



THE AMERICAN LEGION *Centennial celebration*

10 December 2016

To: All PDC's, Department Officers, DEC's, County Commanders, Post Commanders
American Legion Auxiliary Department of New Jersey
SAL Detachment of New Jersey
Legion Riders

Comrades and Friends:

As Chairman of our Department's "100th Anniversary Committee" I felt it necessary to write this message to all of you in hopes that you will help our committee in seeking and providing information that both our National Organization and we here in New Jersey seek as our great organization's Centennial approaches. As I have discussed many times over the last several years our rich, heralded 100 year history in the American Legion must be recorded and preserved for the future. The following explains three ways in which I hope you'll please help us out.

Firstly; Here in New Jersey we have over 300 American Legion Posts, of which 116 are Centennial Posts. Fantastic things have happened at these Posts for Veterans and residents of the Communities they serve. The American Legion wants to know every American Legion Post's story.

Early on our committee thought it would be best for each Post to send their history to us and when we had received a history from every Post in New Jersey we thought of creating a booklet that would tell our Department's American Legion story. This to be done by the time the Centennial was upon us and handed out at our proposed Centennial Grand Gala. Very few Posts responded to this request.

That mindset has now changed as National has created a website at which any Post can very easily share their history through a step-by-step guide that you can easily follow, create your own web page and who's end result will be visible to everyone. Go to www.centennial.legion.org click on "Share Your Post History" follow the easy directions, and you're done! To date, 24 Department of New Jersey American Legion Posts have done this. With your help, all our Posts can do this!

Secondly; the American Legion is working with the United States WWI Centennial Commission and Pritzker Military Museum and Library to document Monuments and Memorials dedicated specifically to WWI, thousands of which were erected by the early American Legion.

The 100 Cities/100 Memorials program includes 100 matching-money grants of \$2,000 each to be used for restoration of worn Monuments. Any organization, municipality, or individual may apply for these grants.

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Our committee asks if you have a WWI Monument or Memorial at your Post or in your Community please go to the Commission's web site and register this structure, plus if this Memorial or Monument needs to be restored please consider applying for one of the grants. All the information you need can be found at www.worldwar1centennial.org

Lastly; we have all said the following many times when reciting our preamble; ***“To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars”;***

Our 100th Anniversary Observance Committee on the National level has found that there is no central catalog, index or database for Monuments and Memorials dedicated to American Military service from the Revolutionary War to the current Global War on Terrorism.

Across the country and around the world, U.S. War, Military and Veterans Memorials stand to honor those who served in uniform and the battles they fought to protect our Nation's and others freedoms. We have a sacred obligation to keep these Memorials alive, recorded and in the best possible condition, as well as bring attention to their original and intended meaning. At the recent Fall Meetings in Indianapolis our NEC approved Resolution No. 10: “The Veterans Memorial Identification Project.”

As a result of this resolution the American Legion is now establishing a database to identify the locations, document histories and share photographs of our nation's monuments and memorials to those who have served. National Commander Charles Schmidt, and I on behalf of New Jersey's Centennial Committee, ask you please help us by sharing and submitting any Monuments and Memorials located at your Post and in your communities. Key points for each submission should include;

- *Location of the Memorial; mapped if possible*
- *Purpose of the Memorial; such as who it honors and why*
- *Date of the Memorial's installation and who installed it*
- *A brief assessment of its current condition; to include a photo or photos*

One can simply record all this info by going to the web site www.legion.org/memorials and clicking on “Add a Memorial.”

A lot of this help we ask will be placed on our individual Posts. In communities where there is no Post but there are Monuments, this is where the County Organization will have to step in.

In closing I remind you to use the web sites provided to submit the information we seek. I believe once word spreads throughout our Department that help is needed in submitting a Post History, identifying our WWI Memorials, and identifying all other Memorials and Monuments, our Legion family will step up and meet this challenge. Yes, a little work and effort is required but National has made things very easy for us through these web sites. Please know our committee is ready to help with this vital endeavor in any way and at any time, and thanks everyone for their greatly needed support.

For God & Country,

Chuck Robbins

*Chairman – AL Dept. of NJ Centennial Committee
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