*:

# 248

Vermont Veteran  
Families Housed

# 138

Vermont Veterans Supported  
to Positive Outcome

# 224

Instances of  
Homelessness  
Prevented  
(through temporary  
financial assistance)

# 183

Children  
Served

\*Through March 2021





## Department of Vermont American Legion

### “Foliage Gas Raffle”

1<sup>st</sup> Prize



2<sup>nd</sup> Prize



Donation: 3 Tickets for \$5.00

Drawing: Mid-Winter Conference







January 22, 2022

Mail tickets and payment to:

Department Headquarters  
126 State Street, P O Box 396  
Montpelier, VT 05601-0396



# Fall Foliage Gas Raffle Tickets

 <p><b>Department of Vermont American Legion "Foliage" Gas Raffle Donation-3 Tickets for \$5.00</b></p> <p>Drawing: January 22, 2022 1<sup>st</sup> Prize-\$250 gas card 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize-\$150 gas card</p>	Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____
 <p><b>Department of Vermont American Legion "Foliage" Gas Raffle Donation-3 Tickets for \$5.00</b></p> <p>Drawing: January 22, 2022 1<sup>st</sup> Prize-\$250 gas card 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize-\$150 gas card</p>	Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____
 <p><b>Department of Vermont American Legion "Foliage" Gas Raffle Donation-3 Tickets for \$5.00</b></p> <p>Drawing: January 22, 2022 1<sup>st</sup> Prize-\$250 gas card 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize-\$150 gas card</p>	Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____
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