

# Post 90 Gazette



March 2021

Edited by Amy Ostler

**WARNING:** Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package," which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package.

Also, never accept anything if you do not, personally, know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is. **See full story on page 3.**

## HAPPY 102<sup>nd</sup> BIRTHDAY American Legion

The American Legion was born during a global pandemic. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 50 million people died of an influenza outbreak which was first identified in 1918, spread rapidly in 1919 and continued into 1920.

An estimated 500 million people —one-third of the global population — were infected, according to the CDC.

**See full story on page 4**

## New rollout tool notifies high-risk Vets when to expect their vaccine

With two COVID-19 vaccines available for emergency use and deliveries starting at VA health care facilities, many Veterans are wondering when they can receive the vaccine.



Facilities will notify Veterans at high risk for contracting the virus or those who could develop serious illness about their eligibility and when they can expect to get their vaccine.

This is possible because of VA's new data outreach tool. **See full story on page 6**



## Commander's Column

Marti Bigbie

The Washington County Fairs has been changed to APRIL. This year Korean War Veterans will be honored on APRIL 15th 11 am at the Harmony Building. If you would like to be added to the Wall of Honor for this year's Fair please send photos to [military@washcofair.net](mailto:military@washcofair.net). The photos for the Fair seeks are either 1) from service time 2) after service, perhaps in some sort of Military garb, be it a cap with your service era on it. for example, "Korean War Veteran" or "Proud Navy Veteran" or "USS Tang", etc.

I still need the number that you spent helping fellow Veterans, Boys State, writing letters for our Veterans at the Veterans home. **Tony Moore and Michael Dingus** helped deliver 120 Valentine Cards in time for Valentine's Day to our Veterans home in Ivins.



Every day should be a day for BUDDY CHECK where we call on a friend, neighbor or fellow Veteran to check on them. Your time is one item that I need to log for our report due 6-1-2021.

Still in need of Christmas Card fronts for Christmas 2021. Old phone charges are in need for homeless Veterans.

Continue to be safe, wear masks, social distancing when in or at gatherings, Covid Shots - have you taken them or have you gotten scheduled?

BE SURE TO SIGN UP ON THE BALLOT THAT WAS IN FEBRUARY AND AGAIN IN MARCH FOR POST 90 OFFICERS - EXECUTIVE BOARD AND COMMITTEES. IN APRIL at the Board Executive the final slate of officers will be voted on and then at the May dinner meeting will be installed.

I will try to get the schedule of events out every other week so you can pick and choose which events to attend.

## Commander Department of Utah

Marti Bigbie

With the help of Department/Area/District/Posts/Members we are achieving the goal Numbers set by National for renewing those unpaid members for 2021. Also, we have added several new members. We still have a ways to go for our 100% year-end Goal. Continue to keep and update the CPR information due 6-1-2021.

## Be Aware of a New Scam

The following is a recounting of the incident from the victim:

Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone saying that he was from some outfit called: "Express Couriers," (The name could be any courier company). He asked if I was going to be home because there was a package for me that required a signature.

The caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in, roughly, an hour. Sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and a bottle of wine. I was, very, surprised since there was no special occasion or holiday, and I, certainly, didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued, I inquired as to who the sender was.

The courier replied, "I don't know, I'm only delivering the package."

Apparently, a greeting card was being sent separately. (The card has never arrived!) There was also a consignment note with the gift.

He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a \$3.50 "delivery/ verification charge," providing proof that he had, actually, delivered the package to an adult (of legal drinking age), and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone, especially a minor.

This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the delivery company required payment to be by credit or debit card only, so that everything is, properly, accounted for, and this would help in keeping a legal record of the transaction.

He added, "Couriers don't carry cash to avoid loss or being, likely, targets for robbery."

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled out his credit card, and the "delivery man," asked him to swipe the card on a small mobile card machine with a small screen and keypad. Frank, my husband, was asked to enter his PIN number and a receipt was printed out. He was given a copy of the transaction.

The guy said everything was in order, and wished us good day, and left.

To our, horrible, surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, \$4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from our credit/debit account at various ATM machines.

Apparently, the "mobile credit card machine," which the deliveryman carried, now, had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details including the PIN number.

**WARNING:** Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package," which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything if you do not, personally, know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is.

Above all, the only time you should give out any personal credit/debit card information is when you yourself initiated the purchase or transaction!

PLEASE, pass this on, it may just prevent someone else from being swindled.

## Happy Birthday American Legion!

The American Legion was born during a global pandemic. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 50 million people died of an influenza outbreak which was first identified in 1918, spread rapidly in 1919 and continued into 1920. An estimated 500 million people —one-third of the global population — were infected, according to the CDC.

The doughboys of World War I suffered greatly. Though it was frequently referred to as the “Spanish Flu” some trace the first outbreak to Camp Funston, Kansas. In 1918, more than 121,000 sailors and Marines were admitted to Navy hospitals for influenza. It is estimated that the disease caused many of the 63,114 “non-battle deaths” of U.S. servicemembers during World War I.

Yet, out of the ashes of what was then the deadliest war in world history and in the mist of what is still the worst flu pandemic ever known, came an organization that was devoted to, among other things, “mutual helpfulness.”

Strong evidence suggests that The American Legion was not organized in spite of these hardships but because of them. Life was not easy for the founders of The American Legion. They had experienced trench and chemical warfare, earth-shattering artillery, dysentery, cholera and typhoid. They watched many of their closest comrades die before the nation’s pre-eminent World War I organization would even come to be.

Yet it did come to be. In Paris, France, March 15th through 17th, 1919. This new organization of American veterans of the “Great War,” would later develop a constitution with a Preamble pledging to “promote peace and goodwill on earth.”

It is a pledge that Legionnaires continue to repeat during the opening of every American Legion meeting. The founders had experienced the horrors of war and felt a special obligation to avoid future conflicts unless America was truly threatened.

In 2019, the nation’s largest and most respected veterans organization celebrated its centennial. A year into its second century of service, The American Legion inspired its members again to answer their nation’s call ... so it could weather another global pandemic.

Social-distancing and safety became priorities, but service remained the mission. American Legion Family members made facemasks, collected gloves and provided other personal protective equipment for first responders and health-care workers.

Posts served as supply centers and drive-thru food pantries. Departments held online job fairs for veterans and their spouses. Blood donations were made in American Legion parking lots and meeting halls.

As a precaution, many of the traditional large American Legion Family gatherings were either put on hold or morphed into teleconferences.

Throughout the year, National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford sent a consistent and clear message that not even a global pandemic would stop The American Legion from its mission — veterans strengthening America.

“We have faced down enemies, foreign and domestic throughout our nation’s history. While the threat is ominous, we will once again work together to overcome it,” he vowed.

After receiving a donation of 250,000 facemasks from the organization’s close allies in Taiwan, The American Legion quickly sent 10,000 of the coverings to the Holyoke Soldiers Home in Massachusetts. The facility had been ravaged by COVID-19, which reportedly took the lives of 76 patients there.

“We owe it to our nation’s veterans to ensure that these types of tragedies do not repeat themselves,” Commander Oxford said.

The economic consequences of the coronavirus have been devastating. Businesses shut down, vacations were cancelled and lawmakers argued over the size of relief packages.

During a virtual meeting of the National Executive Committee in October, American Legion leaders passed a “Buy American” resolution, which called for the return of manufacturing from overseas and the creation of more domestic production of goods.

The N.E.C. also established a Mission Blue Post Assistance Program, which provides one thousand dollar grants to active American Legion posts that participated in at least one American Legion program in the most recent 18 months and were adversely impacted by health protection restrictions.

Crisis response is nothing new to The American Legion. Its National Emergency Fund has provided relief to natural disaster victims for decades. During the prolonged government shutdown of 2019, The American Legion provided more than one million dollars of Temporary Financial Assistance to Coast Guard families who experienced payment delays.

The American Legion’s commitment to service has continued throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Post 483 in Queens, New York has regularly provided meals and delivery to area home-bound veterans and seniors in need.

The American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors program provided an \$18,000 grant for the purchase of iPads so hospitalized patients in the VA Minneapolis Health Care System can have virtual visits with their loved ones.

American Legion Post 176 in Springfield, Virginia, joined with Philips North America as a tele-health host, so patients would not have to risk additional exposure when traveling for medical appointments. The initiative, Project ATLAS, is expected to spread among many participating American Legion posts.

Post 65 in South Phoenix, Arizona, teamed with the HeroZona Foundation to provide thousands of free drive-thru COVID-19 tests to residents of the Grand Canyon State.

The results of an American Legion COVID-19 survey indicated that forty percent of veterans believed that communication with friends and families was the most important factor in their emotional well-being.

Prior to the pandemic, an estimated twenty veterans a day were committing suicide. From 2020 to 2021, The American Legion Buddy Check program took on an even greater importance.

Legionnaire Leroy Lippi, Jr., of Post 272 in Linglestown, Pennsylvania conducted no fewer than 438 buddy checks in less than one month.

Jennifer Havlick, a Legionnaire from Post 109, in Two Harbors, Minnesota, led nightly Zoom meetings and mobilized what she terms “enhanced Buddy Checks,” to communicate with — and run errands for — veterans quarantining at home.

In early 2021, the American death toll from the coronavirus surpassed U.S. losses in World War II. The American Legion has not been immune. Most vulnerable were members of the Greatest Generation, though every age group has been affected.

The challenges of The American Legion’s one hundred and first year were not lost on its national commander. Quote: “We are meeting differently,” Commander Oxford said. “We are serving differently, but we are still serving... 2020 is year that many would like to forget, but I truly believe it could be our finest hour.” – unquote.

As the American Legion observes its 102nd birthday, it does so in a spirit of remembrance. Equally prevalent is a spirit of optimism. As vaccines are administered, American Legion posts will continue to play a role.

Just as The American Legion survived and thrived through the Spanish Flu pandemic during the early days of the organization, America's wartime veterans will ensure that The American Legion Family overcomes the current challenge and prospers in its one hundred and second year and beyond.

America needs a strong American Legion, especially in times just like this.

God Bless you and God Bless America!  
# # #

## **New rollout tool notifies high-risk Vets when to expect their vaccine**

With two COVID-19 vaccines available for emergency use and deliveries starting at VA health care facilities, many Veterans are wondering when they can receive the vaccine.

Facilities will notify Veterans at high risk for contracting the virus or those who could develop serious illness about their eligibility and when they can expect to get their vaccine.

This is possible because of VA's new data outreach tool.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach for Veterans software program uses data in the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) databases to find Veterans who are in high-risk groups. Because the vaccines are new and in high demand, quantities are limited. They're being given to the most at-risk groups first.

Using database to sort Veterans by age and health conditions  
VA follows the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to determine who should be offered the vaccine first when supply is limited. Since VA medical records are electronic, facilities can use the VSSC database to sort Veterans by their ages or if they have high-risk health conditions.

It can then provide medical facilities with a list of Veterans who should be offered vaccine first.

Pictured above, registered nurse Sandra Getchell gives the COVID-19 vaccine to World War II Veteran Margaret Klessens, 96. Klessens is a resident of VA Bedford Healthcare System's community living center.

Klessens was the first VA patient nationwide to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and has now received her second vaccine. (VA photo by Kat Bailey)

"The Vaccine Outreach for Veterans program was designed to review records of all Veterans receiving care throughout the VA health system to determine their risk level and when they should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine," according to Stacey Campbell, VSSC's deputy director.

Tool ensures Veterans can be easily identified  
VSSC worked with the COVID-19 Vaccine Project National Integrated Project Team (IPT) Prioritization Group to develop the tool and ensure that Veterans could be easily identified based on age or underlying conditions.

The tool uses patient identifiers to show a patient's medical conditions, age, gender, and serious and pre-existing health conditions. It also shows current disease treatments, such as chemotherapy or dialysis, and other risk factors for severe COVID-19, such as smoking or obesity.

A patient's medical record can reveal a patient's interest in receiving the vaccine. It also contains contact information so their local facility can notify them of their prioritized eligibility.

Veterans may be notified by their local facility using traditional mailing or electronic notification systems. These systems include VEText or My HealthVet. Veterans also may receive calls from patient case managers.

Important tool to keep Veterans healthy and safe

“It’s helpful if providers that Veterans know and trust for their care help with outreach. We want Veterans to know this is an important tool to keep them healthy and safe,” said Patti Wallace, the senior clinical advisor for the VHA Office of Healthcare Transformation. She was instrumental in bringing the work of the IPT together with VSSC for use in the field.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has multiple phases for the vaccine based on availability. Most VA facilities are in the first phase (Phase 1a), which ensures the most vulnerable people get the vaccine first.

VA facilities can start offering vaccines to those covered under Phase 1b of the CDCs allocation guidelines when they have made good progress through Phase 1a.

Dr. Jane Kim is the chief consultant for preventive medicine at the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. She has been leading a team of experts, including public health, infectious disease, pharmacy, ethics and equity in anticipation of the vaccine rollout.

Dr. Sophia Califano is the deputy chief consultant for preventive medicine. She worked with these experts to adapt CDC guidance on phased allocation of vaccine for VA. Her team worked closely with the VSSC team to develop the software tool and ensure it captured the right information and made it easy for facility outreach teams to contact Veterans.

Ensuring those most at risk are at the front of the line

Califano noted that the process to determine risk levels is intentionally straightforward to help Veterans understand why they are being offered the vaccine and how it may benefit them. This ensures that those most at risk are at the front of the line and phases can move quickly. The goal is to quickly offer the vaccine to as many staff and Veterans as vaccine supply permits.

Veterans who would be eligible in Phase 1b due to their profession may have access to the vaccine through their place of work before enough vaccine is available through VA. All Veterans and staff are encouraged to get vaccinated at their first available opportunity.

For example, their state may offer them the vaccine before VA does. You can provide a picture of the COVID-19 vaccination card to your VA provider through secure messaging and request it be added to your records.

“We want to encourage Veterans to get the COVID vaccine as soon as it becomes available to them,” Califano said. We believe this is the best path forward and the best way to protect you and your family.”

Updates on COVID-19 information will be posted on the VA Access to Care website. Also, information on COVID-19 vaccines at VA can be found [here](#).

# ELECTION/VOTE FOR POST 90 OFFICERS-EXECUTIVE BOARD

It is time to volunteer for Post 90 Officers/Executive Board and positions for the 2021/2022 membership year starting 7-1-2021 to 06-30-2022.

Elected Positions (some of listed but can have seconds or more)

Position	Currently Serving	Volunteer or nominee
Post Commander	Marti Bigbie or someone to volunteer to take this position:	_____
Vice Commander	Terry Dunne	_____
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander	(membership) James Webb	_____
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander	(Boys State) Floyd Smith	_____
Adjutant	Available position	_____

**Appointed Positions Like volunteers but willing to work in these positions**

Service Officer	Terry Dunne	_____
Finance Officer	Brooks Reece	_____
Chaplain	Don Oborn, Terry Dunne, Floyd Smith, Paul Cramer, Thomas Lystrup	_____
Sgt. At Arms	Paul Cramer, Mike Dinges	_____
Historian & PR	Mike Dinges	_____
Judge Advocate	Thomas Lystrup	_____
Ritual Team	Calvin Jensen, Terry Dunne, Foster Johnson	_____
Event Coordinator	Brooks Reece	_____
Membership	Terry Dunne, James Webb	_____
Post Newsletter	Amy Ostler	_____
Post Newsletter Contributor of news/articles	Mike Dinges	_____
Women's Auxiliary	Judy Oar	_____
Baseball Team Liaison	Terry Dunne – will call for volunteers when needed	_____
Post 90 Website caretaker	Amy Ostler	_____