

# THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 20-1

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## Commander's Column

By the time you read this we will have begun the new year. I'm sure almost all of you know the phrase "Hindsight is 2020". Looking back over the year 2019, we've had a lot of successes and made some real strides in serving our veterans. A brief recap:

Our participation with the float in the Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades is always fun and a big hit with the spectators. With the amount of candy that we tossed out, I'm sure it was a big hit with the dentists as well. If you haven't taken the opportunity to ride our award-winning float or walk alongside tossing candy you are really missing out. The vast number of spectators cheering on the Legion and thanking you for your service is a source of pride, but for many of us, myself included, it's more deeply humbling than anything else. It will make you glad to be a Legion member.

The LEGION act that President Trump signed into law was a major success and went a long way in righting a longstanding oversight. See the article in this newsletter for more information.

Several of us visited three local physical and mental care facilities on Veteran's Day. To my knowledge, it was the best attended visitation that I'm aware of and a hit with the residents.

Looking ahead in 2020: We will again be hosting the Michigan State Legion Convention during the last week of June at the Radisson in downtown Kalamazoo.

Please note the article about the new Post 36 winter indoor air gun league we are holding at the Kalamazoo Rod and Gun Club in January and February. There's been a lot of interest and it should be a great time for both young and old, men and women, girls and boys. And it's free. If you have any questions, contact Mike Schewe or myself. Still serving, Dave Sytsma



**On Veterans Day 2019, American Legion members visited three local assisted living facilities. We paid our respect to the resident veterans and thanked them for their service to our country.**

## 2020 Winter Indoor Airgun League

Post 36 members, all local veterans, and your family members are welcome to join us for a Winter indoor Airgun League, at the Kalamazoo Rod & Gun Club on Tuesday nights, 7-9pm, beginning January 14th- through February 25th.

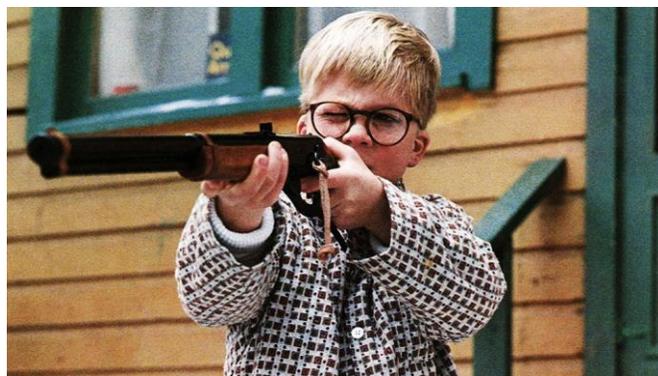
The American Legion Post 36 is sponsoring the Tuesday night league and will cover the fees for veterans and family members. Please note that only airguns shooting under 1000fps will be allowed. Also, calibers are limited to .22 and smaller.

All ages are welcome. This is a great way to maintain your skills and get in some family time during the cold winter months. Join us, the shooting starts at 7pm in the clubhouse.

See the link below to the Kalamazoo Rod & Gun Club calendar and their location. Note- the calendar shows the league starting on the 7th, but it officially starts on 1/14. If we have enough interest, we can start on the 7th, but please call Dave Sytsma or Mike Schewe if you want to shoot on the 7th, or with questions.

The Kalamazoo Rod & Gun Club is located at-  
**7533 North Sprinkle Road, Kalamazoo.**

**Calendar-** <http://kalamazoorodandgunclub.com/calendar>



**Join us at the Kalamazoo Rod and Gun Club, on Tuesday nights, beginning January 14th at 7pm. Sponsored by American Legion Post 36.**

*The American Legion's success depends entirely on active membership, participation and volunteerism. The organization belongs to the people it serves and the communities in which it thrives.*

## VETERANS DAY 2019- Nursing Home Visits

American Legion Post 36 members spent Veteran's Day 2019, visiting and thanking veterans who reside in 3 of our local nursing homes. In the morning, we visited the Upjohn Directors Hall and the Rehabilitation Center, both are located at the Heritage Community of Kalamazoo. In the afternoon we visited the veterans at North Woods Village Memory Care. All three facilities invited their family members and served refreshments and took the time to make the day a celebration of their service. Mike and Sue Schewe supplied chocolate bars to every veteran. We had so much fun that now we are planning to visit more veterans in other assisted living facilities. Not just for Veterans Day, but several times a year. If you want to join us on our next visit, please contact one of our officers. Not only will you have the opportunity to thank some of our aging veterans, you will also have a fun, humbling, and rewarding experience.



**Adjutant Jim Saur, Commander Dave Sytsma, Jr. Vice Dan Holdridge, and Sr. Vice Mike Schewe visit one of the veterans at the Upjohn Rehab. Center.**

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*“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.”*

**— Shannon L. Alder**

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### **Monthly Trivia is Back! -**

The Student Veterans of America (SVA) focuses on the needs & concerns of American military veterans in higher education. The SVA advocates for improvements in veterans educational benefits. **In what year was the SVA officially incorporated?**



**American Legion members thanking the veterans at North Woods Village on Veterans Day.**



**Adjutant Jim Saur visits with one of the resident veterans at the Upjohn Rehabilitation Center.**

**TAPS- The members of American Legion Post 36 extend their deepest sympathies to the loved ones of these fallen members.**

DAVID QUINN - Dave was born April 2, 1930, in Marshall, MI. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War. After his service, David worked in the City of Kalamazoo water department. David is survived by his wife Ruth, two stepchildren, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

*We have members who have recently lost spouses or have moved into nursing or memory care facilities. Please remember them in your thoughts and prayers.*

**Never Forgotten - Rest in Peace**

## **What you need to know about the LEGION**

**Act** - The American Legion, JUL 30, 2019  
FacebookTwitterMore7K

With President Trump's signature on the LEGION Act, the extension of the ongoing declared period of war was extended back to Dec. 7, 1941. The congressionally approved act is a way to honor thousands of veterans who were killed or wounded on duty during periods not previously considered a time of war.

"Finally, Congress has acknowledged the service and sacrifice of at least 1,600 veterans who died or were wounded in previously undeclared periods of war," said American Legion National Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett. "This new law honors the memories of those veterans while allowing other veterans from those previously undeclared eras to receive all the American Legion benefits they have earned through their service."

The LEGION Act - Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act — also redefines The American Legion's membership eligibility dates. The eligibility now spans from Dec. 7, 1941, until a time when the U.S. is no longer at war, as determined by Congress.

Here are some answers to questions about the new law and what it means for The American Legion.

**Question:** *How does this change the eligibility requirements for The American Legion?*

**Answer:** The only change is that Congress has reduced the number of eligibility periods from seven to two. They are April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941, and continuing. No other restrictions are changed.

**Question:** *What's the impact on veterans who previously were not eligible for American Legion membership?*

**Answer:** Veterans who were honorably discharged but whose service did not fall into the previous defined war eras may now join The American Legion immediately. To do so, eligible members may call one of our officers, or sign up at [www.legion.org/join](http://www.legion.org/join).

**Question:** *I am among the veterans who were not allowed to join previously, so why do you want me now?*

**Answer:** The American Legion's founding fathers believed, "a veteran is a veteran," an axiom that has held true throughout the organization's more than century of service. Some veterans were ineligible to join because of the war eras that were defined by Congress. The recent bill passage and president's signature changed that.

**Question:** *How does this affect the Sons of The American Legion (SAL)?*

**Answer:** The Sons' eligibility criteria will change along with that of The American Legion. Any son or grandson of a living American

Legion member will be able to join the SAL program. (Sons and grandsons of deceased veterans are also eligible.) For example, a son of a veteran who served between 1985 and 1988 previously would not have been eligible. With the extension of the war period, that veteran would immediately be eligible for The American Legion and the son would be able to join the SAL.

**Question:** *How does this affect the eligibility for the American Legion Auxiliary?*

**Answer:** This follows the same concept as the SAL, as noted previously. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is currently open to grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of eligible veterans.



### **Legion updates Auxiliary eligibility criteria from 'wives' to 'spouses'**

During the American Legion's 101st National Convention, delegates approved changes to the Constitution and Bylaws to replace the word "wife" with "spouse," related to the membership criteria for the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).

The American Legion, which was chartered by Congress, created the ALA. For that reason, the ALA operates as a separate corporation and does not need congressional approval for an eligibility change. The American Legion's bylaws have always set the eligibility requirements of the ALA.

"We are happy to welcome eligible male spouses of veterans and servicemembers to the American Legion Family," ALA National President Nicole Clapp said. "This is consistent with our longstanding legacy of embracing military families and supporting them any way we can."



**For the fourth consecutive summer, Post 36 members enjoyed a Friday night dinner at the South Haven American Legion Post with our families.**



Join us at 6pm, Friday January 10<sup>th</sup>, when we volunteer during Bingo Night at the Battle Creek VAMC. It's a fun and rewarding way to give back to those who have served.



## COMING EVENTS

- Sun. 1/5 3<sup>rd</sup> District Mtg. – Coldwater Post 52  
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm
- Tue. 1/7 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Fri. 1/10 Battle Creek VAMC- Bingo night 6:00 pm
- Tue. 1/14 Tuesday Airgun League. Opening night at Kalamazoo Rod & Gun. Every Tuesday night through February. 7pm – 9pm
- Thurs. 1/16 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm  
Dinner night - meal to be determined
- Sat. 1/18 Red Arrow Riders Pool tournament – 2pm  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. thru April. 1pm registration.
- Tue. 1/21 Tuesday Airgun League. 7pm – 9pm
- Tue. 1/28 Tuesday Airgun League. 7pm – 9pm
- Tue. 2/4 Tuesday Airgun League. 7pm – 9pm
- Tue. 2/4 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Tue. 2/11 Tuesday Airgun League. 7pm – 9pm
- Tue. 2/18 Tuesday Airgun League. 7pm – 9pm
- Thurs. 2/20 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm  
Dinner night - Soup and chili bar
- Tue. 2/25 Tuesday Airgun League. Final night at Kalamazoo Rod & Gun – 7pm – 9pm
- Sun. 3/1 3<sup>rd</sup> District Mtg. – Union City Post 196  
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm
- Tue. 3/3 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Thurs. 3/19 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm  
Dinner night – meal to be determined

**Please join us in welcoming  
these new members to Post 36.  
Welcome and Thank You for Still Serving.**

Patrick Duggan - U.S. Air Force

Ron Brown - U.S. Army

Ivan Gough - U.S. Marine Corps

Lubbert Van Dellen - U.S. Navy

Gary Manogue - U.S. Coast Guard

David Quinn - U.S. Air Force

### **Battle Creek VA Medical News & Numbers-**

The toll-free number for appointments & info. is 1-888-214-1247. The local number is (269) 966-5600. Phone extensions are- for triage ext. 35053, prescriptions ext. 35500, and customer service ext. 31990 or at ext. 31980.

**The 24/7 Veteran Crisis Line is 1-877-927-8387.**

For further VA questions you can also go to this website-  
<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

For assistance obtaining discharge records, visit-  
[www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/)

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Thanks to those of you who have renewed early. Early renewals save us time and money. We are currently at 85% renewed and we have 6 new members for 2020. All honorably discharged veterans are now eligible to join the American Legion, so please encourage your veteran friends and family to join with us and help us to continue serving local veterans and our community. Help us to continue the mission and remain active.

If you know a qualified veteran who might want to join or transfer, please have them call Dave Sytsma or Mike Schewe. And anyone who recruits 3 or more new members (not transfers) before June 2020 is eligible for a 2020 recruiters pin.

**Keep Post 36 strong through solid membership!**

### **NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS OR POST EVENTS?**

If you need a ride, please contact us. Lack of transportation should not stop anyone from participating in our Post events.

### **The Four Pillars of the American Legion**

1. Strong National Security
2. Taking Care of Veterans
3. Mentoring Youth
4. Patriotism & Honor



**THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218**

Post 36 meetings are held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW Post at  
**1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Kalamazoo 49002**