

Merry Christmas



Christmas Past

We all have memories of our favorite Christmas, maybe from our childhood or as we watched our children with wide-eyed anticipation of the arrival of Santa Clause. As a history teacher, I always enjoyed teaching my classes the history of Christmas and Christmas traditions around the world. Today I was thinking about the upcoming membership challenge for December 7th. It made me wonder what Christmas 1941 would have been like for America. So, I did a little research. Christmas 1941 was a very different Christmas for many Americans. We were thrust into World War II. President Roosevelt wasted no time in asking Congress for a declaration of war on Japan and then Germany. America had been preparing for the war that was now on our doorstep. Now it was time for full-on war production and recruitment of soldiers. With Christmas around the corner, President Roosevelt kept the Spirit of Christmas alive when he insisted on the Lighting of the National Christmas Tree at the White House. He believed that even during a time of war, Christmas was a time to pause and reflect on the best aspects of humanity. I believe that our American Legion Family is that reflection of the best parts of humanity. We live by our motto "Service above Self". In 1941 the American Legion Family was there to help with military recruitment and war bond sales. Legion Posts were used for military and defense needs. In 1941 the Auxiliary worked extensively with the Red Cross. That year they donated six mobile blood units and created the Emergency Committee to support the war efforts. In 1942 there was a shortage of nurses. The ALA provided nursing scholarships and sponsored 1,000 students. In 1944 the ALA established the rehabilitation programs for disabled veterans. I am so thankful and proud for my American Legion Family past and present.

Merry Christmas and have a Happy Blessed New Year,

Julie

Spread some Christmas Cheer

Most of us are really good at helping people who are in dire straits. But what about the mom who is overworked and running out of time to get it all together for Christmas or the senior citizen who would like to put Christmas decorations up but has no one to help?

If we take the time to look around us, we will see many needs we can meet. Be blessed this year, step out of your comfort zone, and do something to make someone smile today.

Here are a few more suggestions.

1. Make Dinner or cookies and Deliver it to to a neighbor.
2. Volunteer to help wrap Christmas presents, or watch the kids while mom and dad shop.
3. Pick groceries up or run errands for Someone.
4. Spend time with someone who is lonely. really listen to them.
5. Simply ask someone, How can I help you?
6. Smile and say Thank you.

I challenge each of you to have a servant's heart this Christmas.

BE THE ONE

Please don't forget to "Be the One" The Holidays can be especially hard for someone suffering from PTSD, Anxiety, and depression. Crisis #988 and press 1. Counselors are available 24/7 or text 838255.

A veterans' wreath is a symbol of HONOR, RESPECT, and VICTORY. Each of the 10 balsam bouquets that comprises a veteran's wreath, symbolizes 10 special qualities:

- Their BELIEF in a greater good
- Their LOVE for each other
- Their STRENGTH, work ethic, & character
- Their HONESTY & Integrity
- Their HUMILITY, selflessness & modesty
- Their AMBITIONS & aspirations
- Their OPTIMISM for America
- Their CONCERN for the future
- Their PRIDE in their duties
- Their HOPE & DREAMS that didn't always come true but left them with no regrets.



Parts of the Wreath Symbols

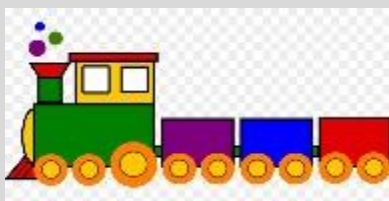
- Evergreens = Longevity & Endurance
- Red Bow = Great Sacrifice
- Forest Scent = Purity & Simplicity
- Circular Shape = Eternity



WREATHS across AMERICA

December 16, 2023, At the National Convention this past August, the American Legion Auxiliary national organization joined with Wreaths Across America. Wreaths Across America's mission is that of honoring those who served and teaching our children the value of freedom.

Get on Board the NC Train and get that membership turned for Conductor Toni. Our next membership challenge is December 7. We need to be at 75% Toot Toot!!!!



Spotlight on National Security

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BLUE STAR BANNERS

Blue Star Banners are a great way to recognize members of your Unit or Community that have a spouse or children serving in the U.S. Military. The banner may hold up to 5 stars and each star represents a family member in the U.S. Armed Services: Learn more about the Blue Star Banner here: <https://www.legion-aux.org/blue-star-banners>

Blue Star Banners may be purchased from Flag & Emblem

Sales: <https://emblem.legion.org/Blue-Star-Banners/departments/61/>



MILITARY FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity among U.S. veterans and military families is a national security concern: it multiplies stress on active-duty personnel, diminishes well-being among service members and their children—who are more likely to serve in the military as adults—and may hinder recruitment for the armed services. As direct service providers and the U.S. government respond to the short-term needs of veterans and military families, this brief puts forward long-term solutions to food insecurity in the U.S. military and veteran communities. *Please follow this link to continue reading: [Solving Food Insecurity among U.S. Veterans and Military Families \(csis.org\)](https://www.csis.org/press/food-insecurity-among-u-s-veterans-and-military-families).*

The attached document contains important information regarding food insecurity among military families.