



AMERICAN LEGION

The Oxley Post

4637 Decatur Street
Philadelphia, PA 19136
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www.TheOxleyPost.org



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September/October 2019

IMPORTANT NEWS

Our Legion Family and Legion Meeting nights are changing!

Oxley Family Meeting: Third Monday of the Month at 7PM effective September 16th
Regular Meeting: Third Monday of the Month at 7:30 PM, effective September 16th
AL Board Meeting: First Monday of the Month at 7:30, effective October 7th

Commander's Message

By: **Bruce Conklin**

Wow! It's hard to believe summer is over. It's amazing how fast it has come and gone. While the summer is usually a dead time for the Legion, we've been keeping very busy. Our Department Convention was well represented by **Bill Castillo, Greg Aschendorf and Bob Cummings**. They will be providing a briefing at our September meeting.

We had a great Karaoke night hosted by Northeast Philly's best DJ: Harry "O"! It was such a success we're bringing him back on Saturday, September 28. There is more detail below. Please make an effort to come out. It's a great time to be had by all.

On July 27th, **Mike Kennedy** ran a golf outing at Byrne's Golf Course in remembrance of Bill Bieringer. This was not a fundraiser... just an opportunity for friends to get together and play golf while remembering a good friend. It was a great time and we look forward to continuing this next year.

Then we held a viewing of the movie "Remember the 27 Crusaders". This full-length documentary examined the 27 graduates of Father Judge High School who were killed during the Vietnam War. The movie was great and there were more than a few tears shed. If the movie were not enough, we were also extremely fortunate to have the film's producer, John Riccuitti and director, Shawn Swords in attendance for the viewing. After the showing, both talked about their experiences in making the film and answered questions from the audience. It was an awesome experience. Keep an eye out for their next project that will focus on students from North Catholic, Edison and Cardinal Dougherty who died in Vietnam including Dougherty grad Michael J. Crescenze who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions in Vietnam.

We have a lot going on in the next couple months that you'll read about below. I hope you can come out and support your post!

Finally, we have some incredible news to report: Several months ago we started the process of applying for a grant from Home Depot to do some remodeling of our post. I am thrilled to report that just last week we received word that the grant has been approved! With this very significant grant in hand we will be completely renovating the kitchen and hall. We still have a lot of planning to do, but we expect things to be happening quickly. This has been a very difficult and time-consuming process and I'd like to thank **Greg Aschendorf** for all the hard work he did spearheading this project along with help from **Bob Cummings and Chuck Phraner**.

Canteen Report:
By: Greg Aschendorf

Thanks to everyone who stops by and enjoys a cold beverage and supports the post. We made it through our summer in good shape thanks in large part to the success we've enjoyed with Friday night 'luck of the draw darts'. And now that football season is here, we're hoping to keep that momentum moving forward. As Bruce outlined above, thanks to the Home Depot grant, we're going to have a very busy fall. We'll need a lot of help and I hope we can count on you for your support and assistance.

Friday Night "Flights"

Every Friday we host Friday Night "Luck of the Draw" dart tournaments. All skill levels are welcome and you'll be paired up with a partner that is selected at random. We play "501 single-on/double off". Registration begins at 7:30 - darts at 8-ish.

Quaker City English Dart League

We're very excited to be welcoming new teams for both Tuesday and Thursday nights. Please take a few minutes to say hi and give our new shooters a warm Oxley welcome. "Pick-up" night for team captains is Thursday, September 12th at the Columbia Social Club (Almond St.) Tuesday night league play begins on September 17th and the Thursday league begins on September 19th.

Oxley Post Raffle!

In cooperation with Delia's Gun shop, we are raffling off a new Radical Arms AR-15 with red-dot sight and in-stock battery storage; ambidextrous safety and full-length rail system. Tickets are \$10 each and the drawing will be held on Veterans Day, November 11th. Anyone purchasing a ticket must be at least 18 years of age and must be eligible to own a firearm. Tickets are available at the post. This has the potential of being an incredible fundraiser for the post. Please consider purchasing a ticket or better yet, take 5 or 10 and sell them to friends. For more information contact **Ed Hays or Bob Cummings**.

KARAOKE Returning to the Oxley Post

On Saturday, September 28th at 7PM, Northeast Philly's own Harry "O" will make his return to the Oxley Post. Come out and sing the night away. There is No Cover charge. Please help spread the word and come out to support your Post.



Adjutant Report:
By: Jack Tomkins

Membership: A new year has begun for the American Legion and it's time to send in your 2020 dues. We're off to a great start with almost 60% of our members being paid. Our goal is that we get to 100% by December, so if you haven't paid yet, please take a couple minutes to send in a check for \$30. You can also pay safely and conveniently online with a credit or debit card by going to www.legion.org/membership/renewals. For your convenience and to get the most recent information for our records, please fill out and return with your dues. Please call me at 215-280-2033 if you have any questions. **Please mail your 2020 payments to the post in c/o Adjutant Jack Tomkins.** As always, if you have a hardship and are unable to pay, please contact me or any post officer.

✂ _____ cut here _____
2020 Dues Remittance

Please fill out the information below and make check or money order for \$30 payable to the William D. Oxley Post #133 and mail to the post at 4637 Decatur St, Phila., PA 19136

NAME _____ 2019 Legion Card Number _____
ADDRESS _____ PHONE: _____ HOME CELL
CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____
DATE OF BIRTH _____ EMAIL _____

Mindful Breathing for Veterans

By: Sean Lehman MSgt, USAF (ret)

Source: Lehman, Sean. "Mindful Breathing for Veterans." *Heroes with Hearing Loss*, Hamilton Captel, 17 Dec. 2018, blog.heroeswithhearingloss.org/mindful-breathing-veterans/?_ga=2.66930983.82480926.1566903228-137113310.1566903228.

You've trained for the harshest conditions. You can survive for weeks with barely any food and stay alive for days with little water, but you can only live a matter of minutes without air. Breathing is so important that your body does it automatically—which is why we usually don't think about it. However, becoming aware of your breathing and how you're doing it can be extremely helpful. Veterans battling symptoms caused by service-related conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), chronic pain, substance abuse, tinnitus and hearing loss have found great benefit in learning mindful breathing.

Conscious Breathing and the Military

For many years, the military has known about the benefits of controlled breathing. Service members learn early on to control their breathing to steady their aim and improve their accuracy. Other breathing techniques, such as box breathing (a.k.a. combat breathing) is taught in different branches of the military to help improve performance during combat and other stressful situations. Controlled breathing is an essential survival technique for pilots facing high G forces. Widespread data shows that proper breathing techniques improve focus, reduce dizziness, calm anxiety and mitigate pain.

Special programs have been developed for veterans to teach mindful breathing techniques that can manage symptoms associated with common service-related conditions. A recent study has shown that practicing conscious breathing can significantly reduce symptoms of PTSD in veterans.¹

Why Controlled Breathing Works

The system in your body that automates your breathing is called the parasympathetic nervous system. It also controls other things your body does automatically (such as making your heart beat) and instigates your fight or flight responses. The automatic functions in your body change based on your emotional state, but unlike most autonomic functions, you can control your breathing if you practice. Since your breathing pattern changes according to your emotional state, if you breathe in the pattern associated with a specific emotion you can trick your body into feeling it. When you breathe deeply, as you would when you are calm and confident, you send your

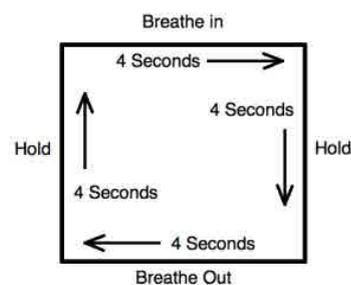
parasympathetic nervous system the message to relax. This helps reduce fight or flight reactions and can make you actually feel more calm and confident.

Box Breathing

Box breathing (a.k.a. combat breathing) is a technique used by military personnel to increase performance, especially in combat and other highly stressful situations. The technique is called "box breathing" because there are four basic steps to the practice that can be pictured as the four sides of a box.

How to do Box Breathing

Before you begin, push out as much air as possible from your lungs and relax for four seconds without inhaling. Then follow the steps below:



1. Inhale smoothly through your nose for four seconds starting with expanding your lower torso and diaphragm then bringing air into your lungs
2. Relax for four seconds without exhaling
3. Exhale for four seconds letting the motion compress your diaphragm toward your spine
4. Relax for four seconds without inhaling, then take one or two normal, slow breaths before repeating the process

Repeat the pattern for up to 20 minutes or until you feel calm and relaxed. Veterans who practice conscious breathing for 10 to 20 minutes per day have reported experiencing significant relief.

When to Use Box Breathing

You don't have to save these techniques for just stressful situations. Practicing box breathing is a great way to decompress a bit whenever you want to relax. These different forms of mindful breathing can also help prevent or reduce dizziness and anxiety, increase mental focus, improve performance, manage stress, better tolerate discomfort and control emotions.

1. <https://news.stanford.edu/pr/2013/pr-veterans-breathing-study-052213.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 8th 1PM: Eagles Tailgate Party The SAL will be firing up the grill and watching as the Eagles take on the Washington Redskins in their opening day of the 2019 season. You'll be part of the action as we stream the game onto a giant 10 ft screen in the hall. You'll also have an opportunity to get a raffle ticket for a Carson Wentz "Salute to Service" jersey.



Monday, September 9th 8PM: Sons of the American Legion Meeting.

Wednesday, September 11th 9AM: The Walter A Mason Post #152 will be hosting its 18th Annual Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Engine 28 Firehouse at Belgrade and Ontario Sts in Port Richmond

Saturday, September 14th 11AM: POW/MIA National Chair of Honor Dedication at Washington Crossing National Cemetery (830 Highland Rd, Newtown, PA). The guest speaker will be Ralph Galati, Capt. USAF., Former POW (1972-1973)

Monday, September 16th 7PM: Legion Family Meeting followed by Regular Legion Meeting.

Saturday, September 21st 7PM: Installation of Officers Oxley Post Officers (AL, Sons and LA) will be officially installed into their new offices at 7PM. All Officers are expected to attend.

Saturday, September 28th, 7PM: Back by Popular Demand, NE Philly's own DJ Harry "O" brings Karaoke back to the Oxley Post

Saturday, October 5th 8PM: Night at the Races The first race begins at 8PM. There are 10 races and you can buy a 'racing horse' for \$5. See the bartender for more information. This is an important fundraiser for us so please come out and support the post!



Monday, October 7th 7:30 PM: Legion Board Meeting

Monday, October 14th 8PM: Sons of the American Legion Meeting

Monday, October 21st 7PM: Oxley Family Meeting followed by Regular Legion Meeting

Saturday, October 26th: Legion College. This is open to all AL members and all officers are strongly encouraged to attend. It is a great opportunity to learn more about the Legion from expert members. For more information talk to **Bruce Conklin**.

Sick Call: Please keep the following members in your prayers: **Paul Palmer, Jack Hosgood, Francis Dufner, Bruce Conklin, Bill Castillo & Jake Pielacha**. If you know of someone who should be included on the sick list, please contact Jack Tomkins at 215-280-2033.

Happy Birthday: Please join us in wishing a Happy Birthday to the following Oxley Family Members.

Francis Dufner 9/1; Bill Prella 9/2; Mickey Hunt 9/11; Frank Suplick 9/20; Frank Sperduto 10/8; Donald Devlin 10/22; Thomas Fallon 10/31

We're Here to Help!

The purpose of the American Legion is to be of service to veterans who are in need. If you find yourself in a position where you are in need of assistance please don't hesitate to reach out. We can help with problems in getting your VA benefits to a ride to the doctor's office. We can also help you get a handicap placard or license plate for your car or getting a "Veteran Designation" on your state issued driver's license or non-driver ID. Contact our Service Officer **Mike Vokes** at 267-968-4124 for assistance.

News from the Sons



The Sons of the American Legion meets on the second Monday of the month at 8PM, please make an effort to attend. Our dues of \$25 are now due. You can drop them off at the post, or mail them in. Please clearly mark on the envelope Attn: Bill Wasylenko, Adjutant

Wall of Faces – Spread the Word - UPDATE

As reported in previous editions, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) has undertaken a project to gather pictures of everyone whose name is memorialized on the wall in an effort to preserve their legacy for generations to come. You can see the collection at <http://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/> The PA Department of Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is trying to help get photos of everyone who died from Pennsylvania. **When we first reported on this story last March, there were 11 veterans whose photos had not been identified. Today, that number is down to three!** If you served with any of these heroes or know them from the neighborhood and have a photo let us know and we'll help put you in touch with the VVMF. You can also help by spreading the word to your friends, family and coworkers. Let's do our part to help honor these men and make sure they are not forgotten to history.

Here's what we know about them from a *Philadelphia Daily News* Supplement titled "Six Hundred and Thirty One" published October 26, 1987.

Wall of Faces – Missing Photos

SP4 Vestie T. Driggers: (DOB 9/26/1944) Driggers played trumpet in a professional band for several years before entering the Army in November 1967. The specialist 4, a light weapons infantryman, was assigned to Company B of the 2nd Battalion 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. He died in Vietnam on November 29, 1968 at age 24.

MSgt. Matthew Harris, Jr. (DOB 4/1/1931) The career of Air Force non-commissioned officer, a 1948 graduate of Overbrook High School had served in Japan and Morocco, among other places before being assigned to the 33rd Air Force Dispensary in Vietnam in February 1965. The 34-year-old medical service technician died in Saigon on May 28, 1965. He was survived by a wife and a son.

PFC Willie J. Washington, Jr. (DOB 7/8/1949) (*W. Redner Street, North Philadelphia*) Washington worked in a candy factory, operating a machine that rolled hot candy into strips for cutting, before joining the Marine Corps in May 1968. The 19-year-old private first class trained to be a rifleman and was sent to Vietnam, where he was assigned to Company I of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division. Washington died in Quang Tri Province on Nov. 18, 1968, during Operation Lancaster II. He was survived by his parents.

PLEASE GIVE BLOOD



Please make a commitment to donate an hour to donate the gift of life! There is a convenient blood donation center at Rhawn and Dungan Streets that is open 7 days a week or go to www.redcross.org/give-blood.html or call 1-800-RED-CROSS to schedule an appointment. After you've donated, please call Bill Castillo at 267-974-8808 to let us know you've made the donation.

The Oxley Post is On the Web!

Please visit our website www.TheOxleyPost.org for the latest news and information on happenings at the post. Please take a few minutes and check it out. It's full of helpful resources, information. We're looking for any historical documents and/or photos you may have of the post. Please contact Bob Cummings. We'd also ask you google us and give us a positive review. You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter.

LEGION Act Signed into Law

In a major legislative win for the American Legion, on July 30th, President Trump signed the LEGION (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service) Act.

This bipartisan bill declares that the United States has been in a state of war since December 7, 1941. This designation is important to the Legion as a way to honor approximately 1,600 American service members who were killed or wounded in previously undeclared periods of war.

Our most sincere thanks go out to our newest sponsors: **PJ Driscoll** is the Commander of Post 396 S.A.L. and **Justin Harris** is a regular at our Friday Night Flights Luck of the Draw Dart Tournaments.

Please support them and all our sponsors and let them know you appreciate their advertising in the Oxley Post!

It is also significant in that it opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to join the American Legion and avail themselves to the programs and benefits the Legion offers that they had not been previously eligible.

11 things you need to know about the LEGION Act

Source: "11 Things You Need to Know about the LEGION Act." *The American Legion*, 30 July 2019, www.legion.org/membership/246558/11-things-you-need-know-about-legion-act. (As amended)

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: (Amended) 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 should talk to any post officer.

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: *So how does this differentiate The American Legion from AMVETS?*

Answer: The American Legion's eligibility criteria states that veterans must have served during "wartime." When Congress decides the U.S. is no longer in a state of war, the Legion's membership eligibility period will close, while AMVETS will still be open to those who served.

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.

Question: *How does this affect membership for departments, districts and posts?*

Answer: This change opens up American Legion membership to thousands more veterans who likely live in your communities. They may become members immediately.

Question: *The current membership applications don't address the eligibility change. How do we process those members?*

Answer: New membership materials will be developed and provided as quickly as possible. Until then, it is recommended that prospective members from a previously undocumented war era write "Other Conflicts" in the eligibility date section and send it in to their department with the appropriate dues.

Question: *What steps should departments, districts and posts focus on?*

Answer: A good first step would be to review all recruiting materials to look for eligibility dates. Information on electronic media (websites, social media channels, etc.) should be changed immediately. It is up to departments to decide on the best way to handle printed materials, while updated ones are being produced.

Question: *How does this change the Paid Up For Life program?*

Answer: There are no changes to the PUFL program, though the newly eligible members would be able to become PUFLs. To learn more about the program, visit <https://www.legion.org/PUFL>

Question: *Who can I contact for more information about this change as it applies to membership and recruiting?*

Answer: [Amended] Contact **Jack Tomkins** for more information.