

POST ACTIVITIES

Legion Family delivers holiday cheer

American Legion Family members care for their community during the holiday season through monetary donations, Toys for Tots donation drives, meal deliveries, food donations and much more. Below are only a few of the many ways the Legion Family is giving joy this holiday season. Please share what your post is doing at

legiontown.org.

American Legion Post 34 and Auxiliary Unit 34 in El Reno, Okla., held its annual Gifts to the Yanks program fundraiser by hosting a poker run, live auction and dinner. Over \$2,924 was raised.

The money was presented to the El Reno High School on Veterans Day to kick off their 77th annual fundraising for Gift to the Yanks. "After the students have completed their fundraising, they will go shopping to buy and wrap all the gifts purchased," Unit 34 Secretary Debbie Wintermute said. "In December, the high school will hold its annual Gifts to the Yanks program assembly in the high school auditorium. At the end of the program, they load all of the wrapped gifts onto their school buses and go to Oklahoma City to the VA hospital. While spreading the holiday cheer by singing Christmas carols in the halls, they make sure that each and every veteran in the hospital



receives a gift! We are proud to have continued this for the past 76 years, having never missed a year!"

American Legion Post 89 in Stoughton, Mass., sponsored a Toys for Tots night on Nov. 19 that featured bands and dinner. Admission to the event was to bring a new, unwrapped toy. The post collected over 327 toys with more still coming in. "This is the 75th anniversary of Toys for Tots, and we were honored to be part of this program," said Michael L. Pazyra, Post 89 commander. "This was a great community event that highlighted what our post is all about - not only serving our veterans and their families, but also our community at large. A

special thanks to Post Senior Vice Commander Thomas McGauley for doing the groundwork for the event."

American Legion Post 5 in Emporia, Kan., held its first Toy Run to benefit the Salvation Army. Nearly 90 toys, games and other items for kids were donated through the drive, along with over \$300.

James R. Cutler American Legion Post 39 in Abilene, Kan., held its 25th annual Abilene Motorcycle Toy Run. About 70 Legion Riders from the post and surrounding areas brought in more than 150 toys for Toys for Tots.

Do you own an IRA or other qualified retirement plan?
Are you looking for a tax-wise strategy to make gifts to support The American Legion?

If so, consider making an IRA charitable rollover gift.

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If you would like to learn more about how to make an IRA charitable rollover gift, visit our website or call us to request a brochure by mail.

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- May satisfy your annual required minimum distribution, or RMD, up to the amount of your gift
- Allows you to give from pre-tax assets and your distribution is excluded from taxable income
- Helps avoid limits on charitable deductions and prevents you from being pushed into a higher tax bracket
- Simplifies the giving process. It's easy to do - just notify your IRA custodian
- Minimizes the effect your giving has on your cash flow. The gift is from your assets, not your checkbook

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and other veteran advocates receive action alerts from The American Legion on important legislative issues that the Legion is advocating for. “This number jumped by 20,000 through the PACT Act alone,” Kamin said. Sign up for the action alerts on the Grassroots Action Center web page.

He also encouraged Legionnaires to draft a plan on how to encourage more people to sign up for action alerts, engage in Legion legislative priorities and participate in local advocacy campaigns. This can be done through social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – sending emails or text alerts through various texting programs, such as EZ Texting.

“Instagram is the most popular social media platform. It is the preferred media for storytelling,” Kamin said. “It’s going to get you your highest views. It’s a place for telling your story, establishing a brand and garnering interest.”

There are several bills featured on the Grassroots Action Center that the Legion supports and calls on Legionnaires to contact their representatives to pass. A few of the bills are the:

- **Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act** that would expand eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility.
- **Afghan Adjustment Act** that would provide our new Afghan neighbors with access to a more streamlined and efficient lawful permanent residency process.
- **Veteran Service Recognition Act** that would protect non-citizen veterans from deportation and ensure that they and their families would still receive the benefits they earned if they are deported. This bill also expedites the process of naturalization for our non-citizen servicemembers.
- **STRONG Veterans Act of 2022** that would direct VA to establish a “Buddy Check Week,” provide educational opportunities, materials and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks, as well as require increased resources for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle any potential increased usage during the designated week.

AMERICANISM

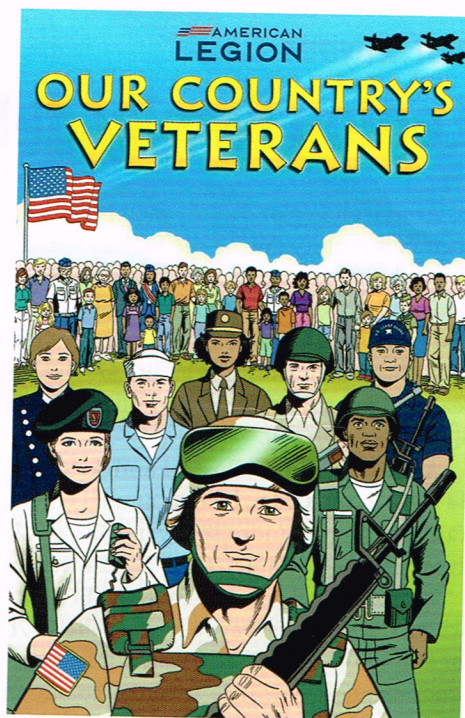
Updated comic book educates youth about veterans

The American Legion’s “Our Country’s Veterans” comic book educates youth about what a veteran is, the variety of roles they can do in the armed forces, their service and sacrifice, how to thank a veteran and how to be a good citizen. The comic book has gone through a recent major overhaul to update veteran war eras – to include Iraq – uniform and dress style, diversity, a representation of all six branches of services and more.

“Our Country’s Veterans” comic book is available for purchase through Emblem Sales (emblem.legion.org), Item No. 755.304. The cost is 75 cents a piece or 100 for 59 cents a piece. This comic book is an educational tool Legion Family members can give to elementary students to help them understand the military service of our men and women.

The story is about four youth who help with the dedication of a new veterans memorial, hear the stories and contributions of people they know who have served in military, and share in the importance of thanking America’s veterans.

The update to “Our Country’s Veterans” is part of the “Rally Around the Flag” campaign by The American Legion. Two other American Legion comic books, “I Pledge Allegiance” and “Our Country’s Flag” have also been updated but the new version of each are not yet available.



LEADERSHIP

Ask the national judge advocate

Do you have a question for American Legion National Judge Advocate Mark Seavey on a Legion-related issue? Email your question to dispatch@legion.org. And look for your answer in an upcoming digital Dispatch and on the Dispatch landing page, legion.org/dispatch.

