



Highlander Boys Were Denver Legacy

If you grew up in Denver prior to the mid-1970s, you no doubt knew about the Highlander Boys. Perhaps you were even one of them.

The youngsters were ubiquitous throughout Denver neighborhoods, dressed in their military-style uniforms and carrying their rifles. They were seen walking, biking, and taking a bus or street car on their way to a regular meeting at their headquarters, or on the way to a parade, or conduct Presentation of the Colors at an event,



or compete in a shooting contest.

Requirements to join were simple: be nine years old, be in good physical health, and attend a church of your parents' choosing every week. Physical activity was an essential part of the agenda. The military structure which included drills was a way of instilling skills, discipline, and good qualities in the boys.

They attended "speak well classes" for at least a year and were offered opportunities to *See page 4*

John C. Penney Announced as Car Show Special Honoree

Evergreen resident, Vietnam Veteran, and National Champion Air Racer John Penney will serve as Post 178's 2026 Car Show Special Honoree.

While attending the U.S. Air Force Academy John set an Academy record that stood for 13 years, soaring to an altitude of 33,900 feet. He received the "Orville Wright Achievement Award" as the outstanding graduate of over 1,200 students and graduated "Top Gun" of his first class. He then flew 139 missions totaling 398 combat hours during a combat tour in Thailand. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf clusters. He retired as a Lt. Col in the Nevada Air National Guard in 1979, after 23 years of military service.

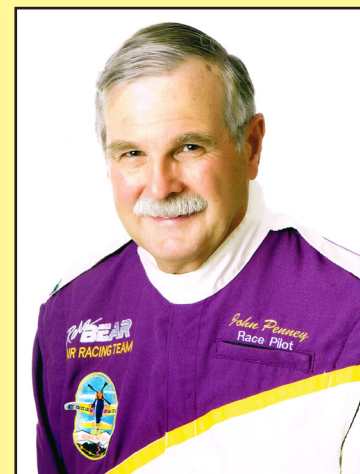
His air racing career spanned 30 years beginning in 1985, and includes four Reno Air Race Unlimited Gold National Championships, two Gold Championships at the Phoenix 500 Air Races, and two Jet Gold Championships at



Reno. He holds the distinction of being the first air racer in history to exceed 500 mph on a closed course. His performances prompted the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum to award him the Pulitzer Trophy for Air Racing in 1994 and 1995.

Most of John's victories came while flying a WWII Grumman F8F-2 Bearcat named "Rare Bear," propelled by a supercharged, air cooled, 18 cylinder, 4,350 horsepower Curtiss Wright engine developing over 7,100 lb. ft. of torque.

John is a laureate of both the Colorado Aviation and Motorsports Halls of Fame. Post 178 is privileged to have John deliver a video presentation of his air racing career at the show's awards ceremony.



LEGION CHAPLAIN

Mary Johnson

The month of May brings us many opportunities to honor special people. May 8th is **Military Spouse Appreciation Day**, May 10th is **Mother's Day**, and May 16th is **Armed Forces Day** which honors all active duty service men and women.

Memorial Day honors all military who have died and that tribute will be on May 25th.

In honor of Mother's Day, I offer Proverbs 31:28-29

"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.'"

And, in honor of the fallen Psalm 116:15

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants."

COMMANDER'S REPORT

Russ Scott

It has been brought to my attention that we still have people parking in handicap spaces without the placard or handicap license plates. Please don't park in those spaces without the proper authorization. Disabled veterans plates are not allowed to park in handicap spaces. This is a state law that requires proper authorization.

On another note, if you can't remove your hat and participate in the Pledge of Allegiance you are in the wrong organization. This request is especially directed to those who participate in bingo. As I have stated before, many times, leave your political beliefs out in the parking lot, or better still, at home. Everyone should be able to come to Post 178 and enjoy their time here.

Memorial Day



Monday, May 29

Post 178 Service at 11:30 a.m.

Backyard Picnic to Follow

Latest installment on the meaning of The American Legion Preamble:

To Promote Peace and Good Will on Earth

Until all the world becomes a good neighborhood, Legionnaires must continue the effort to promote peace and good will on earth. It is in pursuance of this founding ideal that the American Legion has supported from the beginning and seek to strengthen the United Nations organization. Obliquely, The American Legion also contributes to this ideal by firmly supporting a strong national defense to discourage breaking of the peace by an aggressor.

RIDERS REPORT

Steve Peterson

Time for a change. What kind of winter was that?! Spring is a bit questionable. What will summer bring? Change is inevitable, good or, let's say, not so good.

At Post 178 there could come a change of officers in June. Those now serving in officers positions obviously love their service to the Legion, many have done years in various officer positions. We hope for new blood to help keep this wonderful Post the one we all love. Consider the opportunity to serve and reap the benefits and rewards that come from helping others.

SAL REPORT

Brad Hall

Not a bunch to announce this month but let's see.....

Of course, the **SAL Golf Tournament** is coming up fast. Please get your sign-ups in as it is starting to fill up.

We can also use hole sponsors for the tourney. Give me a call if interested. It's a great way to get your company name out there in front of potential customers.

We can still use volunteers to help on **Friday Dinners**. It is hard to put together a menu ahead of time when we aren't sure if there will be enough help to prepare the meal. Talk to **Dave McBrien** or me if you are interested.

Sunday Breakfast help is needed sometimes also. Please sign up on the sheet outside the pickle cage or talk to Dave as he is the one in the know on his volunteer situation. Come on down and get involved. It can help a soul feel good.

Thank a Veteran when you see one.

BUSINESS REPORT

Bob Heer

Our annual **Memorial Day Service** will start at 11:30 on May 25 followed

by a Post 178-member picnic at noon. The Post will provide draft beer, burgers, brats, and dogs. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to share. As always, I am soliciting volunteers to check membership cards at the lounge door. A sign-up sheet is in the lounge if you can cover the door for a 30-minute shift. The picnic is free to Post 178 members but non-member guests will be charged \$10 and children age 12 and under \$5.00.

Due to rising coffee costs, we're making a small adjustment to our breakfast service. Your first cup of coffee remains complimentary with the purchase of breakfast. Additional coffee is now offered at our updated weekday price of \$2 per cup or \$4 per carafe. Please note that refills are not included.

Recently we have again experienced bingo players reserving seats at the bar for their friends and family members who are not at the Post as well as asking non-bingo players to either move or ask when they are leaving. Both practices are to be stopped immediately.

Past actions as described above have resulted in at least one long time Veteran member, **Max Thompson**, to cease coming into the Post. Max has always been a very significant supporter of our Post programs and for him or any other member to be treated so badly is unacceptable. No one is entitled to have specific seats available only to them.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Ray Scott

Thank you's are in order for our awesome Volunteers! **Angie Bobitsky** for all you do helping Legion Saturday Breakfasts. **Judy Myers** for the 'ever-so-fun' decoupage poppy bottle craft class, and all the time you give to Saturday Breakfasts, Wednesday Dinners, and keeping our finances straight. **Dee Yurko, Joy Nichols, Rhonda Guenther, Diana McCarl** for your time making the recent Bereavement run smoothly. **Karen Black** for stepping in to help cook Burgers for the Junior Shooters Awards Banquet along with her regular help from **Sherry Shorey** and **Diana McCarl**; to **Carol Conway** for running the fryer when we needed a substitute; to **Kim Gebinine** for your flexibility and help the first Wednesday Dinner of the month; **Shari Davis** and her sidekick **Mark Ward** for cooking dinners, buying groceries, keeping the Auxiliary Room organized, as well as all your hard work along with **Dee Yurko** and **Yvonne Trujillo** on Thursdays and Saturdays with bingo; **Nancy Carter** for helping me decorate for Purple Up! Celebrating Military Child Ceremony and Dinner; **Daisi and Ruby Vanderpool** for their help with the Ceremony, **Alysyn Harvey-Green** helping me prepare the food for that dinner; **Dita Alexander, Leslie Moore**, and **Judy Myers** for all your time communicating our activities on Facebook, Post 178's Website, and e-mails; **Bonnie Stocker** for sending Birthday Cards to all our members throughout the year; **Ranya Kelly** for all you do for all of us at Post 178 and for all the Veterans and Active Duty Military you continue to make all of us very proud to assist you with.

On April 11th, **Ranya Kelly, Carol Jansons, Shari Davis** and I delivered our **Community Service Project** donations to **Mountain Vista Care Facility** in Wheat Ridge. The facility administrator gave Ranya a list of items to help their residents quality of life. These included personal care products, socks, lap blankets, art supplies, along with pantry goods for their staff struggling to feed their families.

On Saturday, May 2nd during bingo, there will be a **Derby Day Hat Contest**. Judging will be before Black-out and the winner will be awarded \$50!

May 22nd is Poppy Day, when Auxiliary members will be at King Soopers, 32nd and Youngfield Street, handing out paper poppies and taking donations for Veterans.

Our next meeting is May 5th at 6:00 p.m. and will include Officer Elections for the 2026-2027 year and planning for **Memorial Day Ceremony and Picnic**. Hope to see all of you soon!



Nita and Pete Calkum celebrated 52 years of marriage by renewing their vows in a ceremony at Post 178 on April 19.

participate in public speaking, gun safety and marksmanship, camping, and various athletics. The boys could also learn to play a musical instrument and march in the Highlander Boys Band.

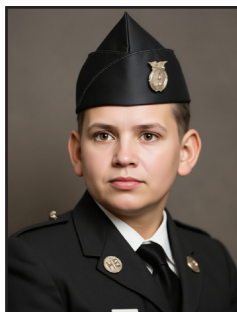
The organization was the brain-child of businessman, entrepreneur, and philanthropist George W. Olinger. Originally he organized a baseball team in the Highland neighborhood of Denver, where his family's first mortuary business was located. He supplied the balls, bats, and gloves, and found that when he provided uniforms for the boys teamwork evolved, bonds were formed, and efforts on the field improved. Encouraged by the results, Olinger soon formed more teams all over Denver.

Olinger wanted to build on his success by serving more boys and inspiring them to adopt codes of conduct. In 1916 he recruited 50 boys and formed "Highlanders of Denver" for the purpose of developing boys into loyal citizens through a Four Point Program that included mental, spiritual, social, and physical development. He provided all the financing for the first twelve years, until 1928 when the organization numbered 1,000 active members and 11,000 alumni.

That year a Board of Directors was formed made up of Denver businessmen and the Highlander Boys Foundation was begun. An eight-day campaign raised \$294,000, enough to construct the "Temple of Youth" building at 300 Logan Street that opened on February 22, 1930 housing a gymnasium, rifle range, hobby and crafts rooms, meeting rooms, a huge kitchen, a library, and parade grounds.

In 1936, Presbyterian minister and skilled fundraiser, David C. Bayless, took the reigns of the organization and continued with Olinger's policies and supervision. Olinger served on the board until his death in 1954.

In 1955, prominent Denver citizen, Albert S. Carter, donated 310 acres of mountain property to the organization. All Highlander Boys were obligated to attend a week-long summer camp at Carter Lake where they were organized into military ranks, slept in



Quonset huts, and participated in archery, arts and crafts, baseball, boating, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, swimming, and volleyball.

A big top tent was erected and used for Officer Leadership and first-aid classes during the day, and for movies, skits, games, singing songs, and various celebrations in the evenings. Events were always opened by recitations of the Highlander Boys Precepts (Be Kind, Live Pure, Speak True, Right Wrong, Defend the Weak, Play the Game Square), Aims (Be Prompt, Obey Orders, Be Neat, Avoid Slang, Be Polite, Be Positive), and Prayer (Oh God...teach me to be a Christian gentleman, help me to think pure thoughts, help me to be truthful...to be honest...that I may be worthy of those who love me, teach me to respect all women as I do my mother, make my life one of service...and to look up to Thee for strength.)

As the city of Denver became more decentralized in the 1960s, chapter groups were formed in the suburbs of Lakewood, Arvada, Aurora, Englewood, Broomfield, Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster. Twice each year every chapter would travel to the National Guard Armory to compete in drill competitions.

The 1960s also brought changing attitudes, spawned largely by opposition to the Vietnam War. The Highlanders struggled in the face of criticism that it was militarist, sexist, and elitist. It

reacted by going co-ed and recruiting heavily in ethnic neighborhoods.

Finally, in 1976, the Highlander Boys shut its doors, but only after having served more than 100,000 boys (and girls). George Olinger's investment in Denver's youth created multiple generations of good citizens.

Well-known Denver juvenile Judge Philip Gilliam once said he'd "never had any Highlander Boys come

in front of him." The truth of that statement lies partially in the fact that if a boy ever got in trouble they were immediately kicked out of the Highlander Boys.

*Photos restored by
Mike Harris*

SAL

18th Annual



Tournament

Friday, June 19, 2026

Applewood Golf Course

\$400 per Foursome
Proceeds go to SAL Charities

\$100 per Single Player
(we will do our best to place single players)

Entry Deadline June 12 (NO EXCEPTIONS)

- 18 Holes of Golf, Cart, Range Balls
- Team Awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place
- Awards for Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin, and Longest Putt
- 1st Drink, Lunch, and Door Prizes at Post 178, 1655 Simms St., Lakewood

**Tournament
Sponsorship
Opportunities**

Contact Brad Hall
720-471-9383
(leave a message)

Sponsors' Deadline June 5

3 Ways to Register

Scan QR Code

Online at
tinyurl.com/yx7y3tra

Complete the Form
on the Reverse Side

