



EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A STORY

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF

SOUTH CAROLINA

The American Legion's Department of South Carolina consists of nearly 20,000 wartime veterans who serve in their communities through more than 160 local posts across the Palmetto State. It is a department with a rich history of youth champions, one of the nation's largest Boys State programs, a flourishing American Legion Riders group and a devotion to the Legion's pillar values of service to veterans, young people, military personnel, patriotism and remembrance, guided by the spirit of a past national commander known simply as "Mr. Veteran," Past National Commander E. Roy Stone.

SC Legionnaires

Former South Carolina Gov. and longtime U.S. Sen. J. Strom Thurmond was a member of The American Legion.



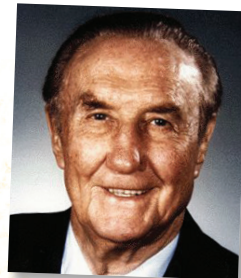
Irvine Belser, student body president and top athlete at the University of South Carolina who went on to Yale and Oxford where he was a Rhodes Scholar, served as South Carolina's first department adjutant. In addition to his athletic, academic and professional successes, he served in the U.S. Army during World War I and World War II, retiring as a colonel.

Wyndham Meredith Manning, whose father and great-grandfather served as governors of South Carolina, was the first commander of American Legion Post 6 in Columbia. Manning was a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, lost three gubernatorial races and finished his career of public service as superintendent of the state's prison system.



Aiken County native Gerald R. Tyler, was one of seven South Carolinians who attended the Paris Caucus of The American Legion in March 1919 when the organization was formed. As a commanding officer on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, N.M., he helped develop the atomic bomb that ended World War II.

Legionnaire Holmes Buck Springs of Myrtle Beach, a business, civic and church leader for many decades there, served in the 2nd South Carolina National Guard and was a colonel during action on the Mexican border before he was assigned to the 30th Division staff of the American Expeditionary Forces in France during World War I, where he retired as a brigadier general.



E. Roy Stone: "This we believe"

Longtime American Legion National Executive Committeeman E. Roy Stone of James F. Daniel Post 3 in Greenville, a U.S. Navy veteran who served in both theaters of World War II, joined the organization after he saw wounded GIs filling up the corridors of an overflowing naval hospital in California. When he got home to South Carolina, he saw a similar sight, where some 800 disabled

veterans were waiting for rooms at the VA hospital.

"I saw men being put in the hallways," he later explained. "Later, I went to the funerals of some of the men who were stored in the halls because the VA didn't have the space to treat them. I was determined that their supreme sacrifices would not be in vain."

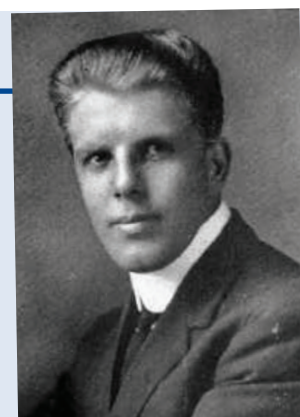
He joined The American Legion and spent the rest of his life fighting for veterans and their values. He served as a local, state and national leader who was named a past national commander in 1987.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the Legion's National Emergency Fund, which provides grants and other assistance after disasters, such as Hurricane Camille that devastated the Southeast in 1969; Stone helped formalize the NEF that continues to serve communities today.

Stone, who has a meeting room named after him at American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis, wrote an article for *The American Legion Magazine* in commemoration of the organization's 75th anniversary. It was titled, "This We Believe."

"We believe a veteran is a veteran. Legionnaires are Republicans, and they are Democrats. They are senators, congressmen, firemen, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, insurance salesmen, grocers, barbers and career military men and women. They are old and they are young. They are rich and they are poor ... We have a stake, if you will, in seeing our country live on and grow strong because we witnessed so many give their blood and sometimes their lives to this end."

On Sept. 12, 1994, the article was entered into the Congressional Record, and as a statement of American Legion mission and beliefs, it stands as one of the organization's most cherished messages.



1919

Julius Walker of Columbia serves as the American Legion Department of South Carolina's first commander. At just 22 years old, he is believed to have been the youngest American Legion department commander in history.

1926

A state agency for the prosecution of veterans claims is approved by the Legislature, creating the position of state service officer. South Carolina Gov. John G. Richards appoints **E. Henry Cappelmann** of Charleston to take the office.

1930

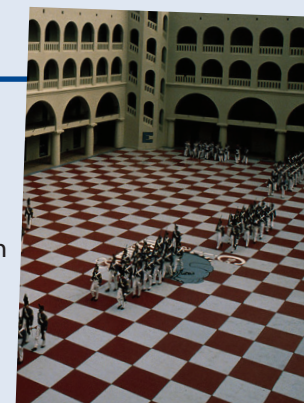
The **South Carolina General Assembly** passes a war widows and orphans scholarship bill driven to passage by The American Legion.

1939

Henry Fletcher Padgett of Saluda Post 65 wins the American Legion National Oratorical contest.

1941

The American Legion National Oratorical contest is conducted at **The Citadel** in Charleston. The champion is Frank Church Jr. of Idaho, who would go on to have a 24-year run as a U.S. senator and serve as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

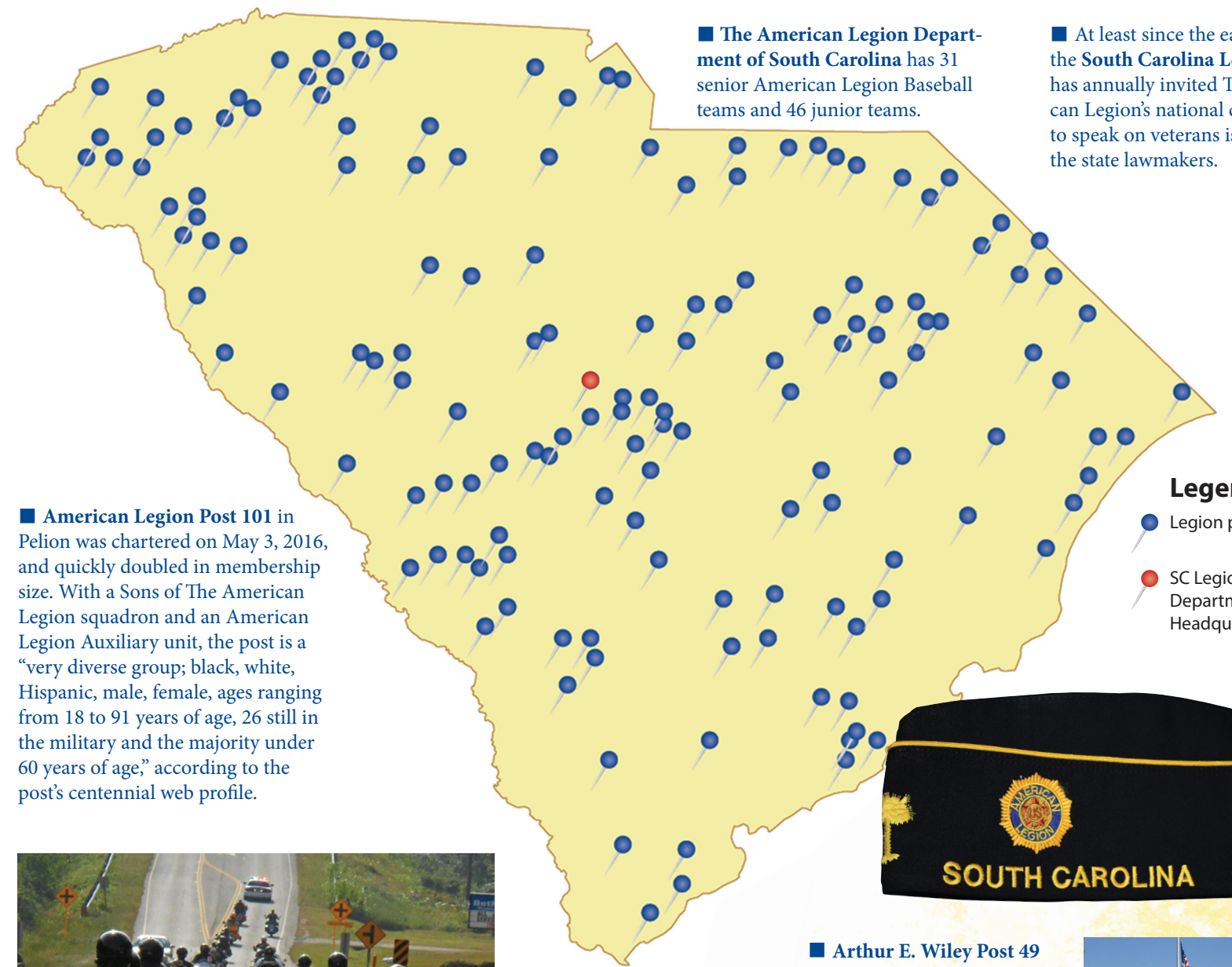


1942

William C. Miller of Summerville is the first discharged World War II veteran to join The American Legion after a resolution passes allowing veterans of that war era to join.

1958

Thirty-three American Legion posts throughout South Carolina raise nearly \$3,400 in a department program called Blue Crutches for Polio. **Honea Path Post 50** takes first place in the competition to raise the most money.



■ The American Legion Department of South Carolina has 31 senior American Legion Baseball teams and 46 junior teams.

■ At least since the early 1960s, the **South Carolina Legislature** has annually invited The American Legion's national commander to speak on veterans issues before the state lawmakers.

Legend

- Legion posts
- SC Legion Department Headquarters



■ **American Legion Post 101** in Pelion was chartered on May 3, 2016, and quickly doubled in membership size. With a Sons of The American Legion squadron and an American Legion Auxiliary unit, the post is a "very diverse group; black, white, Hispanic, male, female, ages ranging from 18 to 91 years of age, 26 still in the military and the majority under 60 years of age," according to the post's centennial web profile.



Riders on a mission to help

A 612-mile South Carolina American Legion Riders run in 2012 raised more than \$10,000 for the Legion's Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides education funding to the children of men and women who lost their lives on duty or became 50 percent or more disabled after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The South Carolina State Legacy Run became annual following the 2012 success. The South Carolina Legion Riders are one of the nation's biggest yearly contributors to the Legacy Scholarship, which raises more than \$1.2 million a year to help with college costs.



■ **Spartanburg Post 28's** building was completed in 1937 and is historically significant due to its unusual granite Colonial Revival design and its connection with the Works Progress Administration. It was formally dedicated on Armistice Day 1937 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The American Legion operates a museum inside.

■ **Arthur E. Wiley Post 49** in Hilton Head received its charter April 14, 2014, with 42 members. Wiley, a World War I veteran, became a community, business and church leader after he came home to civilian life.



■ **The American Legion War Museum in Greenville at Post 3** has operated as a bomb shelter, USO club and dance hall. In 2002, it transformed into a museum and 6,000-volume library named in honor of its volunteer director, Cecil Buchanan, whose vision now generates some 12,000 visits a year, including more than 100 school groups.

STARS of the DIAMONDS



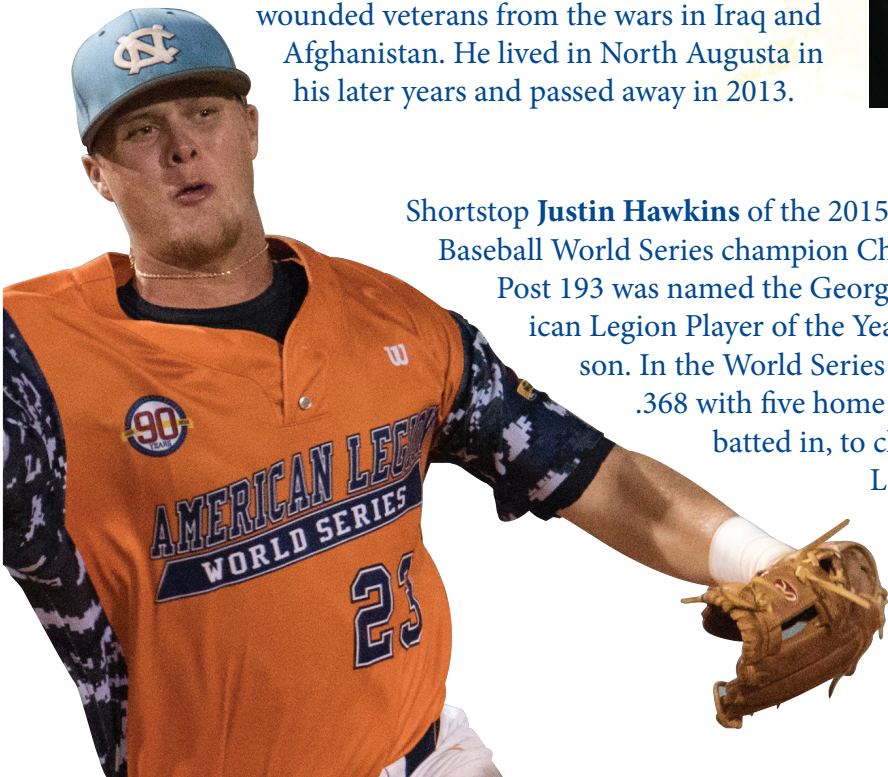
Hall of Fame left-fielder **Jim Rice** of the Boston Red Sox got his start playing for Anderson Post 14. He played in 2,089 Major League games and finished with a career batting average of .298, including 382 home runs, 373 doubles and 79 triples. He was an eight-time all-star and the American League Most Valuable Player in 1978. After retirement as a player, he became involved in numerous charitable causes, especially those that benefit children.

Bobby Richardson, who helped Sumter win the state American Legion Baseball title as a player, became a proud ambassador of the program after a Major League Baseball career that spanned 12 years starting in 1955. He joined the New York Yankees at the age of 19 and played in more than 1,400 games. He holds numerous Major League Baseball World Series records, including runs batted in and hits in a series. He played in 30 consecutive World Series games as the Yankees were piling up pennants in nine of his first 10 years in the majors. Richardson went on to coach at the University of South Carolina where his 1975 team went 51-6 and finished as the runner-up in the College Baseball World Series.

Lou Brissie of Anderson, who suffered devastating leg injuries in Italy as a combat infantryman in World War II, underwent 23 surgeries after his wounds but persevered to pitch six full seasons in the Major Leagues, wearing a brace. An inspiration to all with disabilities, he later served as a national American Legion Baseball commissioner and was an inspirational speaker for wounded veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He lived in North Augusta in his later years and passed away in 2013.



Shortstop **Justin Hawkins** of the 2015 American Legion Baseball World Series champion Chapin-Newberry Post 193 was named the George W. Rulon American Legion Player of the Year the same season. In the World Series that year, he hit .368 with five home runs and 12 runs batted in, to claim the Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Award and the Big Stick Award for most bases reached, with 31.



Birth and growth of the Dorn VA Medical Center

In 1929, E. Henry Cappelmann submitted an American Legion Department of South Carolina convention resolution urging the construction of a veterans hospital in the state. Department Commander Oscar Doyle appointed a hospital committee, and the \$1.3 million facility in Columbia was completed in 1932. American Legion Department Commander Richmond H. Hilton presided over the dedication ceremony, and the first patient was admitted on Dec. 1, 1932. At that time, the facility had 306 beds and a staff of 457.

In 1978, the hospital was named for William Jennings Bryan Dorn, a World War II U.S. Army Air Corps veteran and former House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman who served as commander of the American Legion Department of South Carolina after he left Congress.

Today, the Dorn VA Medical Center provides state-of-the-art care for more than 81,000 veterans a year. It is also the hub for seven VA community-based outpatient clinics.



■ **William Henry "Haskell" Coffin** was a renowned early-20th-century commercial artist from South Carolina. His work appeared on the covers of leading national magazines and on government posters. The poster, at right, "Columbia's New Jewel," promoted The American Legion in its formative years.

Did you know?

South Carolina Past Department Commander **Feltham S. James**, elected national chaplain of The American Legion in 1958, designed the original "Grace Cards" that offer multid denominational prayers and promote church participation among American Legion Family members. The same cards continue to be sold through American Legion Emblem Sales today, more than 60 years after they were first designed.

Post-9/11 SC LEGION

My family has always been a part of the military ... I enjoy working for the Legion because of the support for veterans.

Kevin Joy, American Legion Department of South Carolina assistant sergeant at arms, 122nd Combat Engineer Battalion, Edgefield, S.C. Joy enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1973 and served until 1985 when he went to work for the Department of Justice. After 9/11, he enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard on a 10-year commitment that ended in 2011. During his time with the National Guard, he had numerous responsibilities, including training and equipment readiness, and one tour of combat duty in Iraq.



Richard Riley, elected governor of South Carolina in 1978 and in 1982, got his start in public service as a participant in American Legion Palmetto Boys State.



National television journalist and news anchor **Craig D. Melvin** is a Palmetto Boys State alum who later served as a counselor for the program.

Boys State Luminaries

Former NFL football players **Vonnie Holliday** and **Cory Chavous** were participants in Palmetto Boys State.

U.S. Sen. **Tim Scott** addressed more than 1,100 participants of the Palmetto American Legion Boys State program at Anderson University in 2017. Scott participated in Palmetto Boys State in 1982.

Contact The American Legion of South Carolina

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Join The American Legion

www.legion.org/join



1972	1981	1994	2005	2010	2012	2015
Thomas W. Joiner of Rock Hill wins first place in the American Legion's National Oratorical contest. He later becomes a professor of violin and orchestral activities at Furman University in Greenville and music director of the Hendersonville, N.C., Symphony Orchestra.	A Vietnam memorial is established at Patriot's Point in Charleston as "The American Legion Room" aboard USS Yorktown.	U.S. Army Korean War veteran Willie M. McLaughlin of Greenwood is elected as the first African-American South Carolina American Legion department commander, a major turning point for the organization in the state. He has served in a variety of distinguished positions, such as secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Agriculture Teachers and president of the Greenwood County Education Association of South Carolina.	Navy Veteran Norma J. Walker of North Augusta is the first woman elected South Carolina American Legion department commander.	Victoria Black of Iva wins the American Legion National Oratorical contest, taking home an \$18,000 college scholarship.	Colt Gross of North Augusta, sponsored by Post 71, wins the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Championship in the precision category.	Chapin-Newberry becomes the first South Carolina team in 79 years to win an American Legion World Series championship, defeating Louisiana 9-2 at Keeter Stadium in Shelby, N.C.