



David (Coop) Cooper
Commander
Post 32

The Morning Report

Quarterly Newsletter for The American Legion Springfield Post 32 Family

Introducing The Members of The Inter-veterans Burial Detail of Sangamon County

Picture taken July 2nd, 2025, at Camp Butler National Cemetery
Submitted by Post 32 Past Commander Bruce O'Neil



Suzie Q. Weiss
President
Unit 32



Jim Peters
Commander
Squadron 32

Members in the photo (left to right): Bill Settles, Jim Good, David Cooper, Mark Thomas, Wilbur Baumann, Emile Bouvet, David Janssen, Bruce O'Neil, Art Runge, Skip Turnbull, Howard Hennessey, Ed Smith, David Crouch, David Leinum, Jim Carroll, Bill Sitki, and kneeling is Commander Gael Kent.

Those members not pictured are Steven Button, David Cawley, John Clabuesch, Topper Davis, Andrea Marshall, Jerry Robertson, John Good, Eric Perkins, Tom Pasko.



John Anderson
Director
Post 32
Riders

We are a Team of unpaid volunteers. We have performed 317 military funerals and 12 ceremonies in 2024. Some of us have served in literally thousands of military burials as Members of the Burial Detail.

We are dedicated to giving all veterans the recognition they deserve at their final act of service to their country. If you feel the calling to help us serve these veterans, use the contact information on the card.



**Inter-Veterans Burial Detail
of Sangamon County**

**Gael K. Kent
Commander**

**P.O. Box 291
Rochester IL, 62563
(815) 953-5618
burialdetail.spfld.il@gmail.com**

American Legion Family National Officers for the 2025-2026 Command Year

National Commander The American Legion Dan K. Wiley



An Air Force veteran, Wiley is a retired state district court judge who raises cattle in Leavenworth, Kan. Following his Air Force service, Wiley obtained a bachelor's degree in business at the College of Great Falls in Montana. He returned to his hometown of Lawrence, Kan., and earned a law degree at the University of Kansas.

Wiley has held many leadership positions at The American Legion post, department and national levels. He is a paid-up-for-life member of Byron H. Mehl American Legion Post 23 in Leavenworth, a past department commander of Kansas and represented the state as a member of The Legion's National Executive Committee.

Appointed by the Kansas governor as a district court judge in 2008, Wiley helped establish and preside over the Leavenworth County Veterans Treatment Court. He has been active in his community and is a past president of the Leavenworth / Lansing Chamber of Commerce, a past chairman of the Leavenworth County Veterans Day Parade Committee and a former member of the Unified School District 453 School Board.

As national commander, Wiley is a strong advocate for The American Legion's **Be the One** mission to prevent veteran suicide. He emphasizes inclusivity in the American Legion Family through the theme, Better Together!

Wiley and his wife, Sonia, have two children, Austin and Christy, and one grandson.

National President The American Legion Auxiliary Pam Ray



During its 104th National Convention, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) elected Pam Ray as its National President for the 2025-2026 command year. The office of National President is the ALA's highest volunteer leadership position.

"Thank you all so much for the trust you have shown today by electing and installing me as your national president," Ray told convention delegates and guests. "I promise to do my very best to respect that trust and protect our mission and our organization."

Ray has held numerous leadership positions in the ALA at the unit, district, department and national levels. At the national level, she served as chair of several programs, including Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, ALA Girls Nation, Junior Activities, National Security, Membership, and Constitution & Bylaws. She also served on the National Executive Committee and ALA Strategic Planning Committee.

A member of Urbana Unit 71 in Illinois, Ray is eligible for membership through her late father, Clay Lofton, who served during the Korean War and World War II. Ray was a nurse for 47 years and loved caring for people who needed help. She worked in the burn center, pediatrics, neurosurgery, and spent much of her career caring for head and neck cancer patients and their families.

She has been married to Harl "Butch" Ray for 46 years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Friends of the American Legion Family and Sponsors of The Morning Report



**THE INTER-VETERANS BURIAL
DETAIL OF SANGAMON COUNTY**

NEEDS YOU

VOLUNTEER AT KAMPER279@COMCAST.NET
ATTEND A FUNERAL AT CAMP BUTLER N.C.



**OUR POP-POP and GRANNY LOVE
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Dylan Walton, Benjamin Walton,
Lincoln Davis & Levi Davis**

**Sons of The American Legion
National Commander William Clancy III**



William “Bill” Clancy III, a member of the Detachment of New York, has been elected as National Commander Sons of The American Legion (SAL) for 2025-2026 command year.

“All of my thoughts always bring me back to one word. It’s the word we,” Clancy said. “‘We’ is infinitely more powerful than ‘I’. We is the word that our founding fathers chose when they wrote one of the best documents ever written, when they opened it with, ‘We, the people’.

Clancy also spoke of the Sons’ role in promoting the Legion’s veteran suicide prevention mission. “Being the one to stop veteran suicide by conveying the training and to make the public aware of this tremendous horror facing our country – that veterans are taking their own lives.

Clancy, a graduate of New York Boys State, is a founding member of SAL Squadron 156 in City Island and served multiple terms as squadron commander. He also has served as New York detachment commander and in national leadership positions.

He is eligible for Sons membership through the military service of both his grandfather and father.

“Growing up with all the values laid out in the preamble of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion was a phenomenal way to grow. And my hope is that in the year ahead, I project those values to all Americans.”

**Friend of The American Legion and Sponsor of
The Morning Report**

American Legion Post 32, 1120 Sangamon Ave. – 217-523-3415
www.springfieldamericanlegion.com spfldpost32@outlook.com

Mess Hall Restaurant (Always Open to the Public)
Lunch: Wednesday – Friday 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Dinner: Wednesday – Friday 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Bar & Gaming Open (Always Open to the Public)
Tuesday - Friday – 10:30 AM – 10:00 PM
Saturday - NOON – 10:00 PM Sunday – NOON – 4:00 PM

**The American Legion Family of Post 32
Officers of the 2025-2026 Command Year**

American Legion Post 32

Commander	David M. Cooper
Senior Vice Commander	Brian Owens II
Junior Vice Commander	Nicholas S. Jacob
Finance Officer	Michael E. Walton
Adjutant	Gerald R. Bellatti
Chaplain	Tim Kennedy
Sergeant At Arms	Ben Arnold
Service Officer	William “Bill” Mowder

Chapter 32 Legion Riders

Director	John Anderson
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American Legion Memorial Home Corporation

President	Michael E. Walton
Club Committee Chairman	Michael E. Walton

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 32

President	Suzie Q. Weiss
Vice President	Sue Leka
Sergeant At Arms	Sara Kay Ruebling
Chaplain	Alba Jensen
Historian	Alba Jensen
Secretary	Ethel Lynn Neville
Treasurer	Ethel Lynn Neville

Sons of The American Legion Squadron 32

Commander	James Peters Jr.
Senior Vice Commander	John Chernis
Junior Vice Commander	
Adjutant	Gerald R. Bellatti
Finance Officer	Michael E. Walton
Advisor	Bruce O’Neil

Post 32 Lincoln Pilgrimage Committee

General Chairman	James Peters Jr.
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**Friend of The American Legion and Sponsor of
The Morning Report**



The American Legion Springfield Post 32 Family Leadership

Post 32 Commander David (Coop) Cooper

Do you and your family like well prepared “comfort” food served to you by friendly, hard-working people?

The Mess Hall Restaurant at The American Legion Springfield Post 32 welcomes The American Legion Family to join us for that very “comfort” food you like.

The Mess Hall Restaurant is open for lunch and dinner every week on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Wednesday special features either a spaghetti dinner or a meatloaf dinner. Thursday features a choice of fried chicken dinner or a chicken gilet and liver dinner, both with options to fill out the meal with potatoes or salads. Friday features deep fried walleye or whole catfish dinners complete with side orders. The food is good and portions are generous. In addition to the specials, we offer an entire menu of favorites for you and your family. You can come in for dinner or order take-out. See our website: <https://www.springfieldamericanlegion.com/> and select “Mess Hall Restaurant” to see the entire menu.

Contact Commander Cooper Phone: 217-899-4112 or email: Cooper6646@gmail.com.

Unit 32 President Suzie Q. Weiss

Our first fall event will be the Family Cookout on Sept 27th from 4-7, featuring steak, potato and salad.

Saturday, October 4th from 3-6 PM, we host our Legion Family Oktoberfest. Please come out and enjoy the Schnitzel. Sunday, October 5th, the 21st District meets in Kinkaid from 11:00 AM (lunch); the meeting starts at 1:00 PM and all are welcome. Oct. 12th is FALL FORUM at SPFLD POST 32. Food will be served at 12 PM. and our meeting will begin at 1 PM.

Oct. 19th is our Quarter Auction at VFW Post 755 on old Jacksonville road. We have a lot of nice items to raise those paddles for, along with doing a silent auction. Food and drink available. All are welcome.

October 28 – 30 we hold our NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S HOMECOMING for our own Pam Ray. If you’d like to attend these events you must register by Oct 1st.

November 2nd from 11-2 we hold the Harvest Dinner. We will serve beef and noodles, beef tips and rice, chicken and noodles, green beans, applesauce, coleslaw, rolls, and dessert. Our Famous Taco Dinner will be held on November 16th from 11-2. Please come out and join us for some good food. December 15th is our Chili Cook-off; all cooks come out and have a good time.

Please remember our Veterans. We raise funds for them and the several schools we support. God Bless us all and God Bless America. For more information, please contact me: Weissuziq@aol.com, 217-341-3728.

Squadron 32 Commander James Peters

Autumn is upon us, bringing with it chilly weather and beautiful fall scenery. We have just concluded another successful American Legion Family of Illinois convention. Congratulations to Roy Smith, Commander – Department of Illinois, Jill Layton, President – American Legion Auxiliary Department of Illinois, and Wayne Madison, Commander – Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Illinois. A special congratulations to Springfield’s own Pam Ray, who was elected and installed as the American Legion Auxiliary National President at the recent National Convention.

As we enter a new membership year, please ensure your dues are paid early. We have several fundraising meals and events coming up in the next few months, so please pay special attention to the calendar in this report and make it a point to attend and support your American Legion.

It is that time of the year for my focus to turn to the National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of President Abraham Lincoln. This will be my second year as General Chairman, and we are looking forward to another great pilgrimage. Please consider attending breakfast and lunch. It is a very special event! This will be the 92nd pilgrimage that Post 32 has hosted. Can you imagine that? 92 years! Watch for announcements and additional information on the pilgrimage that will be coming soon. For God and Country. Contact me at: Contact me at: jpeters.ilsal@yahoo.com or 217-416-1533.

Post 32 Riders Director John Anderson

Greetings! Riding with Heart for Our Heroes

As we roll into another month of camaraderie and service, I want to thank each of you for your unwavering commitment to our veterans, communities, and the open road. As your new director, I’m still finding my footing.

This month, some of us hit the road with purpose, joining the Seventh Annual Missouri Vietnam Wall Run to honor our POW/MIAs kicking off a powerful two-day event that culminated in Perryville, Missouri—home to the stunning replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Some of us also participated in the Hall’s 911 Ride to Remember.

Let’s continue to ride with pride, strengthen our bonds, and make a difference together. Stay safe, keep the shiny side up, and I’ll see you on the road! For more information contact me: 217 725-4509 or fireball398@gmail.com

Post 32 Quarterly Calendar

October, November, December 2025

Event

Time and Date

Regular Events at Post 32

4th Wednesday Drawing (Must be present to win Color TV or Gift Certificates)

Unit 32 Meetings

Legion Riders Meetings

La Femmes

ALMHC/Club Committee Meetings

Morning Report Meetings

Lincoln Pilgrimage Meetings

Squadron 32 Meetings

Post 32 Meetings

Special Events at Post 32

Unit 32 Quarter Auction at VFW Post 755 (Old Jack Rd.)

American Legion Auxiliary National President Homecoming for Illinois' own Pam Ray

Unit 32 Harvest Time Dinner

Veterans' Day – Free Ham and Beans

Unit 32 Taco Dinner

Thanksgiving Day

Unit 32 "Humphrey's Meat Market Gift Card Drawing"

Christmas Eve – Free Egg Nog

Christmas Eve – Unit 32 Snacks

Christmas Eve – **Post 32 Closes**

Christmas Day

New Years Eve – Mess Hall Special Menu

Morning Report Articles for January 2026 Issue Due

October, November, December 2025

7:00 PM – October 23, November 26, December 24

5:00 PM – October 7, November 4, December 2

6:00 PM – October 7, November 4

5:00 PM – October 14, December 9

5:00 PM – October 21, November 18, December 16

6:00 PM – October 21, December 16

7:00 PM – October 21, December 16

5:30 PM – October 28, November 25, December 23

6:30 PM – October 28, November 25, December 23

1:00 PM – October 19

October 23 – October 26

Celebration Brochure: <http://ilala.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Homecoming-Brochure-MM-PRINT-V2-2.pdf>

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM – November 2

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM – November 11

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM – November 16

November 27 – **Mess Hall Restaurant Closed All Day 4:00 PM to Closing – Post 32 Bar and Gaming Open**

5:00 PM – November 26

12:00 PM – 5:00 PM – December 24

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM – December 24

6:00 PM – December 24

December 25 – **Mess Hall Restaurant Closed All Day 4:00 PM to Closing – Post 32 Bar and Gaming Open**

Post 32 Normal Hours – See Last Page

December 10

The American Legion Springfield Post 32 Is a Great Place to Work

The American Legion Springfield Post 32, The Mess Hall Restaurant, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield needs a Part Time Cook and Part Time Wait Staff. If you or someone you know is interested, please stop by 1120 Sangamon Avenue and talk to Manager Mandy. Or you can reach us by email: spfldpost32@sbcglobal.net or by telephone: 217-523-3415.

Friends of the American Legion Family and Sponsors of The Morning Report – Thank You!



The Spirit of the American Doughboy – A Post 32 Legion Rider’s Odyssey

Post 32 Past Commander and Current Legion Rider Cynthia Robbins

In August 2022, I purchased my first motorcycle as a direct result of Michael Lee’s influence. I fell into the veteran biker lifestyle and registered to participate in the Tour of Honor (TOH) riding program, a national program which focuses on memorials whether war, first responder, police, etc. One of the TOH Additional Rides is the Lost Generation which directs Riders to WWI Doughboy statues throughout the 50 states. Most Americans are not aware of the connection between the American Legion and “The Spirit of the American Doughboy”.

American Legion Rhodes Post 2 in Tacoma, Washington planned to place a memorial commemorating the Centralia, Washington massacre (or Armistice Day Riot) in which four Legionnaires, all US Army WWI veterans, were gunned down by members of the Industrial Workers of the World as they marched in the Armistice Day parade on November 11, 1919.

In 1921, Rhodes Post 2 hosted a nationwide competition for a WWI monument for the occasion. American sculptor E. M. Viquesney from Spencer, Indiana won the design award for his doughboy statue “The Spirit of American Doughboy.” Upon inspection of Viquesney’s completed sample, Post 2 withdrew the award as the statue was comprised of hollow sheet bronze instead of cast bronze. Post 2 then awarded sculptor Alonzo Victor Lewis’ “The Sentinel” (another version of a doughboy) as the replacement monument.

Viquesney was not deterred in his effort to have his sculpture recognized as a national symbol. Even though the American Legion was in its infancy, Viquesney realized the importance of the endorsement of this organization. He worked tirelessly meeting with Legion Commanders to secure approval to market his statue with the Legion’s endorsement. Once the Legion agreed to provide its seal of approval for Viquesney’s statue, production went into high gear. Viquesney created approximately 145 life size statues but flooded the market with 12” high statuettes, all tagged “Endorsed by the American Legion.” Some statuettes were made into lamps. Viquesney created his doughboy in response to a nat-

ional interest to honor those who died, were wounded, or served in WWI. While Viquesney wanted to depict an American soldier in battle. Rather than portray excessive might or power, he wanted to represent the “spirit” of the American Doughboy’s determination to preserve freedom for their county. Viquesney’s doughboy is striding forward in an erect posture with a grenade in the right hand and a bayoneted 1903 Springfield rifle in the left hand. Viquesney’s partnership with the American Legion paved the way for his doughboy statute to be the most recognizable symbol of the American WWI soldier.

Last fall, fellow Legion Rider Jim Kinsel, informed me that I should visit Irish Grove Cemetery in northeastern Menard County because there was something of interest I should see. On a sunny October morning I made the trek to this very secluded cemetery and there he was standing as a sentry to the cemetery. The doughboy was placed on the gravesite of Corporal Gilbert Ervin of Company B, 58th Infantry, who died in the Meuse-Argonne Battle near Septsarges, France, October 1, 1918.

I was unable to find documentation on Corporal Ervin. I contacted doughboy researcher Les Kopel, through the TOH website to learn why he was not on the national registry. Through several minutes of texting and sending photos to Mr. Kopel, he responded “I think you found yourself a doughboy, little girl.” I found a national treasure. Going forward Corp Ervin is known as DB 565.

My journey with the doughboys does not end with DB 565. This past April, another TOH participant displayed a picture of Viquesney’s statuette on the website. I reached out to the poster who informed me the statuette was in an antique mall in Oshgosh, Wisconsin. I called the mall and purchased the statuette over the phone. My 1920 version of Viquesney’s “Spirit of American Doughboy” is proudly displayed in my home as an ever-present reminder of the freedom we all have as Americans. To date there is no known doughboy statue, by any sculptor, documented in Sangamon County, so my journey continues. **(See DB 565 on Page 7.)**

Friends of the American Legion Family and Sponsors of The Morning Report – Thank you!



The Vala Veteran's Assistance Fund: Veterans Helping Veterans

Post 32 Jr. Vice Commander Nicolas Jacob

Last December, Post 32, with support from the Vala Veteran's Assistance Fund, had the privilege of distributing 50 \$100 gift certificates from Humphrey's Market to veterans and active military in the Springfield area. Among the recipients was SSG Barbara Klutnick, a dedicated nurse and veteran whose story is a testament to service.

For over 20 years, Barbara worked as a nurse at Cole and St. John's Hospitals while raising six children alongside her husband, Albert, a fellow veteran.

At the age of 39, Barbara made the bold decision to join the Army, enlisting on the same day as her son. Her son would go on to earn the *Minute Man of the Year* award, while her younger brother was appointed to start the 233rd Military Police Unit in Springfield, IL.

SSG Klutnick served proudly for 20 years in the Illinois National Guard, the better part as Maintenance Chief with the 233rd MPs. Her service took her on deployments to Germany and Asia.

She also gave back to her community as a tutor at Lincoln's Challenge Academy, helping to mentor high school students.

Today, Barbara enjoys her well-earned retirement in Springfield. Her unwavering commitment to her family, country, and community is truly inspiring.

Through the Vala Veteran's Assistance Fund, we are honored to brighten the holidays for veterans like Barbara. Please consider a donation to assist our sister and brother Veterans and their families and mail your contribution to: **American Legion Post 32 VALA Veteran Assistance Fund, 1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1853.**

DB 565

**Marks the Grave of World War I Veteran
Corporal Gilbert Ervin, Company B, 58th Infantry
Killed in Action
Meuse-Argonne Battle near Septsarges, France,
October 1, 1918.**

**SSG Barbara Klutnick and
Post 32 Jr. Vice Commander Nic Jacob**

December 2024



Friends of the American Legion Family and Sponsors of The Morning Report – Thank you!





The American Legion Springfield Post 32
1120 Sangamon Avenue
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1853
217-523-3415
Spfldpost32@outlook.com
www.springfieldamericanlegion.com

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The Mess Hall Restaurant at Post 32

Best Fried Chicken, Walleye, and whole Catfish on the North End
 (Address and contact information above)

The Mess Hall Restaurant is a Sponsor of The Morning Report

BAR AND VIDEO GAMING HOURS

Tuesday – Friday	10:30 AM – 10:00 PM*
Saturday	12:00 PM – 10:00 PM*
Sunday	12:00 PM – 4:00 PM*

MESS HALL RESTAURANT

“\$2 Tuesday”: Food and Drink 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM
\$2 Domestic Bottles; \$2 Sliders or 3 for \$5; \$2 ¼ lb. Beef Hot Dog; \$2 Springfield Tavern Chilli

LUNCH

Wednesday – Friday	11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
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DINNER

Wednesday – Friday	4:00 PM – 8:00 PM
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***We will stay open later for crowds and special events.**

Welcome everyone to our Video Gaming Room at American Legion Post 32. It is considered the nicest private Gaming Room in Springfield. We have six of the most up to date gaming machines, along with our private area with very comfortable chairs. The Gaming Room offers **free** Soft Drinks, **free** Coffee, **free** Hot Chocolate, and **free** Snacks to Gamers. You should also sign up for the **free** Give Aways offered by Prairie State Gaming. Each time you visit be sure to get your Card punched for a **free** Meal. 10 punches get you a **free** lunch or **free** “All You Can Eat” Spaghetti Dinner on Wednesday or **free** Chicken Dinner on Thursday or **free** Walleye Dinner on Friday. **You can sign up once a day, every day that you come in for our free 4th Wednesday Drawing where we give away a 32” Color TV; a \$50 Gift Certificate and a \$25 Gift Certificate.**