



# DECEMBER 2018 MEMBERSHIP IMPACT REPORT

A Report from American Legion National Headquarters



## TUNE IN JAN. 1, 2019

Tune in to see The American Legion centennial float in the 130th Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day. The parade is televised on ABC, NBC, Hallmark and other channels starting at 8 a.m. Pacific Time.

### VOICE

*"We are glad see VA taking the steps to do right by the veterans who have been underpaid or not received their GI Bill benefit payments. It has been the cause of undue stress for thousands of student veterans and it must be rectified."*

- American Legion National Commander Brett P. Reistad, in response to VA's promise to correct technological and processing issues that have delayed changes, inaccurately calculated veterans benefits and caused a backlog of claims due to Forever GI Bill changes that were mandated to occur Aug. 1, 2018, and now are on schedule to be made by Dec. 1, 2019. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said Nov. 29 that "each and every beneficiary will receive retroactively the exact benefits to which they are entitled under the law."

 **750**

National American Legion claims specialists prepared 750 informal hearing presentations for veterans disputing VA claims decisions in November.

 **4,500+**

Number of coaches and industry leaders expected at the 2019 American Baseball Coaches Association convention in Dallas Jan. 3-6. American Legion Baseball has a booth at the convention and will attend youth baseball committee meetings to discuss the coming season.

 **830**

Of the 830 appeals handled by American Legion VA claims specialists in November, 296 resulted in rulings favorable to the veteran and 338 were remanded, or sent back for more documentation. The American Legion personally appeared in 20 appeals hearings representing veterans in November.

 **532**

The American Legion's Overpayment & Debt Management offices in Philadelphia and Minneapolis prepared 532 claims for veterans, widows and dependents.

 **14**

The American Legion Discharge Review Board submitted 14 applications from veterans seeking changes in the characterizations of their military discharges.



# 65

The American Legion's VA Claims for Benefits Delivery at Discharge units in Salt Lake City and Winston-Salem, N.C., handled 65 cases for members of the Armed Forces nearing separation from military service.



# SWS

The American Legion's System Worth Saving Task Force and members of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division conducted a site visit to the Marion, Ill., VA Medical Center Nov. 19-21.



# \$204,807

As of Dec. 1, The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance national program had disbursed \$204,807 in cash grants in 2018, assisting 338 minor children of 160 veterans in need of shelter, utilities, food and clothing. In November alone, 17 families representing 46 children received \$23,776.78 in American Legion TFA grants.



# ROAR

The American Legion's Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) team made a site visit to the VA Muskogee Regional Benefits Office in Oklahoma Nov. 12-15.

## TESTIMONY

*"The growing diversity of veterans means that a system which primarily provided care to male enrollees must now evolve – and adapt – to meet the needs of all veterans and to provide them the best possible care. VA must continue to adjust to the changing demands of the population it serves."*

*- American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Deputy Director Greg Nembhard, testifying before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Nov. 29, in response to VA Inspector General reports citing unwarranted medical examinations for veterans seeking disability benefits, Intent to File processing mistakes and incorrectly denied post-traumatic stress disorder claims from victims of Military Sexual Trauma.*



# \$237,260

Through 11 months of 2018, the American Legion's National Emergency Fund had paid out \$237,260 in cash grants to posts and veterans affected by natural disasters.



# 58

Number of veterans who were tested and provided same-day results in the final American Legion-Abbvie "Take on Hep C" tour stop of the year, Nov. 15-17, at Homestead-Miami Speedway, home of the 2018 NASCAR championship race.

# LEGACY

**Jan. 20, 1989:** George H.W. Bush, a Houston American Legion member who served as a naval aviator during World War II, is inaugurated as the 41st U.S. president. He would go on to serve as commander-in-chief during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, the Gulf War that would bring the United States into military conflict with Middle Eastern dictatorships and terrorists. Early in his presidency, Bush would sign the Americans with Disabilities Act, which included active participation of American Legion leaders and wheelchair users Miles Epling of West Virginia (national commander, 1989-90) and Joe Frank of Missouri (national commander, 1996-97). President Bush passed away Nov. 30, 2018, at age 94.

*"His stoic leadership during the Gulf War was admired by not just the troops that he led, but by world leaders around the globe. He inspired Americans to give back to their communities. The American Legion was proud to present our highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal, to President Bush in 1991."*

*- American Legion National Commander Brett P. Reistad, following the death of former U.S. President George H.W. Bush*



**\$9,506**

Among the \$9,506 in grants distributed in November from The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program were gift cards for military personnel stationed overseas and support for a military veterans appreciation barbecue at the Anchorage, Alaska, VA Medical Center.



**16**

The American Legion Internal Affairs/Membership team conducted membership revitalization campaigns in 16 districts in Alabama, California, Delaware, Minnesota, Montana and New Jersey in November.



**100**

American Legion district membership revitalization efforts have taken place in more than 100 locations nationwide in 2018, benefitting more than 350 local posts.



**576**

Number of American Legion Junior Shooting Sports competitors from 88 cubs registered for the postal match season, which began Nov. 1. Registration deadline is Jan. 15 2019.



**\$22,620**

On Giving Tuesday, Nov. 27, The American Legion received 396 gifts worth \$22,620 for the Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly known as the American Legion Endowment Fund.



**36**

Through Dec. 1, 2018, 36 new American Legion posts have been chartered for the year.