

A History Of The American Legion



The American Legion was established in Paris, France in March, 1919 by a group of World War I veterans, and was chartered by the 66th U.S. Congress on September 16, 1919, as a "patriotic veterans organization."¹ It is headquartered at the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is composed of 55 state, U.S. territory and overseas departments that are organized into 12,000 posts across the world.

The American Legion dedicates its service to veterans, service members and communities. Since its beginning, its membership has grown to over 1.6 million. Among its many successes: it led the drafting & passing of the "G.I. Bill" of 1944, established the Department of Veterans Affairs (which provides lifetime health benefits for veterans at their hospitals and clinics), continued to honor veterans through many celebrations and observance activities, secured hundreds of benefits and services for veterans (including pensions and relief for veterans exposed to toxic contamination in the service), and taught the "values of responsible citizenship among young people."¹

The principal political focus of the American Legion is that of advocating in the interest of veterans and service members, and it is considered to be one of the most influential nonprofit groups in our country. In that capacity, the American Legion has worked to: "serve those who have served, strengthen the nation they swore with their lives to defend, and uphold the values that define American democracy."¹ Their highest priorities of: "Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth."¹ continue to form the basis of all that they do.

1. From the American Legion website (<https://www.legion.org>)