



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Action Programs of Americanism

Americanism is an unflinching love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the flag, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Our forefathers laid the foundation for a civilization that is the envy of the world. It has brought us greater spiritual and material wealth than any people has ever known. This is our heritage. The many activities of the National Americanism Commission of The American Legion are designed to acknowledge and preserve that heritage, recognizing all of the inalienable rights of man.

This brochure contains a brief description of the many Americanism programs of The American Legion that benefit our nation's youth.



American Legion Baseball

Still Batting a Thousand

American Legion Baseball (ALB) began in 1925 and held its first national tournament the following year. Today, more than 5,000 teams and about 95,000 youngsters participate in all states and Puerto Rico. ALB consists of two divisions – seniors (19 years of age and younger) and juniors (17 years of age and younger).

ALB strives to teach practical lessons of good sportsmanship and citizenship. Loyalty, respect for rules and decisions rendered, fair play, courage and physical fitness are emphasized in this activity.

The Legion's national organization conducts tournaments in its senior division. The winners of eight regional tournaments advance to a national championship tournament. The team crowned national champion is honored by Major League Baseball (MLB) with a trip to the MLB World Series.

Many current and former MLB players developed their skills on American Legion diamonds. They included Hall of Famers like Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Don Drysdale, Joe Morgan, Yogi Berra and Reggie Jackson. Current stars like Chipper Jones, Albert Pujols and Darin Erstad played American Legion Baseball.

American Legion Baseball depends upon its posts, individual Legionnaires and other Legion family organizations to promote the activity. Enthusiastic leadership, coaches and players are available in almost every community where an American Legion post is located.

American Legion and Scouting

Working Together for America's Youth

The American Legion's support of Scouting began at its first national convention when the Legion officially recognized Scouting as a positive program for our nation's youth. Support has remained constant through the years with local posts chartering more than 2,500 units that serve more than 70,000 young people. Hundreds of other units benefit from financial and other forms of support from American Legion posts.

The American Legion sponsors an annual scholarship awarded to the Eagle Scout who is selected as "The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year." The winner is awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship. Three additional scholarships of \$2,500 each are also awarded to three runners-up.

The American Legion and Scouting Square Knot Award recognizes American Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion members who are actively involved in the Scouting program. Over 360 Square Knot Awards have been awarded to recognize Legion family members who have furthered the Scouting program in The American Legion.



For additional information

write National Headquarters, Attn: Baseball, or phone (317) 630-1213.

Publications

- ALB promotion brochure (21-004)
- ALB Rule Book (21-001)



Publications

- The American Legion and Scouting brochure (22-001)
- Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship app.
- American Legion and Scouting Square Knot Award brochure (22-010)



American Legion Shooting Sports

Gaining in Popularity



The American Legion's Junior Shooting Sports Program is a national activity administered through Legion-sponsored clubs organized to provide gun safety and marksmanship training for young people. The program emphasizes proper shooting and safety techniques and is for both boys and girls. Youth with disabilities are also encouraged to participate.

The program is recognized by shooting sports groups as one of the premier amateur shooting programs in the country. More than 900 teams are currently affiliated in the program and approximately 1,500 individual shooters enter national competition each year. The competition culminates with the national championships at the world class shooting complex at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Competition begins with postal matches to determine state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a qualification round to determine shooters who will earn expense paid trips to the national championships. Team competition is also available at postal levels.

The program uses .177 caliber air guns and competitors fire targets set-up in firing lanes 10 meters (33 feet) in length. Air gun ranges can be set up in classrooms, Legion post homes or any enclosed area with adequate lighting and space.

Any recognized youth group (school or club) with responsible adult leadership can become involved with this program. The group/club must be sponsored by an American Legion post and affiliated with the national organization.

The American Legion, based on its involvement in programs like the Junior Shooting Sports and American Legion Baseball, was awarded membership on the United States Olympic Committee.

For enrollment forms and additional information

contact the Americanism and Children & Youth Division, phone (317) 630-1249. There is no affiliation fee.

Publications

- Junior Shooting Sports brochure (22-003)



American Legion Boys State and Nation

Youth Learning About Government

Boys State

American Legion Boys State is one of the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for high school students in the nation. It is a participatory program where each young man learns about the operation of his local, county and state governments.

Boys State has been a program of the National Americanism Commission since 1935. Forty-nine states conduct this program serving more than 20,000 young men each year. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors a similar program for young women called Girls State.

At Boys State young men are exposed to the rights, privileges, duties and

Publications

- Boys State brochure (20-004)
- Other materials available in limited quantities from the Americanism and Children & Youth Division:
- "A Challenge for the Future" DVD - Boys State and Girls State Programs

responsibilities of a franchised citizen. The training is objective and practical with city, county and state governments operated by elected and appointed officials duly placed in office by citizens of their respective Boys State. Activities include legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies, bands, chorus and recreational programs.

American Legion posts interview and select participants for their Boys State program after receiving recommendations from school officials. Costs are usually paid by an American Legion post, a local business or another community-based organization.

Boys Nation

Two of the most outstanding participants from each of 49 Boys State programs are invited to participate in American Legion Boys Nation. This activity, held annually in the Washington, D.C. area, also emphasizes citizenship education; however, it centers on the study of the federal government and its supporting agencies.

Like American Legion Boys State, Boys Nation is an exercise in a two-party system of government. Each delegate becomes a senator and is assigned to one of two mythical political parties. The boys caucus, organize into committees, conduct hearings and act on bills they introduce into the Boys Nation Senate.

Political figures and others prominent in the Washington scene participate in Boys Nation, lending their expertise on the many facets of the federal government. Special visits to federal agencies, national shrines and other points of interest are included in the weeklong session.

Organization of parties, party conventions, and nomination and election of officers all provide practical experience in politics and the administration of a republic. These and similar activities create an understanding of, and an appreciation for, our system of government.

Since its beginning in 1946, Boys Nation has seen many of its graduates elected to public offices, including President of the United States, U.S. Congress, state governors and state legislators. Many others became inspired to actively work for the campaigns of individuals seeking public office.

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program - "A Constitutional Speech Contest" *Learning About Constitution; Earning Dollars for College*

The Oratorical Scholarship Program is an activity designed to develop in high school students a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States. Other objectives are leadership, ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and preparation for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.



For additional information

Students interested in participating should contact their local American Legion post for details. General information on the contest is available on the Legion's Internet Web site at www.legion.org.

Publications

- Oratorical Rules (22-005)
- Oratorical promotional brochure (22-008)
- Oratorical Chairman's Guide (22-006)

Publications

The American Legion publishes flag literature and makes it available through the Emblem Sales Division, PO Box 1050, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or through its Web site at <http://emblem.legion.org>.

- **Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette** (755.200) – Contains Flag Code and American Legion interpretations of proper flag etiquette in situations not specifically covered by the law. Cost is \$1 per copy or \$80 per 100 copies, plus shipping.
- **Flag Code** (755.201) – Illustrates and describes the correct way to display our country's flag. Cost is 20 cents each or \$18 per 100 copies, or \$150 per 1,000 copies, plus shipping.
- **For Which It Stands DVD** (755.400) – A 20-minute video with interactive programs and a teacher's guide designed to help grades 5-9 meet state mandates for required flag education. Cost is \$9.95 each, plus shipping.



High school students are eligible to compete, subject to the rules established by the National Americanism Commission. The contest has two phases: prepared orations of eight to ten minutes in length and an assigned topic presentation from three to five minutes.

Department (state) level contests are usually held during the months of January through March. National competition is conducted over a single weekend, usually in April, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Scholarships are awarded at most levels of competition. At the national level, first place receives \$18,000; second, \$16,000; and third, \$14,000. Each department winner who competes in the first round of the national contest will receive a \$1,500 scholarship.

Flag Education Program

Care and Respect for Flag Important to Legionnaires

The American Legion's Flag Education Program is designed to build patriotism in our youth and all Americans and to develop a thorough understanding of proper flag display and courtesy. Flag education has been a major activity of The American Legion since its inception, with thousands of flag education programs presented each year in classrooms across the country.

Flag education in the schools fills a great need since more than half of the states mandate some form of instruction on flag education to their school districts. The Legion has produced a flag education DVD "For Which It Stands," an instructional resource for students in upper elementary and junior/middle school grades.

The "kit" consists of an interactive DVD, a 40-page teacher's guide for the professional educator and an outline for use by volunteer presenters.

The American Legion encourages and supports efforts to display the U.S. Flag in our nation's classrooms.



School and Student Programs

Promoting Importance of Education

American Legion posts are encouraged to play an active role in the activities of the schools in its community. Legionnaires are encouraged to keep abreast of the many changes required to maintain a successful school system.

Need A Lift? ... A Financial Aid Resource

The American Legion publishes *Need A Lift?* -- a financial aid handbook for high school students. The publication features information on scholarships, loan and grant opportunities and information about specific colleges and careers. The publication can be purchased for \$4.95, including shipping, prepaid from American Legion Emblem Sales, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

American Legion Legacy Scholarship... For Children Left Behind

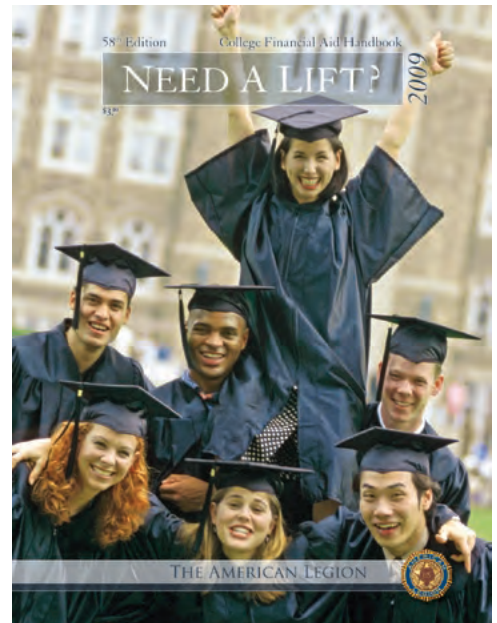
The American Legion has established the American Legion Legacy Scholarship for children of service men and women who die while on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces on or after September 11, 2001. The application is available on the Legion's Web site, www.legion.org or by written request to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206. Contributions to the fund may be sent to the above address.

American Legion School Awards

The American Legion School Awards Program recognizes students in the graduating class in elementary, junior and senior high schools and at the college level. Students are recognized for possessing qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service. Awards may be purchased for presentation from American Legion Emblem Sales.

American Education Week

The American Legion and the National Education Association addressed illiteracy in our nation in 1921 by organizing American Education Week in an effort to draw attention to the importance of education in this country. It also recognized teachers and students who performed above the norm. Each year The American Legion prepares literature on the observance for distribution through departments to American Legion posts.



Publications

- Policy on Education brochure (23-005)
- American Education Week brochure (23-006)
- Guide for Parents and Students brochure (23-004)
- Need-a-Lift? booklet (755.509)
- PACT booklet (23-002)
- Adult Literacy (23-009)
- School Awards (23-007)
- Veterans in the Classroom (23-015)
- Veterans in the Classroom (23-016)

Publications

Printed materials available at cost from The American Legion's National Emblem Sales include:

- Chaplains Prayer Manual
- Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States
- Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette
- The Flag Code
- A Guide to Parents and Students
- Need A Lift?
- Our Country's Flag, Our Country's Veterans, I Pledge Allegiance and Light of Liberty – educational comics
- Service to God and Country booklet

See current American Legion Emblem Sales catalog for prices or write: The American Legion, National Emblem Sales, PO Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

Printed materials available in limited quantities at no cost from the Americanism and Children & Youth Division include:

- Americanism Manual
- Baseball Handbook
- American Education Week brochure
- Boys State brochure
- Junior Shooting Sports brochure
- Oratorical Contest Rules
- PACT Handbook
- Veteran of the Month brochure
- The American Legion and Scouting
- Policy on Education
- The Oratorical Contest Chairman's Guide

Veterans in the Classroom

Veterans in the Classroom is an initiative spearheaded by The American Legion to organize a nationwide effort to connect veterans with schools and ultimately put them in the classroom. In so doing, students learn firsthand from the veterans about life in the military, the horrors of war and how the service of America's veterans affected their lives and the lives of others.

Students gain a greater respect and understanding of the veterans' sacrifices and commitment to service. It also allows students to focus on the true meaning of patriotism as they study real issues of America's history.

Other Programs of Americanism

Community Service

The American Legion recognizes that the community is an important part of our American way of life. Legion posts have, for many years, made lasting contributions that have made American communities better places in which to live.

Community service projects often place special emphasis on the organization of safety first campaigns, elimination of fire hazards, establishment of playgrounds and erection of living memorials. A wide variety of projects designed for the betterment of communities are sponsored by more than 14,000 posts each year. Realizing that every community is in need of improvements, many American Legion posts take a leadership role in community betterment.

Veteran of the Month

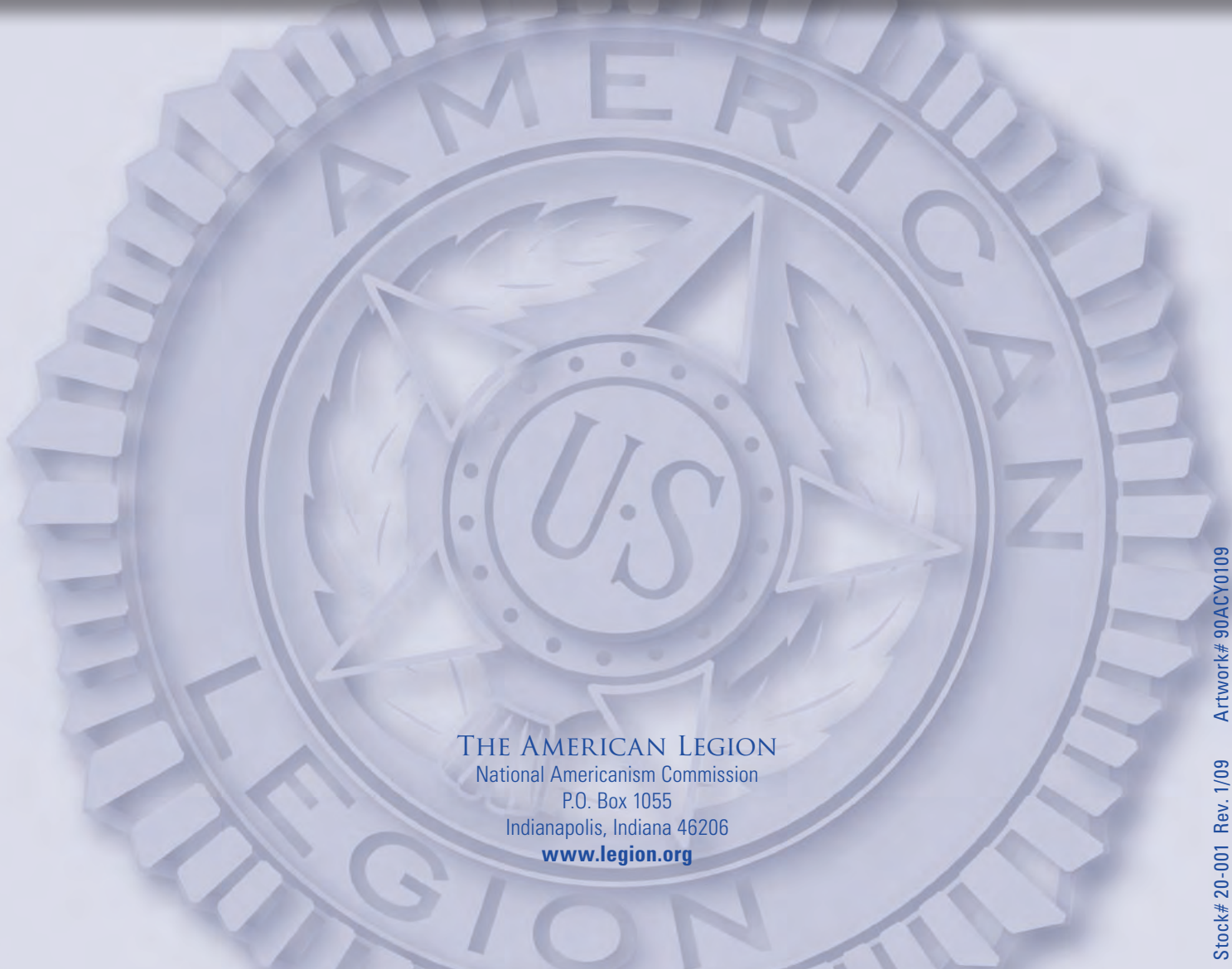
The National Americanism Commission encourages our American Legion posts to honor, recognize and memorialize the service of area veterans who are deceased. The program called Veteran of the Month is based on a recognition period of one month at which time a deceased veteran's burial flag is flown from a designated flagpole in the community. While the administration of the program is strictly a local responsibility, guideline booklets are available from National Headquarters and/or department sources.

Department/Post Programs

Many posts and departments conduct their own Americanism programs on a wide range of subjects. Programs include sporting activities, participatory government education programs, mentoring activities, fund drives for community betterment, safety programs and school related activities.



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National Americanism Commission
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206
www.legion.org