



THE AMERICAN LEGION

"The Friendly Word" from "The Friendly Post"

1655 Simms Street

Post 178

Lakewood, CO



USS American Legion (1919—1946)

After inspecting the hull of an Army troop ship being constructed at Camden, New Jersey, maritime official and member of the newly formed American Legion, William J. Brown, proposed a name change for the vessel at the organization's Pennsylvania Conference. The resolution passed only one week before launching, but publicity was favorable and on October 11, 1919 a U.S. Senator's wife christened the ship "American Legion."

The end of WWI obviated the need for new troop ships, so the American Legion was completed as a passenger-cargo vessel and modified for tropical service.

Munson Steamship Line bought it for \$1 million and began promoting fast passenger service (11 days) to South American ports. Round trip fare from New York to Rio cost \$450. National and regional officials of The American Legion were guests at a gala dinner aboard the ship prior to its maiden voyage to South America on July 23, 1921.

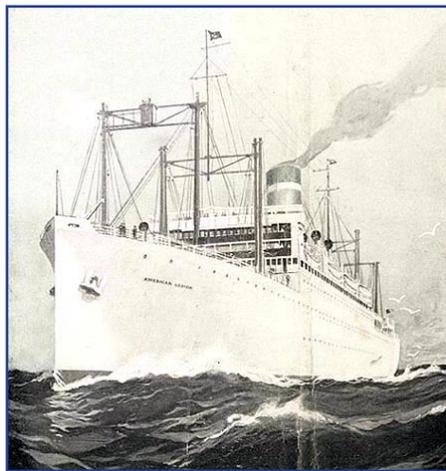
Munson fell into foreclosure in 1939 and the American Legion was laid up. It was rescued by the War Department shortly after Hitler invaded Poland, and converted to a troop transport.

After completing five voyages to Panama in 1940, President Roosevelt directed the American Legion to leave New York immediately for Petsamo, Finland and return with the Crown Princess of Norway and other dignitaries, "plus as many Americans as can be accommodated as they may not be able to return safely in any other way." Among the refugees was a young Danish musician destined for fame in America named Victor Borge. All were fleeing in the wake of Finland's

incredibly heroic but ultimately hopeless wintertime defense from Russian invasion.

The ship, crowded with over 900 aboard, found its way solo through heavy seas mined by both Russians and Germans before reaching New York twelve days later, escorted the final leg by two Navy destroyers.

Transport duties resumed until the ship was acquired by the Navy in August, 1941 and its white Army livery replaced by somber gray. An overhaul was completed in January, 1942. In April, the USS American Legion sailed through the Panama Canal bound for the Pacific.



The USS American Legion was awarded two Battle Stars for meritorious service in combat during WWII.

The vessel proceeded to New Zealand where it was augmented with 20-mm anti-aircraft cannons and selected for participation in the invasion of Guadalcanal, the first offensive landing in the Pacific. The American Legion and USS Fuller were the first ships to put troops ashore on August 7th.

The ship then joined the invasion fleet to repel air attacks. On August 8th a strafing enemy Mitsubishi sprayed machine gun fire across the deck, killing one sailor. Simultaneously, the American Legion's guns brought down the attacker.

The ship returned to the U.S. on December 8, 1943 having traveled 95,680 miles since leaving New York. After repairs, it completed a second tour in the Pacific Theater before spending the duration of the war in San Diego in a training capacity.

On March 28, 1946 the USS American Legion was decommissioned in Olympia, Washington and the name struck from the Naval Vessel Register. On February 5, 1948 it was sold for scrap.

Story by Dave Dupree Reference Source: Wikipedia Image: Bjorn Larsson, Maritime Timetable Images
More images and a 1940 Life Magazine story about the American Legion are at alpost178.org. Click on "newsletter."

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT
Wickey West

The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion charges our organization to

“preserve the memories and incidents of our association in the Great Wars.” It serves as a reminder, as we approach Memorial Day, that some gave their all, leaving us to keep our nation worthy of their sacrifice. We thank them for our freedom. You are not forgotten.

Dear Lord, be with our Legion Family Members as we pause to remember and honor our departed Veterans this Memorial Day. Amen.

COMMANDER'S REPORT
Bill Radwag

Our next meeting is May 3rd at 7:00 p.m. Election of officers is on the agenda. Several positions are contested. Come and make your choice. New officers will take over after the Department Convention June 27th.

Donations from last meeting: \$1,000 to Legion Baseball, \$700.00 for Cub and Eagle Scout projects, \$1,100.00 for the Riders Scholarship Fund and a pool table for Heather Ridge, and \$1,000 for District 5 Officer's Hardship Fund. Current Membership is 98.92%; we need 8 more to reach 100%.

BUSINESS REPORT
Bob Heen

Our first member picnic of the year is on **Memorial Day, May 30th**. The Post will provide burgers, brats, and dogs as well as draft beer. Participants are encouraged to bring a side dish. Members are admitted to the picnic free after showing their membership card. Non-member guests will be charged \$5 and \$2 for children under age 11. The picnic begins at noon following the **Memorial Day Service at 11:00 a.m.** As in prior years the lounge will be closed and doors locked at 11:00 a.m. and remain closed until the service is concluded. Volunteers are needed to staff the door to check membership cards. A sign-up sheet is in the lounge.

AUXILIARY REPORT
Carol Conway

April showers bring May flowers and everything is blooming this month! Our elections will take place during the monthly meeting on May 3rd (the first Tuesday of the month). Come and cast your vote and say hi to our new member **Lee Bachman**, a transfer from Phoenix.

I'd like to send out a grateful "Thank You" to everyone who contributed to the **Clothing Drive** in April. The items will go to our adopted Legion Post in Rockaway Beach, MO. This month we will be hosting the **Jr. Shooter's Dinner on Wednesday, May 25th from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.** Please sign-up to help and think about helping on any **Wednesday Burger Night!** The more the merrier!

Arvada Post 161 is having a **Skills Seminar May 21st** (all day). See their flyer on the AUX board for more information. It's open to anyone. We can really use your help at the **Annual Memorial Day Picnic, sponsored by the Auxiliary.** Please sign up! Remember to mark your calendars for **Mother's Day Breakfast Sunday May 8th!**

Thank you so much for all you do! You are truly appreciated!!

Please pray for members and families.

Sick Bay

None Reported

Final Roll Call

Don "Trapper" Goldtrap—SAL (4/14/16)

Riders Scholarship Fund

Applications available at Post 178 are currently being accepted. Members and families are eligible for nomination. Winners (1 boy, 1 girl) will be announced August 15, 2016. Deadline for applications is August 1st. See any Rider for more info.

Happy 80th Birthday Dee Yurko



RIDERS REPORT
Nick Trajillo

Bill and Eloyisa Torrez amazed us with

their killer recipe for lasagna in April, and RCI's Ranya Kelly provided the garlic bread. Also volunteering were **Brian and Carol Conway** and yours truly. Turnout was good in spite of the Spring snowstorm.

Chuck Elsen is on track to cover the ceiling in the lounge with his hand painted panels, and he's doing great.

The **Riders Annual Benefit Poker Run** is Saturday, May 21st with registration at 9:00 a.m. and first bike out at 9:30. We'll be touring other American Legion Posts in the area and are scheduled to terminate about 3:00 p.m. The Riders will provide food after the run and reward the best and worst poker hands drawn. The cost is \$15 per hand and \$20 per couple. Additional hands are \$5 each. For more info contact **Joe Calabro** at **720-404-3600**.

SAL REPORT
Steve Stroud

The Sons donated the following in

April: Boy's State \$250, Girl's State \$250, Legion Baseball \$500, District 5 Officer's Hardship Fund \$500, and Post 178 Building Fund \$500.



The Riders will raffle this AR-15 at their annual Poker Run May 21st. Only 100 tickets will be sold and are now available at the Post for \$20 (limit 1 per person). Act fast.

let's also acknowledge everyone who makes us feel welcome at Post 178. We never know how long they will be around.



Menus, Announcements, Updates E-mailed

Give us your e-mail address and we'll send you updates including the weekly lunch menu, Friday night menus, upcoming entertainment, special events, and notices such as weather closures.

You'll also get "**The Friendly Word**" on or before the first of each month in glorious living color. Many issues contain additional pages and pictures than the printed b&w version.

To join send your e-mail address to **alpost178news@gmail.com**. Be sure to include your U.S. mail address if you wish to be removed from snail mail.

Remember, past newsletters and other information about Post 178 can always be found at **alpost178.org**.

Military Service Pictures Requested

We are planning a very special evening on September 30, 2016 to honor our Post 178 Veterans. Please save the date. Meantime, I need your help! I'd like to receive a picture of you taken during your service years. You can get your picture to me one of three ways:

- 1) Drop off at the Post with attention **Dawn Rehbein or Karen Black**
- 2) E-mail to me at **drehb7340@comcast.net**
- 3) Mail to American Legion Post 178, 1655 Simms St., Lakewood CO 80215

Please include your name, Legion membership number, military branch, and information about the photo (year taken, location, etc.). We will scan your picture and return it to you if you include your mailing address.

Thank you for all your help. Please keep September 30th open for a night of honor and fun. More information will follow. — Dawn Rehbein

May is for Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and picnics. It's the month for planting gardens so nature's hail storms can sometimes shred our efforts. Just as stress often dampens our everyday lives.

The American Legion is a resource for each of us to help survive the traumas of life. Our Post is an organization of priceless friends who are willing to listen and share ideas

As we commemorate the special lives of our departed Veterans,

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS & TRANSFERS

Ed. D. Pierce—Korea—Army
Will Barber—Vietnam—Navy
Roy L. Dennis II—Gulf—Army
Robert S. Pitiak—Vietnam—Army
Brian Bogan—Vietnam—Air Force
Richard D. King—Vietnam—Army
Bruce R. Beierle—Vietnam—Army
Janet M. Casper—Vietnam—Air Force
Charles J. Casper—Vietnam—Air Force
Theodore M. Brown—Vietnam—Air Force
Nicholas J. Stone—Current Conflict—Navy

THE AMERICAN LEGION

1655 Simms Street Post 178 Lakewood, CO 80215

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- Bill Radunz**, Adjutant bradunz@msn.com
- Wayne McClimans**, Chaplain 303-279-6712
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- Carol Conway**, Auxiliary President 970-275-2891
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- Bob Heer**, Post Manager 303-234-0178
alpost178@comcast.net
- Lounge and Dining** 303-232-4041

Lounge Hours*

- Mon.—Thurs. 11:00 AM to 12:00 Midnight
Fri. 11:00 AM to 2:00 AM
Sat.—Sun. 9:00 AM to 12:00 Midnight
**Bartenders may close earlier on slow nights.*

NEWSLETTER BANNER PHOTO BY BETH HALL

BULLETIN BOARD

**JOKER
POKER**



6 PM FRIDAYS

**memorial
DAY**



Sunday May 15
CO Country Music HOF
2-5 PM
CHILI CHEESE DOGS, CHIPS
2-4 PM

Saturday May 21
Riders Poker Run
9 AM 1st out
3 PM last in
Food Provided

Hawaiian Luau

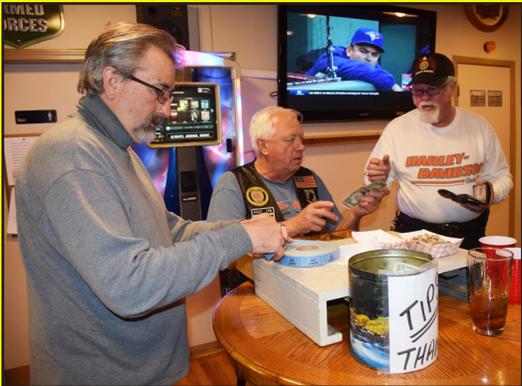


Saturday May 7th
5 PM Social
6 PM Dinner
RSVP at Post 178



Hawaiian Dinner—Music—Hula Dancing—Raffle

Thank You Riders Lasagna Dinner Volunteers

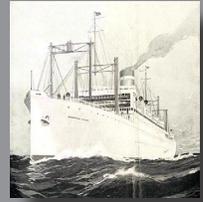




Rio de Janeiro Is Now Only 11 Days Away

USS American Legion

Images: Bjorn Larsson, Maritime Timetable Images
Life Magazine, September 9, 1940
Facebook: USS American Legion



S.S. American Legion



S.S. American Legion

S.S. AMERICAN LEGION
S.S. WESTERN WORLD
S.S. PAN AMERICA
S.S. SOUTHERN CROSS

SOUTH AMERICA
Fastest Time - Finest Ships

from
NEW YORK
to
BRAZIL
ARGENTINE
URUGUAY

SOUTH AMERICA
Fastest Time - Finest Ships

Fastest Time - Finest Ships
NEW YORK to SOUTH AMERICA

Munson Steamship Lines
67 Wall St., New York
managing operators for
U. S. SHIPPING BOARD

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In Petsamo roadstead the 13,736-ton *American Legion* rode at anchor on Aug. 16 as war-refugee passengers boarded her by tender. Five miles beyond the Finnish hills in background is new Soviet frontier.

"AMERICAN LEGION" DOCKS WITH ROYAL AND PLEBEIAN REFUGEES

Last week the war-tossed U. S. Army transport *American Legion* tied up safe and snug at a Brooklyn pier after a jittery twelve-day voyage from Petsamo, Finland. Aboard was a grab bag of 870 war refugees, mostly Americans. There was Crown Princess Martha of Norway and her children coming to the U. S. as guests of the President. There was Mrs. "Daisy" Harriman, U. S. Minister to Norway, five Lithuanian girls in native costume, four shapely vaudeville skaters, several Latin-American diplomats and one Finnish girl stowaway.

The ship was crammed. People slept on cots in the holds and in the brig. The ship had slithered through a 15-mile-long Russian mine field off Petsamo when Berlin warned the *Legion* to shift her course to avoid German mines off Scotland. Undaunted, Captain B. E. Torning stuck to his course, set by the U. S. State Department, and slipped his ship past the mine fields in a 45-m. p. h. gale. The Nazi radio also beat a gruesome propaganda tattoo that the *Legion's* passengers were starving. That night the "starving" passengers had purée of peas, roast-beef hash, eggs, salad, stewed fruit, cheese and real coffee for dinner.



A British plane patrolling the seas to the north of Scotland passed low over the *American Legion*. The pilot could be seen waving "hello" and he dipped the wings of his big four-motored plane in salute.



With President and Mrs. Roosevelt, Crown Princess Martha and two Princesses saw Duchess County Fair Aug. 29. They are Hyde Park guests.



Crown Princess Martha of Norway and little Prince Harald, 3, arrived at Petsamo with the Finnish colonel (in uniform) who was credited with having killed 40 Russians during war.



The royal suite wore lifebelts like everyone else while ship was in Nazi mine fields. Left to right they are: a maid, Crown Princess Martha, the butler, Princess Ragnhild, a governess.



Mrs. Daisy Harriman, brave 70-year-old U. S. Minister to Norway, chatted with Captain Torning on deck during the difficult trip. She had Viking, a Norwegian elkhound and Bart,

an English cocker spaniel, with her. She played bridge every night. The youngster (right) who tired of having his picture taken and grimaced instead is a Danish-American refugee.



Women passengers slept on cots in the hold. The two blonde American girls belong to a roller-skating team which performed before Hitler in Germany and was later marooned in Norway.



Passengers ate in three sittings, passed most of the food themselves as there were only 17 waiters. Diplomats on board ate in a separate dining room, Norwegian royalty ate alone.

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH
NOT TO BE RELEASED
FOR PUBLICATION
NAVY YARD MARE ISLAND CALIF

RESTRICTED

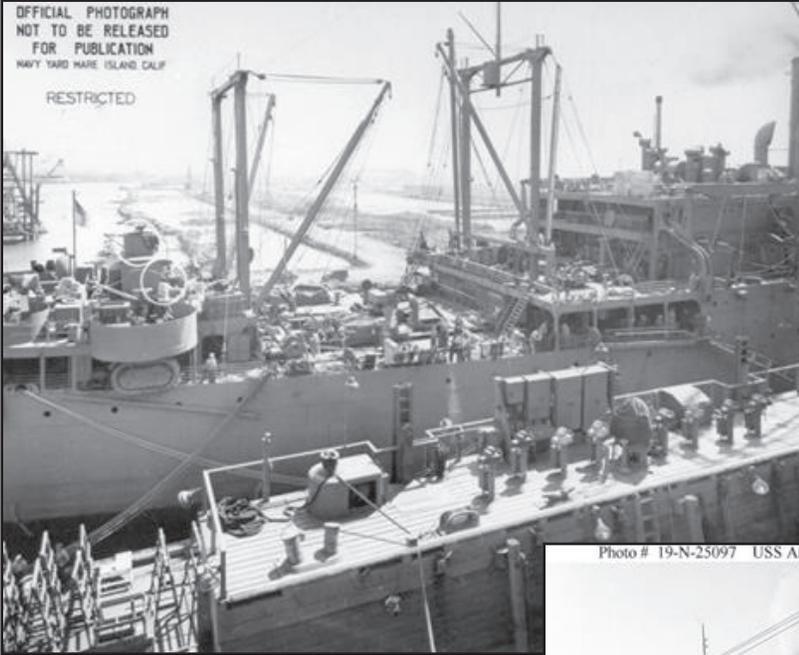


Photo # 19-N-25097 USS American Legion in the shipyard at Brooklyn, N.Y., 28 August 1941



Above: 1944
Middle: 1941
Below: USS American Legion
2 WWII Battle Stars

