



EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A STORY

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey's heralded history is much like that of The American Legion's service to community, state and nation. Three hundred American Legion posts can be found within its borders. The Legion's patriotic service to the communities and veterans it serves is living proof of continued service once active duty ends. These posts' great programs have had a great impact on the lives of many young New Jerseyans who have gone on to become great leaders, role models and champions. From farmlands and cities to the Pine Barrens and the beautiful Jersey Shore, the Garden State has played a key role in America's history – as has The American Legion.

NJ Legionnaires



James H. Hall served as a tanker during World War II, and participated in the Battle of the Bulge. In 2006, during his year as an American Legion national vice commander, he was asked by President Bush to represent all World War II veterans at the opening of the National World War II Memorial. He was a 71-year member of Post 339 in Hopewell.



Margaret M. Malone was a World War II veteran and New Jersey's first female American Legion department commander in 1981-1982, and went on to become a national vice commander in 1982-1983. Far ahead of her time, she was a strong advocate on women veterans' issues and concerns, and she organized and was the first commander of Trenton Women's Post 447.



Hobart Brown was the first commander of the Department of New Jersey, and played a key role in the department's organization. He served in both World War I (where he fought in Argonne at the head of many troops) and World War II. He died in 1955 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

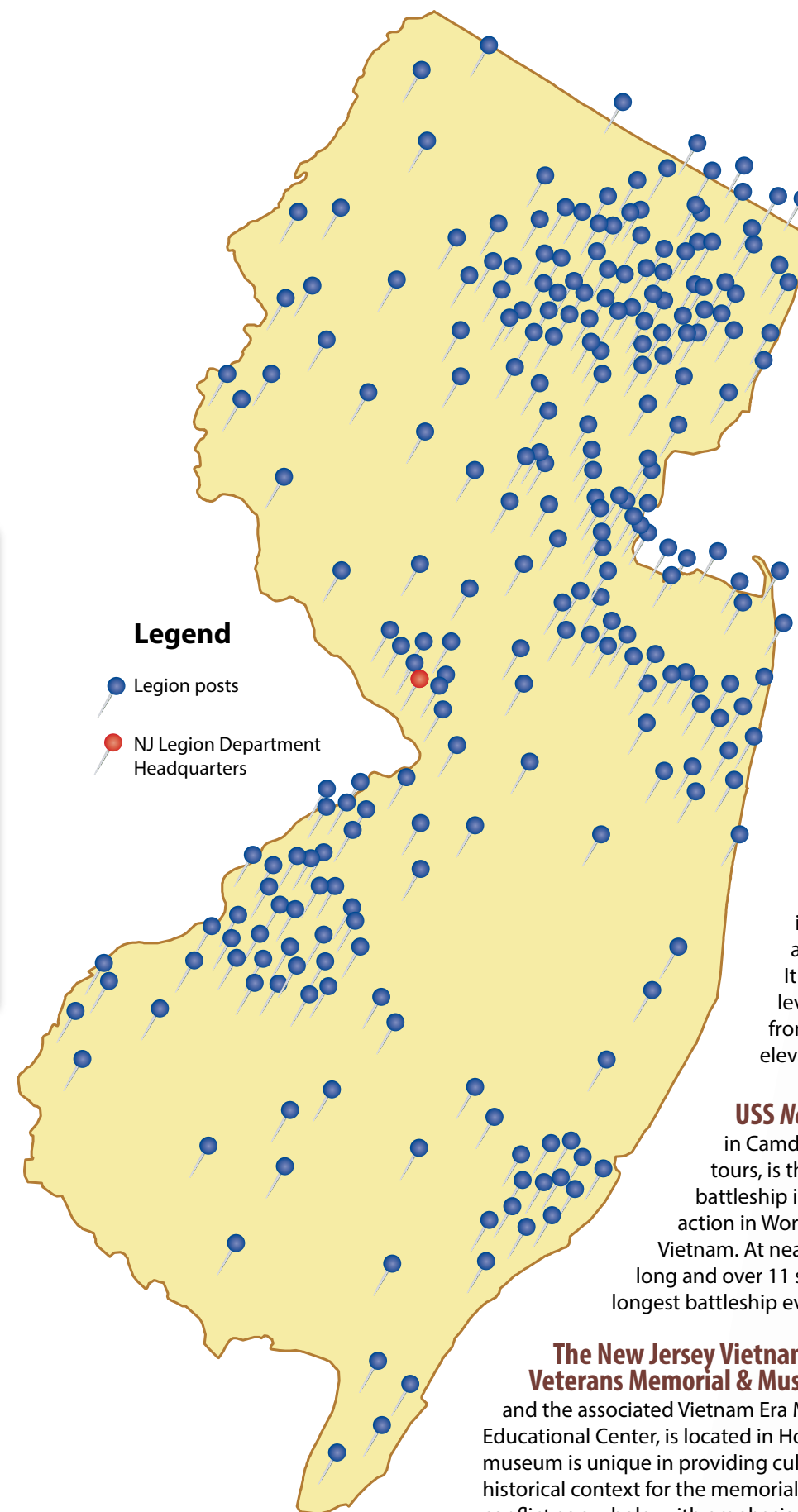


Four Chaplains

Each February, on the first Sunday of the month, the Cathedral of the Air at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst plays host to a service conducted by The American Legion's Department of New Jersey honoring four Army chaplains who died during World War II. The department's presence there is fitting, given that Legion donations contributed heavily to the chapel's construction in 1927 and were spearheaded by then-Legion National Chaplain Gill Robb Wilson of New Jersey.

On Feb. 3, 1943, the USAT *Dorchester* was scuttled by a German U-boat in the North Atlantic Ocean. Methodist minister George L. Fox, Reformed Church in America minister Clark V. Poling, Roman Catholic priest John P. Washington (a New Jersey native) and Rabbi Alexander B. Goode gave their life jackets to other passengers when it was discovered that there weren't enough. As *Dorchester* sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying. Today, each chaplain has his own stained glass window in the Cathedral of the Air.

The American Legion has long promoted the story of the Four Chaplains; the organization sees them as examples of what America is all about, and of veterans helping veterans.



■ Post 331 in Stone Harbor is located in a deactivated U. S. Coast Guard station. The building houses a life-saving museum on its first floor and a military museum on its second.



■ Post 129 in Toms River, the largest post in New Jersey, has 1,762 members. Post 312 in Morristown and Post 315 in Mendham have 15 members each.

Garden State Attractions

The High Point Monument, located in High Point State Park in Sussex, was built between 1928 and 1930 in honor of war veterans. It stands at 1,803 feet above sea level. The monument gets its name from being the site of the highest elevation in the state.



USS New Jersey, berthed in Camden and open for tours, is the most decorated battleship in naval history. It saw action in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. At nearly three football fields long and over 11 stories high, it was the longest battleship ever built.



The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial & Museum, and the associated Vietnam Era Museum & Educational Center, is located in Holmdel. The museum is unique in providing cultural and historical context for the memorial and the conflict as a whole, with emphasis on the effects on New Jersey.



1919

Seven New Jersey World War I veterans attend the Paris Caucus in March, the foundation of The American Legion.

1920

Of the more than 300 Legion posts in New Jersey today, 116 are established between mid-1919 and late 1920.



1934

During the state convention in Belmar, Legionnaires help save lives as the *Morro Castle* sinks near Asbury Park.



1945

The dedication of the new home of Post 19 in Bayonne features natives Stephen Gregg and Nicholas Oresko, who each received the Medal of Honor during World War II.



1947

At the Legion's national convention in New York City, a massed flag formation of New Jersey posts marches together up Fifth Avenue.

1957

The 39th annual American Legion National Convention is held in Atlantic City.



THE LEGION'S BATTLE AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

In 2016, the Department of New Jersey received the national American Legion Homeless Veterans Outreach Award. The award was an acknowledgment of the hard work the department has put in over the last several years to combat homelessness among veterans. The State of New Jersey estimates that it has about 2,000 homeless veterans in it.

In 2013, the department began co-hosting Housing Our Heroes forums that feature an array of service providers in New Jersey and beyond, networking to figure out the best ways to assist homeless and needy veterans. The focus is on finding future solutions, whether that includes transitional housing, living stipends or additional permanent living options.

Since 2011, the department has raised over \$850,000 for this worthy cause. But it doesn't stop with money. Current activities include helping plan and conduct "stand downs" across the state, where veterans and family members in need can drop in and access an array of resources and assistance options. Other promotional and fundraising activities range from 5Ks to bingo events.

Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members – the entire Legion Family, in short – have all contributed to raising funds for this very important issue.



Youth Programs

One of the Four Pillars on which The American Legion was founded after World War I was that of supporting children and youth throughout the country. Since its organization, the Department of New Jersey has stayed true to that commitment with a variety of programs.

American Legion Baseball has been providing opportunities for summer ball for nearly 100 years. New Jersey has nearly 100 senior and junior teams, sponsored by local posts around the state. One team, sponsored by Post 72 in Brooklawn, has won four national American Legion Baseball championships – the most recent in 2014 – and 28 state titles.

For 30 years, the department has also participated in the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest." The contest was developed primarily to instill a better knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution in high school students, as well as of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship and public speaking skills. Students compete for scholarship

money and the chance to represent New Jersey in the national finals in Indianapolis.

The department's safety committee conducts a yearly safety essay and poster contest for middle school students with disabilities.

As part of the department's Americanism Award program, a coloring contest is held each year for fourth and fifth graders. Posts distribute coloring sheets, and choose an entry to be judged at the county, and then department, levels.

Another national program in which the department has taken part since the 1940s is Boys State. A participatory program in which students become part of the operation of a re-created local, county and state government American Legion Jersey Boys State has a strong tradition of education, patriotism and excellence in the development of tomorrow's leaders. The weeklong session is held beginning each Father's Day at Rider University in Lawrenceville. And two delegates have the opportunity to attend the national Boys Nation in Washington. The New Jersey American Legion Auxiliary conducts a similar program for girls.

Did you know?

Among the luminaries who have attended Jersey Boys State are Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, Gov. Chris Christie and actor James Gandolfini.



Post-9/11 NJ LEGION

As a hospital corpsman with the Marines, it was my job to ensure everyone was OK. After I retired I was able to continue providing this service through The American Legion. I love the camaraderie and knowing that someone still has my back. I enjoy visiting our veterans homes, hearing old war stories, playing bingo and participating in our statewide events honoring our servicemembers. As we prepare to celebrate our 100th year of service, I am looking forward to remembering the past and being a part of the future American Legion vision.



Wil Fetherman, a member of Neptune American Legion Post 346, was an active-duty member assigned at the Branch Medical Clinic, Washington (D.C.) Navy Yard on 9/11. He was quickly deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and proudly served with the 22nd MEU in Afghanistan. After retirement, Wil continues his service to his country beyond just Post 346, serving at the both the county and department levels (as a vice commander). His commitment is an example for the newest generation of veterans, stepping into leadership roles to carry The American Legion in New Jersey into its second century.

- **Post 70 in Nutley** was cited with a certificate by aviation authorities for assisting in a 1928 cross-country tour by Charles Lindbergh and his *Spirit of St. Louis* after his nonstop flight to Paris. The post had painted "NUTLEY" on the roof of the Franklin Theater to aid in navigation.
- During World War II, **Post 82 in Millville** donated space at its post home for a USO lounge to accommodate servicemembers stationed at the Millville Army Air Field.

Contact The American Legion of New Jersey

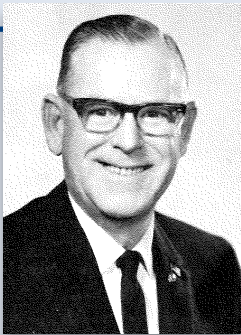
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1965

The Legion and Auxiliary raise money to send Christmas presents to troops serving in Vietnam.



1968

William C. Doyle, a member of Post 79 in Burlington, is elected the 50th national commander of The American Legion.

1980

Ernest Wilson Jr. is elected national commander of the Sons of The American Legion.



2001

The department wins its third national Legion Belgrano Trophy for outstanding support of the Boy Scouts.

2002

Elsie Bailey-Comer is elected national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

2011

Post 12 in Somerville marks 60 consecutive years of all-time membership highs.



2012

Hurricane Sandy destroys or severely damages 10 posts and 275 Legionnaires' homes. The Legion's National Emergency Fund helps all affected.