

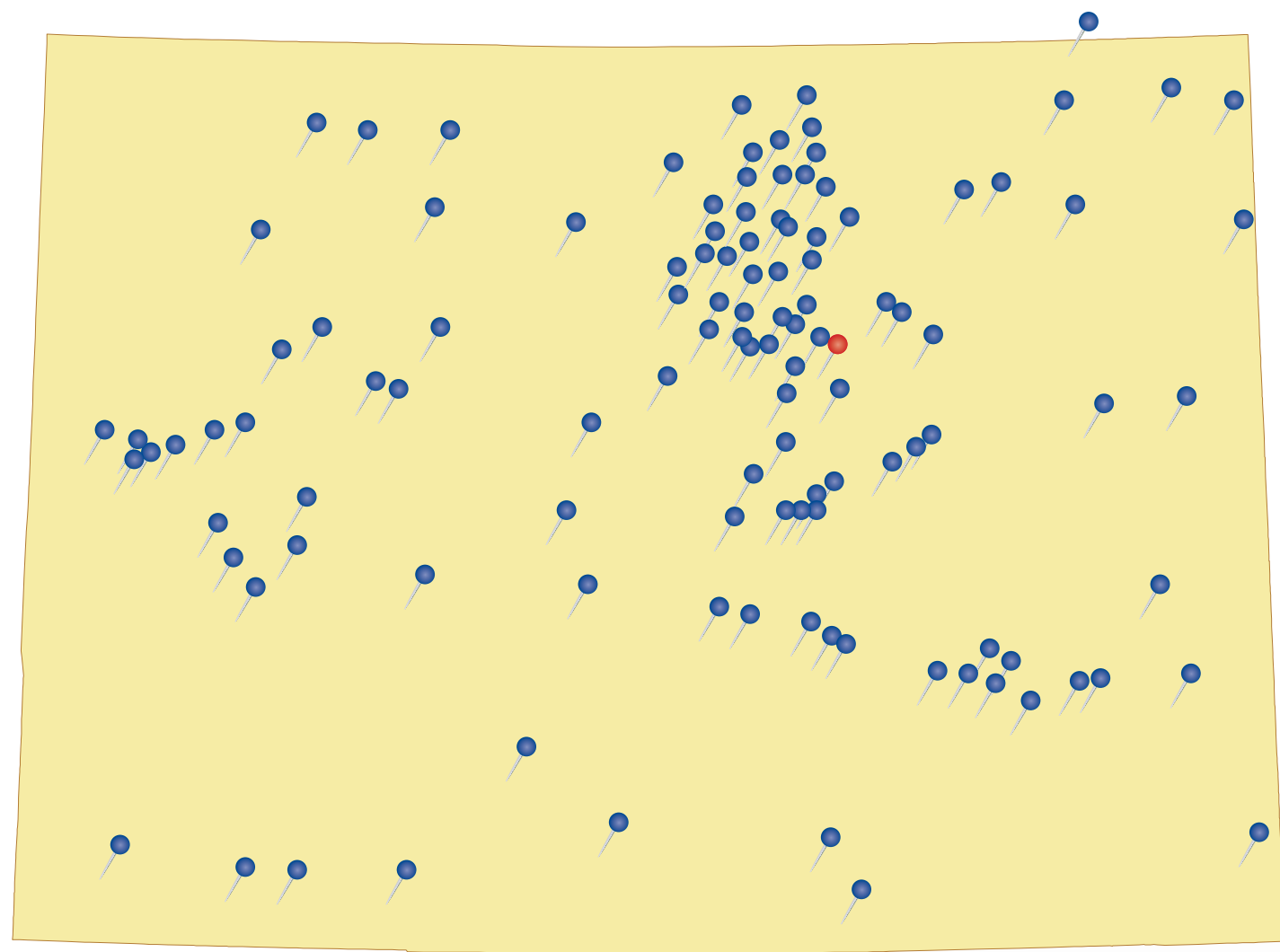


EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A STORY

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF

COLORADO

Colorado's dedication to military service, patriotism and youth can be seen throughout the state. Memorials honoring military members range from a striking veterans monument in the heart of Denver to a memorial in Pueblo featuring the city's four Medal of Honor recipients. The commitment to public service has continued for American Legion members. They rise to the occasion whenever help is needed. They have helped communities recover from devastating natural disasters and support veterans in dire situations. For example, Post 171 in Cripple Creek led a project to completely refurbish the condemned home of a veteran and his 8-year-old disabled son. Each year in Colorado Springs, The American Legion crowns national champions in its annual National Junior Shooting Sports program. As The American Legion celebrates its centennial anniversary, its priorities are on full display in the Centennial State.



- Every year on Veterans Day, Loveland Post 15 members lead a bell-ringing ceremony throughout the town, beginning at 3 a.m. It's a tradition dating back to Nov. 11, 1918, when the bells signaled the end of the "war to end all wars."
- Post 209 in Colorado Springs is the largest post in the state.
- In Grand Junction, Post 200 members cut timber and give it to community members who need it for firewood during the long winter.
- Post 206 is the state's all-women's post, dating back to 1957.
- Post 7 in Leadville is believed to be the post at the highest elevation in the United States, at over 10,000 feet.

Legend

- Legion posts
- CO Legion Department Headquarters

Sacred places of honor and remembrance

Colorado takes pride in its many memorials honoring and remembering veterans. Among the memorials that can be found in the state are two that stand out, one for its newness and one for its uniqueness.

In May 2013, the Colorado Freedom Memorial was dedicated in Aurora. The memorial honors war veterans from all eras, with soil from the nations where troops were deployed. The memorial's unique shape is a reflection of the state's Rocky Mountain range. On its glass panels are the names of nearly 6,000 killed in action since Colorado became a state.

The monument's creator, Rick Crandall, promoted the project while doing live radio broadcasts from American Legion posts.

Elsewhere, atop a mountain in the Rio Grande National Forest, sits

a monument called Soldierstone dedicated to those who helped the Americans during the Vietnam War. The monument's creator and founder, retired Lt. Col. Stuart Allen Beckley, envisioned the memorial to be erected in a place of respect where it would not be vandalized.

The memorial, dedicated in 1995, features a 10-foot-tall monument with stone tablets on all four sides, surrounded by a triangular rock wall that suggests an abandoned outpost from Southeast Asia. Outside the wall are 36 300-pound granite stones in three concentric circles, representing soldiers defending the base. Each of the 36 stones contains quotes in languages of the Americans' allies: Vietnamese, French, Laotian, Cambodian and others.

Centennial State Attractions



The Colorado Tribute to Veterans Monument, near the State Capitol building in Denver, was dedicated Nov. 11, 1990. It is a memorial to those who lost their lives in service to America and a tribute to veterans of the past, present and future. There are five brass disks about six inches in diameter featuring the emblem of each of the service branches above the engraving. The top of the obelisk is lit at night.




The Veterans Plaza in Fort Collins, dedicated in May 2011 and opened in November 2011, serves as a remembrance to veterans. The memorial, in Spring Canyon Community Park, educates visitors about the roles generations of veterans have played to keep America safe.



Pueblo is the hometown of four Medal of Honor recipients – William J. Crawford, Army, World War II; Carl L. Sitter, Marines, Korea; Raymond G. "Jerry" Murphy, Marines, Korea; and Drew D. Dix, Army, Vietnam. All four are depicted in the Pueblo Medal of Honor Memorial at the city's convention center.



In 2000, the Department of Colorado moved to its current office. In the process, they found an old version of the uniform cap each Legionnaire is entitled to wear. Such caps are often customized by each state organization to set its members apart. The top is the shape of Pike's Peak with snow on it. The left side says "Pikes Peak or Bust" and the right side says "Colorado." The material is wool felt.

<p>1921</p> <p>A fire destroys the Post 108 building in Pagosa Springs on its first birthday. The post rebuilt and is still active today.</p>	<p>1927</p> <p>American Legion Post 54 acquires land and donates it to the city of Gunnison with the stipulation that it be maintained by the city as American Legion Memorial Park. The park serves as the focal point for patriotic events like Veterans Day, Flag Day and memorial services for some veterans when requested by the family.</p> 	<p>1954</p> <p>Post 119 in Estes Park dedicates its present home after purchasing it from the Bureau of Reclamation. In 1998, the building was placed on the Colorado List of State Historic Buildings.</p> 	<p>1977</p> <p>Bob Hope appears for the dedication of a hall named in his honor at Cummings-Prather Post 193 in Denver, after performing at the Legion's national convention.</p> 	<p>1981</p> <p>Dean F. Clancy wins the Legion's national Oratorical contest, the first and only Centennial State resident to do so.</p>	<p>1985</p> <p>Woodrow L. Mudge Jr., who attended Colorado Boys State, is elected commander of the Sons of The American Legion.</p>
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CO Legionnaires



Earl Franklin, a World War II veteran, lived a postwar life of community service. In addition to being a Legionnaire, he served as mayor of Sterling, city councilman for a dozen years and a church deacon.



World War I veteran **James "Jimmy" Lingenfelter** was the last Colorado department commander from his war era, serving in 1963. For more than 50 years, he was a veterans service officer and post commander in Salida.



George Sakato received the Medal of Honor for his actions in France during World War II. In 1944, he charged an enemy stronghold, then took command of his platoon while leading the defense of the position. Sakato later served as a district commander for the Legion.



Peter Ole performed as the organist at American Legion national conventions for 37 years, including his final one in 2015. Ole, who began playing at Paul C. Beck Post 23 in Aurora, was honored with a resolution naming him "The American Legion Maestro Emeritus."



Sgt. Allen Dale June, a member of Post 32 in Longmont, received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2000 for his role as one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers during World War II.



Colorado Springs: where champions take aim

Each July, 30 high schoolers from across the country converge on the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs for the two-day American Legion Junior Shooting Sports championship. Colorado Springs has hosted the championship every year except one since 1991.

The contestants qualify by scoring the most points during competitions among 1,300 participants in the American Legion tournament. There are two categories, sporter and precision, in each of which 15 finalists compete in Colorado Springs. Past participants have included Olympic gold medalist Jamie (Beyerle) Corkish. The winners in each category receive scholarship money.

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports program encompasses the basic elements of gun safety, education, marksmanship, enjoyment and competition. Boys and girls can participate; and disabled youth are encouraged to join, as competitive shooting is a sport that creates an equal playing field for all competitors. The participants, staying together in Colorado Springs, socialize between competitions.

When American Legion Past National Commander Dave Rehbein retired from overseeing the program in 2016 after having been involved from its beginning, he commented, "I've had the privilege of doing many, many things in The American Legion. This ranks up there with anything else that might have been an accomplishment."

Did you know?

Shawn Chacón played Legion Baseball for the Greeley team before beginning a career in Major League Baseball that saw the pitcher play for the Colorado Rockies and several other professional teams.

Post-9/11 CO LEGION

There was a disconnect between The American Legion and the generation of veterans who are now coming out of the service, so Post 1879 was born to help bring those services the Legion offers to the newest generation of veterans.

All in all, over the past two years, our aim has evolved from the veterans community to the community as a whole.

We strive to continue growing over the next several years to become an important part of the Fort Collins and Northern Colorado community. Our service never stops, it merely changes course.



Joshua Hayes, Post 1879 adjutant. Post 1879 in Fort Collins, near Colorado State University, is among the Legion's newest posts. It is made up of mostly post-9/11-generation veterans and prides itself on activities that unite post members. The post puts together physical activities such as 5Ks and hikes as a way to form bonds and foster camaraderie. Post 1879 was started by a group of post-9/11 veterans who had left the service and started in college instead of the workforce. Some members had experience with The American Legion and saw that it offered an large number of opportunities and programs for the veterans community, such as camaraderie, jobs, support with VA benefits, homes, fundraising and more.



It's our duty to help our brothers and sisters heal from the physical and mental scars of war.

Terri Clinton, Department of Colorado commander, 2017-18

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Join The American Legion

www.legion.org/join

1992

A memorial mile marker from Brest, France – a sister city of Denver – is dedicated.

1994

June Thomas is elected the first female department commander.



2005

Tom Bock of Post 23 in Aurora is elected national commander of The American Legion.

2011

Michael Herbert of Arvada is elected Boys Nation president.



2013

American Legion Post 18 in Greeley supports victims as severe flooding decimates the town. The Legion's National Emergency Fund doles out \$25,000 worth of grants to affected Legionnaires and posts.

2015

Mike W. Moss is elected national commander of the Sons of The American Legion.



2017

Legion Post 171 in Cripple Creek leads a community effort to rehabilitate the home of veteran and single dad Andrew Smith and his disabled son, Laren.