

Post 90 Gazette



OCTOBER 2021 Edited by Amy Ostler



National Commander Paul E Dillard's response to a September 24th Wall Street Journal piece was published in today's edition.

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For reference, I have included the piece by editorialist Faith Bottum, as well. And, attached, is the 1971 article.

POTLUCK and General Post Meeting is BACK!

October 27th at 6:00 PM at the Legion Hall.

Chili Cook Off (outside judges)

FOOD MUST ARRIVE BY 5:45 PM if to be judged

A-G Salads H-M Vegetables N-S Dessert T-Z Bread, butter

Hope to see you there!!

Warbird Fall Fly-In

Friday & Saturday
October 15 & 16, 2021

See full details on page 11

Warbird Fall Fly-In
Friday & Saturday
October 15 & 16, 2021

St. George, Utah Regional Airport

Admission:
\$5 per person
17 yrs & under free

9 am - 4 pm

If you are interested in taking an aircraft to the event, please contact Jack Fisher at (435) 634-2579.

This is a flying event and not an airshow.

Please watch aircraft as they go out for starting flights. For the museum and shop, the museum gift shop.

The St. George VA clinic is offering walk-in flu shots for the first three Saturdays in October.

Please join us from 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. on October 2nd, 9th, or the 16th at the St. George VA clinic located at:

230 North 1680 East, Building N St. George, UT 84790-2579

For additional questions call the clinic at 435-634-7608.

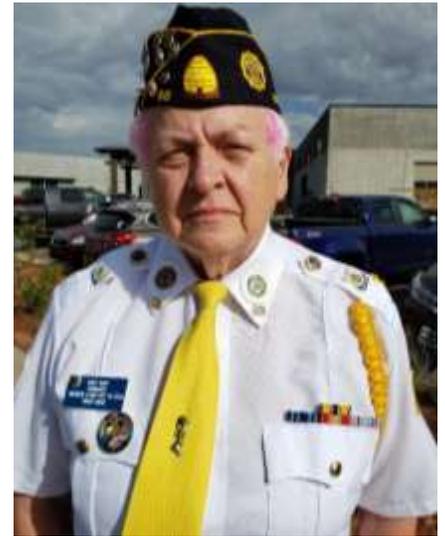


Commander's Column

Marti Bigbie



Sure feels like FALL is here with the cooler temperature and winds which will help members to come out to help and attend our upcoming events. THANKS to members of Post 90 as we were able to reach the 50% paid membership for September NOW have to work towards all the other paid up membership goals. IF YOU have not renewed or if you need help with membership for the 2022 membership year, PLEASE give me a call so arrangements can be made to help with membership dues. IF NOT renewing please let me know also so your name can be removed from future mailings from National.



We are having our dinner meetings again at the Legion Hall. October 27th at the Legion Hall meeting starts close to 6:00 PM and if you are bringing a dish to be judged MUST be there by 5:45 PM so it can be judged and we can eat while everything is still warm/hot. There will be outside judges. PLEASE remember we are a family so bring your family members to the dinners.

Jeff Mckenna author of "Saving Dr. Warren..." "A True Patriot (our own Flag Man, Mr. Warren" is mentioned in the book) will be with us on October 27th.

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR MEMBERS TO COME JOIN THE RITUAL TEAM/HONOR GUARD to help with funerals and special events. If interested please call Calvin Jensen 435-630-5856, Terry Dunne 435-668-9186, Jerry Randall 661-331-9458 or EIRay Robinson 435-757-0502 (NEW Ritual Team/Honor Guard committee looking for members to help with funerals).

Future upcoming events that we will need help with are Veterans Day activities, Pearl Harbor, Wreaths Across America and of course Elves for Christmas for our Veterans/families.

As part of the BUDDY CHECK please keep track of all the events/visits to Veterans/telephone calls, emails made to fellow Veterans, money spend, visits to schools, blood drives and then send to Marti so they can be added to the CPR (online soon) so our time can be recorded. Thanks for your help.

Area 4 Commander's Column

Marti Bigbie

50% Paid membership was extended to September 22nd by National.

In Area 4 District 6 was at 51% paid membership, Post 92 Loa had paid membership of 39 out of goal of 40 for 98% District 7 was at 55% Post 81 Minersville is 100% paid members with 13 total members their goal for 2022 I will be keeping watch on the NEW members for each post as for every 3 new members the National Commanders Pin can be awarded to that recruiter.

As part of the BUDDY CHECK please keep track of all the events/visits to Veterans/telephone calls, emails made to fellow Veterans, money spend, visits to schools, blood drives and then forward to your Adjutants/Commanders for the CPR reports that each POST MUST submit to National by 6-1-22. Do not wait until the last minute as we might miss some activity/time/money that helps American Legion when National Commander Paul E. Dillard goes before congress.

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American Legion Leaders,

National Commander Paul E. Dillard's response to a Sept. 24th Wall Street Journal piece was published in today's edition. Below is that response.

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V/R,

John Raughter



The American Legion Isn't Going Anywhere

Predictions of the veterans' organization's demise have been off before.

The Sept. 24 op-ed by Faith Bottum ("Old Veterans Organizations Are Fading Away") is eerily similar to another Journal article: "American Legion, Once Civic and Social Power is Slowly Fading Away" by reporter P.F. Kluge. "The old members are dying off and the young ones aren't interested," says a veteran quoted in Mr. Kluge's piece. "Younger veterans simply don't join clubs the way older generations did," writes Ms. Bottum.

I must have been one of the veterans that Mr. Kluge believed wasn't interested. You see, his piece was published on May 19, 1971. More than 50 years later, the American Legion is still here and it is still the largest veterans' organization in the country. In recent years, the American Legion has been the lead organization responsible for the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the VA Mission Act and the Veteran Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act. In fiscal year 2020, our corps of more than 3,000 service officers and representatives across the nation was responsible for obtaining more than \$14.25 billion in compensation benefits earned by veterans and their families.

The 2016 Democratic and Republican nominees for president must not have believed we were fading away when they both chose to attend our national convention and address our delegates in the middle of a busy campaign season.

There are more than twice as many American Legion posts in the U.S. today as there are Walmart's. The Journal was wrong 50 years ago and is off base today.

PAUL E. DILLARD

Indianapolis

Mr. Dillard is national commander of the American Legion.

Old Veterans Organizations Are Fading Away

Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines don't join the VFW and American Legion like they used to.

By Faith Bottum

Sept. 23, 2021 1:28 pm ET



An honor guard member plays taps on a bugle during a Memorial Day Service in Grove, Ohio, May 31.

PHOTO: STEPHEN ZENNER/ZUMA PRESS

Peggy Randle is 85 and lives alone with her cat, Max, in Boulder City, Nev. She also fires rifles at veterans' funerals. A nurse in the Navy during the Vietnam War, Ms. Randle belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other organizations that help provide military honors when soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are laid to rest.

"The cat isn't much of a conversationalist," she says, "and I still have something to give. I can still stand up there and fire that M1. I can still help with the 13 flag-fold. I can still do all of those things, and I'm going to do them as long as I can."

Veterans across the country report the same experience: declining membership in the VFW and American Legion, and the difficulty putting together honor guards for funerals. The VFW had its origin in 1899 gatherings of veterans of the Spanish-American War. The American Legion began after World War I, at a 1919 meeting in Paris. Both started as essentially interest groups but quickly grew into vast national networks of local social clubs.

Those clubs would host civic programs such as essay contests, Friday fish fries and scholarships for veterans' children. The American Legion's summer baseball program was once so extensive that few high schools bothered to organize their own teams, and more than 3,400 local teams are still active today.

The VFW has around 1.5 million members, a drop of a million from 1992. The average age is 67, with 400,000 members over 80. The largest organization of veterans' clubs, the American Legion, has two million members, down from 3.3 million in 1946. Kenneth Hagemann, 59, is a retired Marine and deputy adjutant of the VFW in New Jersey. There are 218 posts left in the state, he explained, but "in 10 years, I think it will be 175. We go down every year."

One reason is simply the decline in numbers of veterans. During World War II, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 16.5 million Americans served in the armed forces. Estimates of those who served in the war on terror over the past 20 years hover around three million.

There's another reason the old organizations are fading: Younger veterans simply don't join clubs the way older generations did. Partly this reflects a general decline in community organizations—the sociological transformation that Robert Putnam observed in his 2000 book, "Bowling Alone." Americans aren't joiners. Not like they once were.

But the VFW and American Legion are also shrinking because many veterans from the past 20 years carry with them a more ambiguous sense of both their military experience and their relation to established American institutions. "Vets now don't look for comfort in person at clubs," said Alexia Hodgson, an Army second lieutenant in Anchorage, Alaska. Social media, she suggested, fills some of the gap. "A lot of vets I know . . . talk about their life and experiences, both in and out of the military, over Reddit, Discord and Twitter."

"My generation engages in a different way," added the novelist Phil Klay, a retired Marine and winner of the 2014 National Book Award for his short stories about military service in Iraq. "We tend to be more issue-focused than the old local organizations"—and yet, he admits, "it's important to keep memories alive through local rituals." The difficulty in providing honor guards, he said, symbolizes a worrisome detachment of his generation from local communities. When younger veterans do join a group, they tend toward newer and more service-inspired national organizations such as Team Red, White & Blue or Team Rubicon.

Something important is lost, however, when the local connection is broken. "I was still on active duty when my grandfathers passed away, and I went to the funerals in uniform," said Josh Hauser, a former Marine staff sergeant in Hollsopple, Pa. "That was the first time I realized who takes care of this very important thing, because it was a local VFW that did the military honors."

And what will happen when those old veterans' clubs are gone? The social-club model simultaneously integrated veterans into the local community and gave them a sense of national importance. "I sometimes can't comprehend how we're able" to get to all the funerals, said Robert Garlow, honor-guard commander for VFW Post 36 in Nevada. "Yeah, we feel stretched thin, but it's something we really want to do." Consciously or not, they're right to feel a personal and sociological significance in what they do. The old local community organizations understood the importance of attending funerals to comfort the family and honor the service of the dead.

"They've earned it," Ms. Randle explained. "And maybe someday someone will think I've earned it, too."

Ms. Bottum is the Joseph Rago Memorial Fellow at the Journal.

Bygone Battles

American Legion, Once Civic and Social Power, Is Slowly Fading Away

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It Fails to Recruit Young Vets Of Vietnam, Tries to Shed Aura of Hawkishness & Age

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Fish Fry in Crooksville, Ohio

By P. F. KLUGE

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

LOS ANGELES-It is dark and quiet in the bar of Teddy's Rough Riders American Legion Post 516. Three aging drinkers murmur reminiscences of wars past, but there is no one in the "peek and ponder" card room, the patio, the run-down meeting rooms. The property is for sale.

"I've got my hand on the pulse of things, and we're going down, down, down," says Benton Adams, 68. "The old members are dying off and the young ones aren't interested. We talk until we're blue in the face, but they're still not interested. Half a dozen guys keep this post going, and they're mostly from World War I, like me." (Mr. Adams, who concealed his true age to get into the Navy, is one of the youngest veterans of World War I.)

Across the U.S.A. it is much the same. The American Legion, once a powerful organization with clout ranging from Pennsylvania Avenue to Main Street.,once a hub around which revolved so much of community social and civic life is slowly ebbing in importance. Visits to many posts reveal the same pattern: The men who fought at Chateau-Thierry and Tarawa are fading away, and they aren't being replaced by veterans of a war whose best-known engagement may turn out to be My Lai.

For the Record, Optimism

The Legion is trying to react, trying to preserve itself. Rock music plays in Legion halls that once knew nothing more avant garde than the polka. Legion officials personally visit the battlefield, trying to spur interest among veterans-to-be, while at home Legionnaires armed with computer printouts supplied by the Veterans Administration buttonhole the newly discharged. The Legion is muffling its hawkishness, its conservatism, and is considering liberalizing its membership standards.

Legion officials still express optimism, at least for the record. "As long as we have wars, there will be organizations like the Legion," declares national commander Alfred P. Chamie, who claims that 325,000 Vietnam-era vets have already joined. On the face of it, the Legion appears to be growing a

bit, not shrinking. At the end of 1970 its membership stood at just under 2.7 million. a net gain of about 150,000 from the low of 1964.

In 1946, the high for Legion membership, more than 3.3 million men were enrolled, however. And observers say that in several ways the feeble upturn in membership in the past couple of years is more a sign of trouble than of revival.

The Legion generally has a sizable net gain in membership after a war; the important thing, critics say, is that it has gained so little from the current one. As of June 1970 Vietnam-era vets (those members of the armed services discharged sometime during the conflict) numbered 4.2 million. As for the Legion's claim of 325,000 new recruits, a Washington source estimates that all but 25,000 to 50,000 of these are career soldiers who in many instances began their service in World War II or Korea and just happened to end it during the Vietnam war. They hardly represent an infusion of young blood, he says.

"We Have Nothing in Common"

In any case, numbers don't begin to convey the fact that the members the Legion does claim show less and less interest in its affairs, and that the organization's attempts to recruit the draftees and young regulars who it must have to survive are failing consistently. A large part of the failure is due to the nature of the war itself.

Indifferent when they aren't bitter, many young veterans find little glory in having fought in Vietnam, and less pride on coming home. "I'm not ashamed of being a veteran and none of the vets I know are ashamed of it," says Craig Venter, now a college student in San Diego, "but it's just absurd to think that this is another great American war and that we will be upholding some great tradition by passing out little flags. The Vietnam guys don't sit around talking about the great battles we were in." A young veteran in Los Angeles says: "I want to forget. I don't want to be reminded of it."

An age gap contributes to the Vietnam veterans' lack of interest. A former Green Beret, now an ad salesman, says: "I wouldn't know what to talk about to those people who fought in World War II. Vietnam isn't their war, and for all I know some of them probably think we shouldn't have been in it. We just wouldn't have anything in common."

Puzzled and Disappointed

There are some Legion posts that seem to have overcome the barriers in attracting Vietnam vets. The Halker-Flege Post in Reading, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati, has signed up scores of Viet vets, boasts many father-son combinations among its members and offers a crowded calendar of social activities and civic projects. Thomas Fowler Post 169 in Wichita Falls, Texas, tries to make returning soldiers feel that their Legion post appreciates and admires what they have done. The post drapes a vet's home with bunting, flies a flag in his yard and gives him a one-year free membership. The result: of 169's 700 members, about 150 are Vietnam veterans.

But these are exceptions. In post after post, town after town, the Legion is kept barely breathing by handfuls, of old men meeting in halls that once held hundreds. They are puzzled and disappointed that they cannot interest the young men.

Teddy's Rough Riders in Los Angeles, which had 1,104 members after World War II, now has 237- just three of them Vietnam vets. Across town Hollywood Post 43, which once listed Clark Gable,

Adolphe Menjou and Ronald Reagan as members, has only five Viet vets out of a membership of 743, itself less than half the strength of 1950. "We oldsters wave

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Bygone Battles: American Legion, Once a Civic Power, Is Fading Away

Continued from First Page

the flag still, and wear the uniform," says member George Long. "These Vietnam vets don't go for that. For every one that comes back gung-ho, there are nine who couldn't care less."

The Carson-Williams Post in Tulsa, Okla., has less than 80 Vietnam vets out of 2,500 enrolled, and post service officer Joe Herman says only two or three are active. "There isn't the same patriotic feeling about Vietnam," he says.

The Legion suffered a net loss of about 50 posts last year, bringing the total to 16,200, compared with a peak of 17,500 in the late '40s. And some surviving units are "paper posts," organizations that have declined to the point where they have lost their physical plants and meet-when they meet-at other posts or at regional Legion facilities.

"Not Their Thing"

While conceding that it is growing weaker in the cities, Legion officials maintain that the organization remains strong and healthy in the small-town heartland of America. If so, a visitor cannot discern it readily.

In Centerburg, Ohio, a tiny farming community northeast of Columbus, Charles Andrews Post 46 straggles along with a membership of 53, down from its 1950 peak of 80. Post commander Bob Carpenter, who lives in a small apartment above the storefront post on Main Street, pauses in policing up the remnants of the Friday night bingo game and getting ready for Saturday's beer and euchre.

"We've had difficulty with the Vietnam vets," he says. "We didn't have much to offer them. Now we've got bingo twice a month, and we're 'planning fish fries and bean suppers. And we're going to put up the pictures of Vietnam vets, along with those snapshots over there of our World War I and II members, whether they belong to the post or not. Maybe that will help."

Help is needed. Charles Andrews Post managed to recruit only three Viet vets. "They see the Legion as our generation's thing. not theirs," says Mrs. William Stoupher of the women's auxiliary. In Mount Vernon, Ohio, an industrial town of 18,000, Dan C. Stone Post 136 traditionally drapes black crepe over its charter when a member dies. The crepe has been hung 30 times in the past two years, and membership has been nearly halved from its post-World War II level: Just four present members are Vietnam veterans.

Free Drinks Fall as a Lure

In post after post, attempts to lure the young meet with failure. Phoenix Post 1 has made strenuous efforts. It sponsored a basketball team and laid out \$100 for uniforms and \$120 to join the league, hoping this would attract Viet vets. "They did come and got to play basketball," says post adjutant Dick Gallagher, "but then they dropped out of the Legion. We never even got the uniforms back." Right now about 100 of the 2,200 members are Vietnam-era vets. How many are active? "To be honest, none of them," says Mr. Gallagher.

Thunderbird Post, near Phoenix, has even elected Vietnam vets who aren't members to official positions in the post, hoping this will attract them. It hasn't. "They didn't even bother to come to meetings," says an official. "We went on the radio with messages, we sent out literature, we passed out tickets for free drinks at the Legion bar, but they don't seem to care."

In Crooksville, Ohio, a Legionnaire remembers with chagrin his first effort to recruit Viet vets-a "Vietnam night" with a fish fry and beer. About 25 men were contacted. One showed up.

Beyond the generation gap and the controversial nature of the Vietnam war lie other reasons for the Legion's decline. For one thing, it is being pressed hard by the second-largest veterans' organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW has recruited more Viet vets than the Legion, and its total strength, 1.8 million now, is approaching the Legion's despite the stiffer membership qualifications of the VFW. (To belong, a veteran must actually have served in the theater of war; a Legionnaire need only have served, even if it be stateside, during a period of hostility.)

VFW vs. the Legion

Besides this built-in elitism, the VFW differs from the Legion in its political leanings though far from liberal, its top leadership is more in step with the Democratic Party while the Legion is more oriented to conservative Republicanism. And the VFW thinks of itself as an organization of the rank-and-file rather than noncoms and officers. "The Legion," says one young veteran, "Is run by lifers for lifers."

The VFW also claims it is more in tune with the thinking of the Vietnam veteran. "The Vietnam man is going to be our salvation," says Cooper T. Holt, VFW executive director. "It won't be many years before we pass the Legion. All of us are learning how to wear our hair long now."

There also is an indefinable but strong sensation among many veterans and among the Legion's critics that the organization simply is an anachronism, an echo from a past left far behind. There are many signs that it has lost much of its vigor.

In 1931, When the Legion had far fewer members than it does even today, its national convention in New York was marked by a 17-hour parade cheered by 2.5 million people. When the Legion convened last year in Portland, Ore., it went almost unnoticed-except for a thousand or so antiwar counter-marchers who burned flags and shouted obscenities at the aging Legionnaires.

The meeting of many a Legion post are little more than hollow formalities now, and the concerns of the Legion offer seem to be the concerns that marked the McCarthy era. Take Post 131 in Santa Ana, an indelibly right-wing nook of Orange County. "If this post doesn't come alive pretty soon, I don't think it can last much longer," says Andrew Callanan who is the posts Americanism and counter-subversive chairman.

Post 131 still claims 1,000 members, but no more than a couple of dozen attend meetings now, rattling around in a big, drafty hall that seems to swallow them up. One recent night, 27 Legionnaires,

some visibly bored, were listening to Mr. Callanan call for a blow against peaceniks who display bumper stickers with the peace sign ("that two-fingered monstrosity") superimposed on the American flag.

He won a small victory, getting approval of a \$10 appropriation to print 100 postcards that will be slipped under windshield wipers of offending drivers. The cards will tell them they are violating the law, and ask that the sticker be removed. After this vote, the meeting turned to an inconclusive discussion of the movie "Tora! Tora! Tora!" and closed with a member exhorting his colleagues to "sell, sell, sell those tickets" for a law-and-order awards dinner honoring selected Orange County policemen.

The Legion's waning strength hasn't escaped notice in Washington, where it once had considerable power; the Legion had a great deal to do with drafting, guiding through Congress and setting up the administrative machinery for the GI Bill of Rights, for example, and still regards this legislative structure as its greatest triumph. Today it carries little weight and walks softly in the halls of Congress.

"Those Days Are Gone"

"Some people would like us to raise hell all over the place, but those days are gone," says Harold E. Stringer, a Legion lobbyist in Washington. "We can't go pound a politician's desk anymore and threaten to defeat him if he doesn't go along with us." The Legion's national adjutant, William Hauck, insists that the Legion is still influential if it has an issue attractive to its membership. Is there one? "Right now, no," says Mr. Hauck.

An official of the Veterans Administration believes the ranks of all veterans' organizations will be thinning before long and what little influence they retain will vanish. "As far as I can see, they are striking out completely," he says. "I don't think most of the young fellows are going for the idea at all."

Liberals within the Legion talk of a stirring of Legion interest in such current issues as ecology and birth control. Also, to boost membership and possibly bridge the chasm between old-timers and the Viet vets, it is expected that the Legion will soon decide to admit veterans who served in peacetime. Whether this will have the desired effect is uncertain.

In the meantime, men like Steve Boyko of Teddy's Rough Riders, who hasn't missed a Legion meeting in 25 years, still wait for the young men to come in and take over, still remain confident that somewhere down the road there will be a rendezvous between the generations. "They'll be coming later on," he says. "Later on, as soon as they get their families established. we'll be getting together."

"Years from now, the bitterness will be a little dulled," predicts J. P. Bradley, past commander of Hollywood Post No. 48. "They'll be coming in droves."



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9 am - 4 pm

If you are interested in bringing an aircraft or for more information contact Jack Hunter at 435-669-0655.



This is a training event and not an airshow.

See warbird aircraft as they go out for training flights. Tour the museum and visit the museum gift shop.

