



As the need remains, so do Legion Family efforts

On Dec. 15, Eddie Robinson turned 100 years old. In doing so, he became the oldest living former Major League Baseball player.

And three days earlier, fellow members of American Legion Post 516 in Fort Worth, Texas, were there to help Robinson celebrate the milestone. Members of the post joined others in a parade in front of Robinson's home, where passersby waved signs and offered birthday greetings to a waving Robinson.

Post 516 and Department of Texas District 12 Adjutant Dave Etter said members of Robinson's family reached out to post about participating in the parade, which also included former teammates, former Rangers General Manager Tom Grieve and U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey.

"Here in Texas we're very big Ranger fans," Etter said. "Here is Eddie Robinson, a member of our post ... who became one of the first general managers for the Texas Rangers. And he's a member of our post. That just blew my mind."

“I see his membership come through my desk, and I process it just grinning from ear to ear because he participates (in post activities). He’d come down to our fish fry. He’d come down to other activities we’ve had. Here’s an opportunity because of COVID ... for us to do something for him.”

Robinson, a World War II U.S. Navy veteran and 26-year member of Post 516, played for seven MLB teams over the course of 13 seasons. He batted .268 with 172 home runs and 723 RBI, and in 1948 won a World Series with Cleveland.

After his playing career, Robinson went on to serve in several different front-office capacities for multiple teams, including general manager for both the Rangers and Atlanta Braves. During his career he played in four All-Star games and was responsible for drafting Reggie Jackson, Vida Blue and Dale Murphy.

During the parade Robinson also was presented with an honorary American Legion life membership by Post 516 Commander David Fenn. “It was our chance to do something for his birthday,” Etter said.

Because Post 516 has been able to keep its doors open during much of the pandemic, Etter said it has been able to assist other veterans groups that don’t have a permanent facility to conduct their meetings by offering the post as a safe place to gather. “It’s proven to be very, very successful,” he said.

As 2020 closes out and coronavirus cases continue to rise, American Legion Family members continue to do what they’ve done throughout the pandemic – deliver assistance, hope and honor to others.

California

On Dec. 12, American Legion Riders Chapter 574 in Moreno Valley staged a toy run that doubled as a parade to honor first responders. The Legion Riders made parade laps in front of different fire stations and around the Riverside University Medical Center to show their support and appreciation for the effort of the firefighters and health-care professionals during the pandemic.

Watch some of the parade [here](#).

Delaware

In Millsboro, members of American Legion Post 28 were among those honoring World War II veteran Tom Creekmore on his 97th birthday. Post members teamed up with the Long Neck Rotary Club, the Indian River Fire Company and others to provide Creekmore with a drive-by celebration of nearly 80 vehicles.

Creekmore was presented a certificate of appreciation from Post 28.

Florida

In Palm City, Hugh T. Gregory Post 63 provided a 100th birthday celebration outside the home of World War II veteran Frank Wrublewski.

Kentucky

With COVID-19 affecting many families financially, American Legion Post 9 in Owensboro has been collecting bikes to give to children for Christmas. By Dec. 10 the post already had collected 130 bicycles.

“There’s a very big demand this year,” Post 9 Legionnaire Bobby Self **told the Messenger-Inquirer**.

“We’re just trying to get as many bikes as we can for the children this year.”

Maine

In Belfast, American Legion Post 43 set up a collection for Toys for Tots drive while also collecting donations for the Salvation Army. Legionnaire Leslie Holland said this year’s effort was even more important because of the pandemic.

“I think it’s important with the school’s out, and the kids in such strange times, schooling from home and hybrid, that we keep the holidays as normal as possible but to be safe,” Holland **told WABI**. “And this was the only way we could think of to really keep everybody safe but keep kids’ Christmas a joyful occasion.”

Michigan

Tony Revord Post 244’s American Legion Family in Powers has been collecting money during the holiday season for the Hermansville Food Pantry, which serves residents of Powers, Spalding, Wilson, Cunard, Hermansville, Faithorn, Daggett, Carney, Nadeau, Jam Dam and Perronville.

Minnesota

In Albert Lea, Leo Carey Post 56’s American Legion Family were unable to visit veterans American Legion Auxiliary members living in area care facilities, as they normally do during the holiday season. So instead, it provided more than 100 poinsettias to the staff at Good Samaritan Society, Thorne Crest Senior Living Community, St. John’s Lutheran Community, Oak Park Place and Prairie Senior Cottages to be passed out to the facilities’ residents.

“This is a time to show our community our spirit that we’re here for our veterans and also our Auxiliary members,” American Legion Post 56 Commander Jeff Olson told the Albert Lea Tribune. “We also pay tribute to all the nursing staff — for their help in keeping these individuals safe and being their families when they can’t have their families there now.”

Catherine Buboltz, sales and marketing director at Thorne Crest Senior Living Community, **told the Albert Lea Tribune** that members of Post 56’s Legion Family haven’t let the pandemic get in the way of making the veterans in her facility feel appreciated.

“Normally the Legion Riders, Legion Auxiliary members and Sons of The (American) Legion have taken the time to come and socialize with our resident veterans, along with bringing gifts throughout the year,” Buboltz said. “Legion Post No. 56 has done a great job of adapting to the changes brought forth with the COVID-19 pandemic and have continued to reach out to our veterans, with cards and gifts to thank them for their service and to remind them they are not forgotten.”

Montana

American Legion Post 72 typically hosts a holiday shopping trip for residents of the Montana Veterans Home in Columbia Falls. The residents would get to pick out one gift for themselves and one for a family member.

The pandemic cancelled those plans, so instead the post donated funds to purchase additional gifts to go along with the ones usually purchased for the residents by the Veterans Home. Each resident will receive gifts tailored to their personal tastes.

“We have always gotten the residents gifts in the past, but with the help of The American Legion, this year each resident will be getting some extra gifts,” Montana Veterans Home Volunteer Coordinator Denise Holm **told the Daily Inter Lake**. “We usually do all of our Christmas gifting on one day, but this year we will be able to do something every week to help keep their spirits up.”

New Jersey

With his family unable to give him a traditional party, U.S. Marine Corps veteran John Welsh was instead provided with a drive-by parade for his 100th birthday celebration in Somerdale. Members of American Legion Post 281’s Legion Riders chapter took part in the parade for Welsh, who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima and received two Purple Heart medals.

Ohio

In a normal year, Courtney Lawrence American Legion Post 202's members would visit Medina veterans on Veteran's Day and during the holiday season, including those confined to their homes and living in area care facilities. But 2020 has not been a normal year.

So the post adapted. Post 202 Commander Bob Fenn teamed up with a cinematographer, four middle school Veterans Day essay contest winners and two local singers to create a 30-minute video greeting to provide to the veterans they can't visit in person this year.

The video includes a welcome and thank-you from Fenn, music and the four students reading their winning essays. The video wraps up with photos of U.S. military cemeteries around the world and the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner."

The production ends with pictures of American cemeteries around the world that are filled with the graves of fallen American servicemembers while Hewitt sings "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The video is available via DVD or on [YouTube](#).

Oklahoma

A stand down for veterans in Tulsa was cancelled because of the pandemic, so American Legion Post 15 in Muskogee teamed up with Adventist Community Services and New Hope Assembly of God for a clothing giveaway for veterans and others in need in the community. Items distributed included coats, hats, gloves, scarves, all types of clothing, shoes, socks, new underwear, totes, backpacks, duffel bags, towels, washcloths and other personal items. The event also included a free breakfast.

"With the advent of the cold weather setting in, there's always a need for heavier clothing, long sleeves, jackets, flannel and certainly the underclothing, and just the outright extension of letting these people know somebody is aware and somebody cares," Post 15 Adjutant Raul Rizo **told the Muskogee Phoenix**. "Although we don't know many of these people personally, I think our good Lord charges us to look after each other."

Vermont

In Middlebury, American Legion Post 27 provided \$5,000 in relief to various local veteran and service organizations, and civic clubs hit hard financially by the pandemic.

The post awarded \$1,000 to American Legion Department of Vermont Commander Ron LaRose for his project assisting the two Vermont Boy Scout camps, The Veteran's Place in Northfield, The Dodge House, the Middlebury Rotary Club and the Middlebury Lions Club.

Another \$2,750 was given to the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department to fully fund the New Year's Eve fireworks display.

Washington

In Burlington, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 91 made up for children not being able to sit on Santa Claus's lap by providing a drive-thru Santa experience for 30 Skagit Head Start preschool students.

Unable to host its annual Christmas party for the students at City Hall, Unit 91 instead provided gift boxes handed out by Santa while families remained in their cars. The gift boxes included toys, school and art supplies, and scarves and hats knitted by Auxiliary members.

"I think people need to be safe, but I also think that you have to be compassionate toward your neighbors," Unit 91 member Eva Perry [told goskagit.com](http://told.goskagit.com).

Wisconsin

In Coon Valley, American Legion Post 116 is providing children with a drive-thru visit with Santa to adhere to social-distancing guidelines. The post, the Coon Valley Lions Club and the Coon Valley Conservation Club also are teaming up to provide each child with a treat bag.