



# AMERICAN LEGION

## DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT

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## October 2022 Bulletin

Messages from the Department Commander, Senior Vice Commander,  
District Commanders, and County Commanders

- National Commander's visit to Vermont in October
- Welcome Back, Larry Thompson, Dept. Service Officer
- Vermont Vets Town Halls
- Fall Conference Agenda
- And more....

## Department Commander



### *Tom Scanlon*

We now have a full-time certified DSO as well as an Assistant DSO who is in training for certification. Welcome back DSO Larry Thompson and thank you Bob Pearl for stepping down and up, taking the Assistant's position. This is a big win for our veterans. These are two individuals who genuinely care about veterans.

I was recently invited to represent the Department of Vermont at the birthday party for a member of the Ralph H. Pickett Post 52 in Wallingford. I was accompanied by PDC Tester at this 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Donald Shedd at the Victorian Inn in Wallingford.

It felt like I knew Don, in that a year or two ago I remember watching a segment on WCAX dedicated to him as a Super Senior. This was about three young brothers, ages 18, 19 and 20, who were determined to serve in WWII and who all enlisted in the Marines together in 1944. All three trained together, traveled to the Pacific together to fight, and all remained in the same unit. They were part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment. During this time, the 5<sup>th</sup> Marines fought on Guadalcanal, New Britain, New Guinea, Peleliu, and Okinawa. All three brothers were wounded, Paul on Guadalcanal, Bob at New Britain, and Don at Peleliu. However, all recovered and returned to Vermont.

It was truly an honor to meet this hero and veteran and to present him with a few tokens of the Department of Vermont's appreciation. I thank Commander Mark Loseby for the invitation and all the Post 52 members who were there supporting one of their own.



# BE THE ONE

**988 is the universal telephone number of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. Remember it and use it if necessary.**



## **Sr. Vice Commander - Mark Cloutier**

Greetings fellow Legionnaires.

It's that time of year again. Leaves changing colors, days are getting shorter and nights are getting colder. Don't know about you all but I am certainly not ready for it. Up here in the NEK we have already had a couple of heavy frosts, and this morning when I went to work it was 30 deg. Where did summer go?

With staying with the BE THE ONE theme, this month I am going to talk about buddy checks. Buddy checks serve two purposes. Buddy checks serve as a great membership tool but most of all it is a good way to check up on our fellow veterans that may need some assistance of some sort.

**How are Buddy checks done?** There are a couple of ways. First of all, you will need to have your post adjutant print up the post roster. Then you can either go door to door and pay a visit. Ok, you can make phone calls. But think about it, look for veterans on your list that are some of our older vets that may be lonely and just need someone to talk to. Invite them to a post activity that might be scheduled, or invite them to a post-meeting or post-dinner like the annual Birthday Supper dinners. Pay a visit to your GWOT vets. Especially if you are a GWOT vet yourself. Just the comradery can work wonders. This gives the veteran someone to talk to that could also be experiencing the same issues. This is where BE THE ONE comes into play. Talk to them and find out if there is anything they need or if there is anything you can do to help them. Sometimes just talking does wonders.

**How do you organize a Buddy Check?** Gather up a team of post members that are willing to take a couple of hours and are willing to either visit veterans in person or find a quiet place to make some phone calls. Once you have a list of veterans to call divide it up among those that are willing to do the Buddy Checks.

Two weeks are designated for Buddy check weeks. However, they can be done at any time. This first week is the week of The American Legion's Birthday. The second week is the week of Veterans Day. There is a tool kit on legion.org made especially to help with Buddy Check.

Veterans Day is not that far away. Please folks start making some phone calls or visiting someone just to say "Hey how are you doing today"

<https://www.legion.org/publications/252001/buddy-check-toolkit>

Be safe and stay healthy!

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

Mark Cloutier

Sr Vice Commander, Department of Vermont

*For God and Country*

## **Northern Area Commander Lou Furry**

Greetings Legionnaires,

It's time for the Fall Conference! This will be held at Vergennes Post 14, Saturday, October 22, 2022 – Check in 8:30 am. The agenda for the Fall Conference was provided in September's bulletin, but I have also included it here for your reference. As you can see, there will be a LOT of good information presented. All of us, from our newest to most senior members, can benefit from this. I'm a great believer in continuing education regardless of how long you've been around. I have 67 years' worth of life experience and still learn new stuff almost every day. Make plans to attend Fall Conference and learn some new stuff!

8:30am Registration

8:45am Opening ceremony – Department Commander Tom Scanlon

Welcome Vergennes Post 14 Commander Brian Gebo

9:00am Out of the Box – PDC Fred LaTour

- Revitalization of the American Legion through ideas

9:30am Membership – Sr. Vice Commander Mark Cloutier

- Membership Plan & Goals

- MyLegion.org Demo and Q&A

10:30am Break

10:45am Protocol and Etiquette – PDC Sparky Ferris

11:15am Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency – Sr. Vice Mark Cloutier

11:45am Morning wrap-up and take aways

Noon Lunch \*

1:00pm Green Mountain Boys State – Director Dylan McNamara

1:30pm Oratorical – Chair Karlene Devine

1:45pm Service Officer updates – Robert Pearl

2:00pm Front Porch Forum – Co-founder & CEO Michael Wood-Lewis

2:45pm Good of the Legion – Committee Chair updates

3:00pm Closing Ceremonies – Department Commander Tom Scanlon

As always, please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance. My contact information is: Lou Furry, PO Box 1286, Hardwick, VT 05843, Email: [trollfur@yahoo.com](mailto:trollfur@yahoo.com)



## Department Commander Honored by Middlebury College

By Victor Stone, Department Historian

On Tuesday September 13, 2022, Laurie Patton, President of Middlebury College, conducted a ceremony at the Kirk Alumni Center wherein she presented several Bonnie and John McCardell Citizens awards to five deserving recipients who have made significant, noteworthy contributions to the quality of life in the local community. Among those receiving this prestigious medal and citation was American Legion Department Commander Tom Scanlon.



Commander Scanlon's citation noted that he collaborated with the Vermont Department of Health and Porter Medical Center to set up a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Middlebury Post #27 and due to this effort more than 300 people a week received vaccinations during a six month period beginning in January 2021. In all, 19,300 vaccinations were given during this period. It was further noted that Tom plays a wide range of rolls in multiple aspects of the community by serving on the Middlebury Sports Commission, Addison County Transportation Advisory Committee, Town of Middlebury Public Safety Committee, Addison County Local Emergency Planning Committee and Town of Salisbury Emergency Management Director.

Accompanying Commander Scanlon at this event, which included a fine banquet, were Past Department Commander Cathy Tester and Department Historian Victor Stone. If you would like to learn more about this event, its history and a bit about the other awardees there is a fine article in the Addison County Independent which you can find at this URL: <https://www.addisonindependent.com/2022/09/15/seven-receive-mccardell-citizens-awards/>

To the left, Victor Stone, and Cathy Tester congratulating Commander Scanlon. Below, The five awardees plus Laurie Patton (third from right), President of Middlebury College





THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF VERMONT

**NATIONAL COMMANDER**  
**Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola**

**BANQUET**

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**

**Colchester Post 91**  
**Colchester**

**MENU:**

**Turkey with all the trimmings**

*Appetizers & Dessert*

**No host cocktail hour: 5:00 PM**

**Opening Ceremonies: 6:00 PM**

**Buffet Dinner: 6:15 PM**

**\$15.00 per person**

**Pay when attending dinner**

**RSVP by October 15**  
**to Department Headquarters**

**Email: [finalvt@talofvt.com](mailto:finalvt@talofvt.com)**

**802-223-7131**

**There will be time to present gifts/checks to the National Commander.**  
**His project is American Legion Veterans' and Children's Foundation.**



## **Sons of the American Legion Vermont**

Check out their webpage at <https://salvermont.com/> and see all the great things they do for the veterans of our state.

## **2nd District Commander David Perron**

Legionaries,

Hope this Newsletter finds everyone well and enjoying the upcoming fall.

October is here and let's all start planning for Fall Conference at Vergennes Post 14 on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> -check in 8:30 am.

Membership goal Veteran's Day - Nov 11,2022 GOAL-65 percent. **Lets do this!!!!!!**

As always membership is our big topic and let's all hit it hard, phone calls, knock on doors and a simple conversation in a grocery store could very well lead to a new member. It's all of our jobs to recruit a new member, not just the leadership.

**County commanders, please call your Post and start scheduling your evaluation visit it's important to do them early, it helps new Commanders, you can steer them in the right direction.**

**Once an evaluation is completed and sent to the Department. Please text or e-mail me post # completed so I can fill in my tracker.**

Post Commanders in District 2<sup>nd</sup> please reach out to me if you have any applicants for Oratorical program.

Looking forward to serving as 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commander/Evaluation Chair.

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

Thank you all for serving.

David W Perron

2<sup>nd</sup> District Commander/ Evaluation Chair

Contact #'s Home-525-3895 Cell 272-2793 [Perrondavid323@yahoo.com](mailto:Perrondavid323@yahoo.com)

## **4<sup>th</sup> District Commander Bill Brothers**

Hello everyone, another month has gone, and I hope all is good. I have been visiting posts and it has been great to see the posts activities that are happening and to see how their membership is going. It's been slow, I know everybody is working hard at membership and thank you for what you are doing.

Stay tuned for additional information on a District Caucus in the next two months. I am in the planning stages and hope to share more information next month about the schedule and meeting content.

I hope to see every post at the Fall Conference on October 22 in Vergennes Post 14. Attending conferences and conventions is a great way to learn and advise ways to help the legion family in meeting our goals for the up and coming year.

If your post has a coming event, submit your information to Cathy Tester to be included in the bulletin. Fair Haven Post 49 is raffling off a hunting blind, it's worth 2500.00 and tickets are 20.00 each. If you are in the Fair Haven area, stop by the post check out the hunting blind at eh post and purchase your tickets. If you win and don't want the hunting blind, there is a cash price of \$1,500 dollars

Please reach out if there is anything I can do to help you or your Post. I am here to help!

Bill Brothers  
4th District Commander

## **Department Adjutant Brian Markwell**

It's October already. Off to the Fall Meeting in Indianapolis on the 7<sup>th</sup>, getting back on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Always a great opportunity to meet and talk with the other Department Adjutants from around the country. After that is the visit from the National Commander from 16 to 19 October. Look for more details concerning his schedule of activities coming soon. Then it's on to the Department Fall Meeting in Vergennes on 22 October. The schedule of events will be out soon. For those planning to join us in Vergennes and need some assistance with logging into Legion.org, please bring your computer and we can work with you to make sure you are successful. Also, for posts who would like to set up their membership processing, we will be available to work with you in accomplishing this action. Please make sure you bring your bank account information.

As always, if you have any issues that we can help you with at Department, please call the Department phone number, 802-223-7131, and leave a message if no one is available to take your call live. You can also call me at 802-999-1026 if you have an issue that needs to be addressed.

For God and Country.

Brian Markwell  
Department of Vermont Adjutant



## **Addison County Commander – Bruce Paquin**

Fall has certainly arrived here in the great white north. With that means we are totally into our administrative year of 22/23 with all of our projects and membership work fully underway. In Addison County posts are already achieving great numbers in membership with everyone over 57 percent. To be exact, Bristol 19, is leading the pack with 62 percent, followed by Middlebury 27 at 58.5 percent and Vergennes at 57.5 percent. Well done legionnaires, you have made a true commitment to our organization with this effort. I look forward to the Mid-Winter Conference in Vergennes 14 on October 22, 2022, where I'm sure all of this great work will be recognized. I hope to see many fellow members at the fall conference, where I know a lot of useful information will be disseminated and shared. Until then, we still will be working our programs for the betterment of our veterans, their families, and our communities. I look forward to attending meetings in both Bristol and Vergennes in the near future. As always, if I can be of any assistance, don't hesitate to contact me.

Bruce F. Paquin

Addison County Commander, [Paquinv@comcast.net](mailto:Paquinv@comcast.net), 802 545 2800

## **Bennington County Joe Bump**

Fellow Legionnaires,

October has arrived. Remember we have Fall Conference on the 22nd at Vergennes Post 14. I will be contacting each post for evaluations over the next few weeks. I look forward to seeing you all soon. Keep searching for those members.. Membership, membership, membership. If you need me, don't hesitate to call.

As Always,

Joe Bump, Commander

Bennington County

## **Rutland County Richie Baptie**

Hello to all Legionnaires,

This past month I was able to attend two post meetings one at Rutland Post 31 and Fair Haven Post 49 . I would like to thank Commander Daniel Maniery of Post 31 and Commander Keith Cull of Post 49 for their cooperation and assistance. I also attended a reception at Poultney Post 39 for a WWII veteran, Frank Fresse who was given an Honor Flight. I would like to also thank 4<sup>th</sup> District Commander Bill Brothers for his assistance.

I am planning on visiting other posts within Rutland County in the next few months. If I can be of any assistance, please let me know.

For God and Country,  
Richie Baptie

## **National Commander's Incentive Program**

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola will award his national commander "Be Then One" membership excellence pin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2023 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2022 membership year. Transfers do not count as new members. Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your squadron or unit for use in their respective incentive programs. Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names in the national database and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.

Certification form can be found at [Legion.org](http://Legion.org)

## **Upcoming Events**

National Commander Visit	October 16-19, 2022	See schedule in bulletin
National Commander Visit	October 18	Colchester Post 91
Fall Conference	October 22	Vergennes Post 14
DEC Meeting	October 22	Vergennes Post 14
Mid-Winter Conference	January 20-21, 2023	Double Tree South Burlington
Annual Convention	June 23-24, 2023	Double Tree South Burlington

## **Legion Riders Director Lou Furry**

Greetings Riders,

It's October. The temps are falling, the leaves are showing their colors, and riding season is winding down. It's a good time to squeeze in that fall foliage ride prior to the downtime that is winter, possibly combining it as a fund-raising ride in order to make a contribution to next year's Legacy Scholarship Fund. Whatever you choose to do, please do it safely, enjoy the last rides of the season, and be safely back on the road next season. Are you seeing a trend here? Safety first, above all else. We've all seen what can happen when someone acts unsafely or has a momentary lapse in attention/judgment. Each and every one of you is far too important to be sidelined or lost in an accident. "Leaf-peeping" season brings out far too many distracted

drivers and riders. Defensive riding is more important than ever right now. I look forward to seeing all of you on the road next season!

Ride Safely,

Lou Furry, Director, American Legion Riders

## **Veterans Crisis Line 3-digit number**

As of July 16, 2022, Veterans and their loved ones are able to use a new, easy-to-remember number to reach caring, qualified responders 24/7. Key points are below, followed by additional suggestions.

- Callers may Dial 988, then Press 1
- Veterans will still be able to call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, and text 838255 to reach responders.
- 988 can be used immediately Take action

Here are some steps you can take right away to ensure the transition from the existing Veterans Crisis Line to the new 988 number is clearly communicated to Veterans, and the public:

- If you have a voicemail message for incoming calls, please update the message to include the new number
- Update your briefing and publication materials such as flyers and newsletters with the new logo
- Use a "Dial 988 then Press 1" email signature image and video conference background
- Continue distributing Veterans Crisis Line promotional materials. **All current materials with the 1-800 number are still relevant and can be distributed.**

*Veterans will still be able to call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, and text 838255 to reach responders.*

# BE THE ONE

TO **ASK** EVERYONE, TO INCLUDE VETERANS, IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.

TO **LISTEN** WHEN ANYONE, INCLUDING A VETERAN, NEEDS TO TALK.

TO **REACH** OUT WHEN ANYONE, INCLUDING A VETERAN, IS STRUGGLING.

## **The Department of Vermont Welcomes Back Larry Thompson as Department Service Officer**

As you are probably aware, The American Legion, Department of Vermont recently welcomed back Larry Thompson as Department Service Officer (DSO). Larry was reinstated as the Department of Vermont DSO at a special Department Executive Committee meeting on September 22, 2022. Robert Pearl was appointed as Assistant DSO at this same meeting. Welcome back Larry and thank you Bob for stepping up as the Assistant Service Officer.

There has been much confusion over the reasons for Larry's departure and what happened to bring about his return. The Department of Vermont has acknowledged that some procedures and protocols were not properly followed during the DEC meetings in January 2022 and the events which led to Larry's resignation and the subsequent acceptance by the Department Executive Committee of that resignation.

The National Organization of The American Legion became involved in this issue in June of this year and met with Legionnaires involved in each side. During those conversation, no facts were presented by either side that were in dispute. The only question that was presented to and researched by the Department Advisory Committee (which consisted of five Past National Commanders led by Tom Bock of Colorado) was whether the Constitution and By-laws of the Department had been followed. It was quickly realized that a mistaken interpretation of the Department Constitution was the root cause of the controversy.

**At no time was there any concern voiced over the quality of service that Larry had performed for veterans within the state. In fact, it was universally stated that the quality of Larry's work was exceptional.**

The controversy then simply boiled down to who was responsible for any oversight of Larry's work, and what was required of him in terms of reporting hours worked, and who specifically would provide any administrative aid.

Under the Constitution of the Department of Vermont, the Department Service officer is an officer of that corporation. While ordinarily he might be considered an "employee" of the Department, in a legal sense he is a member of the Board of Directors who also happens to receive a salary. Having acknowledged in principle that this error occurred, all parties to the controversy worked seamlessly with the Department and National representatives to accomplish what was required, namely, to bring Larry back as the DSO.

Regardless of events or levels of responsibility, this issue has been corrected to the satisfaction of all parties, and Larry is now back on board. He is ready, willing, and able to help our veterans. The Legionnaires of Vermont should welcome back this zealous advocate who works tirelessly to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits they earned through honorable military service.

**Once again Larry, welcome back.**

# The American Legion

★ DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ★ P.O. Box 396 ★ Montpelier, VT 05601-0396 ★  
Telephone (802) 223-7131; Fax (802) 223-0318



*For God and Country*

Special DEC Meeting  
Thursday, September 22, 2022  
7 P.M  
Montpelier Post 3  
ZOOM Attendance

Purpose of this meeting was to consider reinstatement of Lawrence Thompson as Department Service Officer.

*Motion by PDC Stanley Garland to accept Robert Pearl's resignation as the Department Service Officer, seconded by PDC Clark Ferris. After brief discussion the motion was approved unanimously.*

*Motion By PDC Stanley Garland to reinstate Lawrence Thompson as the Department of Vermont Service Officer.*

*Motion seconded by PDC Clark Ferris. After a brief discussion the motion was approved. Twenty-eight ayes, two nays and one abstain. Mr. Thompson will assume his duties as soon as possible.*

*Motion by Clark Ferris to appoint Robert Pearl as the Assistant DSO, Motion Seconded by Silas Loomis. After brief discussion the motion was approved unanimously.*

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Brian Markwell, Dept. Adjutant

/mla



**Department of Vermont American Legion**  
**Fall Conference – October 22, 2022**

**Vergennes Post 14**

8:30am Registration

8:45am Opening ceremony – Department Commander Tom Scanlon

Welcome Vergennes Post 14 Commander Brian Gebo

9:00am Out of the Box – PDC Fred LaTour

- Revitalization of the American Legion through ideas

9:30am Membership – Sr. Vice Commander Mark Cloutier

- Membership Plan & Goals

- MyLegion.org Demo and Q&A

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10:45am Protocol and Etiquette – PDC Sparky Ferris

11:15am Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency – Sr. Vice Mark Cloutier

11:45am Morning wrap-up and take aways

Noon Lunch \*

1:00pm Green Mountain Boys State – Director Dylan McNamara

1:30pm Oratorical – Chair Karlene Devine

1:45pm Service Officer updates – Larry Thompson

2:00pm Front Porch Forum – Co-founder & CEO Michael Wood-Lewis

2:45pm Good of the Legion – Committee Chair updates

3:00pm Closing Ceremonies – Department Commander Tom Scanlon

Department Executive Meeting 15 minutes after the closing of the Fall Conference.

Note: Times may vary in between sessions

\*Lunch of baked ziti will be provided by The American Legion Post 14.

**Post Everlasting**

GORDON, CONRAD ....03

LEAVITT, FRANK ....03

COATES, NORMAN .....03

WRIGHT, GEORGE C ...23

ROBERTS, KENNETH P ..23

LEACH, MIKE .....23

JARDINE, DAVID R ...23

MATTHEWS, Bernard ...23

DILLINGHAM, RAY ...25

ABBOTT, EDWIN .....36

HOLDEN, CHARLIE ...36

BLOW, SCOTT A .....43

WEEKS, HARLEY A ....52

TUCKER, ROBERT W ...63

DELUDE, REGINALD ...63

MASON, LEROY J ...76



## PACT ACT & GULF WAR, POST-9/11 ERA VETERANS



The PACT Act, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care eligibility to several groups of Veterans who may not have been eligible before.



Veterans who participated in a **toxic exposure risk activity** (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.



Veterans assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) certain locations during specific periods of time on or after:

- August 2, 1990**, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or United Arab Emirates
- September 11, 2001**, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, or any other country determined relevant by VA



Veterans who deployed in support of:

- Operation Enduring Freedom
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation Freedom's Sentinel
- Operation New Dawn
- Operation Inherent Resolve
- Resolute Support Mission



### SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD:

Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care **between October 1, 2022 and October 1, 2023.**



### Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Radiation
- Occupational Hazards
- Chemicals
- Warfare Agents

**ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022:** VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



The PACT Act adds **20+ new presumptive conditions.** Learn more online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

Participate in the [VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) to help VA better understand potential health effects of exposures and proactively identify health concerns Veterans can discuss with their health care providers for follow-up care.

**Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran** may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

### 4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387 Mon – Fri, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits [VA Form 10-10EZ](#)



Bring a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

### 4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at [VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claims/](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claims/)



Visit a VBA Regional Office [VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Call the Benefits hotline (for specific questions) at 1-800-827-1000



Work with an accredited VSO [VA.gov/oag/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://va.gov/oag/apps/accreditation/index.asp)



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)

## **Sons of The American Legion Advisor – Bruce Paquin**

I would like to start of my message with recognizing the membership efforts of several Squadrons who have embraced the task with true focus. Alburgh Squadron 60 - Creller-Landon, sprinting out with 57 percent, followed closely by Readsboro 29 - Walter L. Case Squadron with 55 percent. Great efforts are also being put forth by Squadrons 3 - Montpelier at 41 percent and 31 Rutland at 40 percent. Keep up the fantastic work, you are the standard we need to emulate. Our fall conference will be on Saturday, October 22 in Vergennes Post 14 where a lot of good information will be disseminated and shared. Also, being a DEC meeting, we do have some SAL housekeeping issues to address. We do need to ratify our Detachment slate of officers and chairman and review a constitution and by law change in reference to allowing electronic meetings (ie: zoom) to be allowed in place of in person gatherings. I will submit these issues to the DEC for your approval. I do look forward to seeing everyone there at the fall conference.

Bruce F. Paquin

SAL Advisor

[Paquinvt@comcast.net](mailto:Paquinvt@comcast.net) 802 545 2800

## **Oratorical Program Karlene Devine**



### **What's Happening ???**

The 2022 Annual Meeting of Department Oratorical Chairpersons in Indianapolis opened with Richard Anderson, outgoing Americanism Commission Chairman stating “To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. . .” as clarification of the Oratorical role for the American Legion and our civic responsibility under the Pillars of Americanism and Children & Youth.

There is a venerable history behind this opening. June 21, 1788 – U.S. Constitution Ratified. Article II, Section I, set forth the Presidential Oath of Office. Following was the Naturalization Act of 1790 addressing an immigrant’s application for citizenship. Since then, “To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. . .” has become part of the Armed Forces enlistment oath, the American Legion Preamble and Public Law 89-554 that established oath of office for all federal employees.

At the 2022 August National American Legion Convention, Anderson and David King(KY) Conference Chairman, sat with the 2022 Oratorical winner, Emma Noble. Emma reinforced the benefit of the program in her life. She affirmed that the length of the Prepared Oration made the accomplishment of winning stand out from other scholarship programs.

<https://www.legion.org/legiontv/PLD1D27913E787209F/48WuexbU8CU> Other Department Chairs also shared that their contestants view the American Legion's Constitutional Speech Contest as a defining opportunity.

Department Chairs at the Oratorical Conference shared **successes and challenges** in their experience of the Program. There were lessons there for all divisions of the American Legion.

- One enthusiastic Department chairperson noted that veterans of OIF(Operation Iraqi Freedom) and OEF(Operation Enduring Freedom) “don't like paper”, give it to them by TicToc or Instagram. Include subject matter with “#” to get their attention ie. #Constitution#speechcontest#AmericanLegion.
- Utah's Oratorical Program is successfully using Facebook, though it was noted that that media was one of my generation (the over 70's) and not the target audience of high school students.
- The American Legion partnered with National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA)several years ago. The NSDA awards points for participation in their program which in turn go towards scholarships. An oratorical participant is given double points for their effort in the Oratorical Program.

**How can you get more students to participate in the Oratorical?** Build your speech program.

- One Department distributes copies of the Constitution to graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders. (917 Society) <https://917society.org/constitution-education/> Concentrates on educating 8<sup>th</sup> graders. “917”stands for the month and date the Constitution was signed. This organizations distributes copies of the U. S. Constitution (free with a suggested donation)
- When your post sponsors a student, give the student a T-shirt identifying them as an American Legion Speech winner. Make it attractive so that they will wear it to school.
- Other organizations have speech contests. Find them in your community and distribute information about the American Legion program. A merit badge can be earned as an Eagle Scout for speech; 4-H has a speech competition; **Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development is the Future Farmers of America** speech competition; DAR, Rotary and Lions Clubs have forms of written and spoken speech competition.
- Avoid using the word “oratorical.” It is too esoteric. Several years ago, the American Legion coined “high school constitutional speech contest” (Leonard Normandeau's words ring in my ears now.)
- In the local schools, work through the school board president to gain entrance to the school for all your youth programs.
- Purchase an advertisement in your local high school student newspaper.

**The Practical, here, and now. Whether you have a student or not, please schedule *contest locations and dates*. When I call you with a student's name, it will be one less challenge in establishing a contest plan for your post or District.**

WANTED: District Commanders (District 2, 3, 5)

WHAT: Set a date for your District Oratorical Contest

WHERE: Within your district, a place suitable for having a small audience

**WHEN:** Anytime during **February 2023**

In the absence of District Oratorical Chairperson, this responsibility falls on the District Commander. District 1 and District 4 have chairpersons.

WANTED: Post Commanders

WHAT: Set a date for your post Oratorical Contest

WHERE: At your post or a nearby facility suitable for having a small audience (5-10 people)

**WHEN:** Anytime during **January 2023**

*By December 1, 2022, please send me the dates and location you have chosen.*

Coined at the inception of the American Legion, the slogan resonates today: "A Square Deal for Every Child."

Karlene DeVine, Department of Vermont, Oratorical Program Chair

## **Evaluations– David Perron**

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR POST EVALUATIONS**

Reference to Post Evaluations is not mentioned in the 2022 edition of the Post Adjutants Manual, nor is it identified as a responsibility. It is also not mentioned or referred to in the 2022 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies. However, it is mentioned and enumerated on in the 2022 District/County Commander's Guide. Section III, entitled "Post Evaluations and Analysis, Motivation & Recognition" wherein it outlines the visiting and evaluating of posts, analysis of post operations and the Post Responsibility Audit (PRA). This responsibility rests solely on the shoulders of the District and County Commanders as enumerated in this referenced manual. This is not to say that post officers could not do an evaluation or audit for internal use to identify strengths and weaknesses as a management tool. However, the official Department evaluation must be conducted optimally by the District Commander or at the very least by the respective County Commander.

One final and important note on evaluations; a District or County Commander must not evaluate their own post, particularly if they are an officer in said post. As an ethical issue, this could create the "appearance of impropriety" to some, if not all. It does not lend itself to having the appearance of being fair, neutral, impartial, and objective, to say the least.





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**THE 50 STATES TOUR**

WITH

**ERINN DEARTH & DAN BECKMANN**

COMING TO

**VERMONT**

AT

**THE SAVOY THEATRE**

**MONTPELIER, VT**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

**7:00PM**

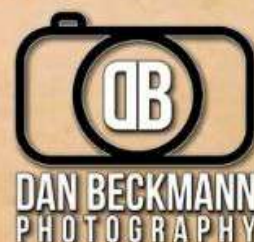
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## **VA Burn Pit Registration**

Veterans and Service members who have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater or operations on or after August 2, 1990, as well as those who have deployed to Afghanistan or Djibouti after September 11, 2011 can use the registry. For assistance with registering call 888-607-8773.

## **Membership Target Dates for 2022/2023**

Fall Meeting	October 13, 2022	55%
Veteran's Day	November 9, 2022	65%
Pearl Harbor Day	December 14, 2022	75%
Mid-Winter	January 19, 2023	80%
President's Day	February 15, 2023	85%
Legion Birthday	March 15, 2023	90%
Children and Youth	April 19, 2023	95%
Armed Forces Day	May 17, 2023	100%

## **Basic Training**

Learn about The American Legion in this self-paced online course. The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online at [www.legion.org/alei](http://www.legion.org/alei).

## **Vermont Vets Town Halls**

# VERMONT VETS TOWN HALLS

IT TAKES COURAGE TO STAND UP AND SPEAK. IT ALSO TAKES COURAGE TO SIT DOWN AND LISTEN.

Dear friends,

Registration is now open for this fall's Vets Town Halls in Vermont! At each of these events, veterans are invited to speak about what their service means to them. All community members - both veterans and nonveterans - are invited to attend and listen. RSVPs are optional, but help us plan. Learn more and register at the links below:

- [Oct 9 in Rutland](#): 1pm at the Godnick Adult Center

- [Oct 16 in Lyndon](#): 1pm at Northern Vermont University–Lyndon
- [Nov. 6 in Colchester](#): 1pm at McCarthy Arts Center, Saint Michael's College

Read on to learn about speaking at a Vets Town Hall, and other happenings and resources.

Warmly,  
Kristen

## Speaking at a Vets Town Hall



### **Tell us what your service means to you.**

Please tell us about your own experiences, whatever they may be, rather than speaking broadly about an issue or organization. You're a member of our community, and it's your stories, reflections, and insights that we're anxious to hear.

Each veteran will be given up to 10 minutes to speak. Veterans who would like to speak can contact [vermont@vetstownhall.org](mailto:vermont@vetstownhall.org), or mark that preference when registering on eventbrite. If you're considering speaking but prefer not to register, we encourage you to attend. After pre-registered speakers go, the host will take speakers from the floor, time permitting. The goal is for every veteran who would like to speak to have a chance to do so.

Of course, veterans (and all community members) are also welcome to simply attend and listen.

If you're interested in speaking but aren't sure what to speak about, [click here for some questions that can serve as starting points.](#)

*Photo is Sherman Hunt at last summer's outdoor town hall in Burlington. Courtesy of Megan Humphrey.*

## News & Notes



### **Vermont Adaptive Veteran Ventures**

#### **Ongoing**

Vermont Adaptive's programs are free for all veterans. September's schedule includes fieldcraft with Wild Roots Community Farm, mountain biking, rock climbing, apple picking, and more. [Learn more.](#)



### **Fieldcraft Weekend at Wild Roots Community Farm September 23-25th**

All skill levels welcome. Come hang out, camp out. Share knowledge & learn. Topics will include types of shelters, water procurement, firecraft, first aid, land navigation and small projects to keeps the mind sharp. Follow [@wildrootscommunityfarm](#) to learn more. (Wild Roots Community Farm is operated by Jon Turner, the host of the Colchester Vets Town Hall.)



## Vermont Veterans Outreach Program

Vermont Veterans Outreach Program - a program developed to care for the needs and reintegration issues of service members, veterans, and combat veterans - will be present at this year's Vets Town Halls and available to offer peer support. [Learn more.](#)

## 2022 Vets Town Halls



**Sunday, October 9th at 1pm**

### Rutland - Godnick Adult Center

Veterans are invited to stand before their community and speak about what their service means to them.

Non-veterans are encouraged to attend and listen.

These events are non-political, and all perspectives are valued. Hosted and organized by Kyle Aines. This event may take place indoors or outdoors depending on weather.

[Learn more.](#)



**Sunday, October 16th at 1pm**

### Lyndon - Moore Community Room on the Northern Vermont University - Lyndon campus

Veterans are invited to stand before their community and speak about what their service means to them.

Non-veterans are encouraged to attend and listen.

These events are non-political, and all perspectives are



valued. Hosted and organized by Marty McMahon.

[Learn more.](#)



**Sunday, November 6th at 1pm**

**Colchester - McCarthy Arts Center, Saint Michael's College**

At a Vets Town Hall, veterans are invited to stand before their community and speak about what their service means to them. Non-veterans are encouraged to attend and listen. These events are non-political, and all perspectives are valued. Hosted by Jon Turner.

[Learn more.](#)

**Thank you:**

2022 Vets Town Hall event hosts **Jon Turner, Kyle Aines, and Marty McMahon.**

Venue sponsors **Community College of Vermont, Northern Vermont University Student Veterans Association** and **Saint Michael's College Veteran and Military Community Services and Student Veteran Association.**

The **Vermont Veterans Outreach Program**, for being present and available to offer peer support at each event.

**The many other individuals & organizations who have provided support & advice!**