

VICTOR-CRIPPLE CREEK AMERICAN LEGION POST 171 NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3, THIRD QUARTER 2020

Americanism Message from the National Commander.

Dear American Legion Family Members and Friends,

WE ARE HERE TO ASSERT in the strongest terms possible that The American Legion stands for equal rights for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or any other characteristic. There is no qualifier to that statement.

It's a belief The American Legion has held since our founding just after the end of World War I. At that time in 1919, African-American veterans were among our organization's founders who adopted a mission statement – the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution – that rings as true today as it did more than a century ago.

At every official American Legion meeting, we pledge among other things "to maintain law and order," as well as "safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy."

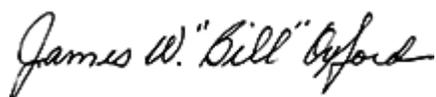
We grieve for African-American citizens George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and far too many others. Their senseless deaths have brought the topic of race relations to the forefront of our hearts and minds.

Just as we believe in equal rights for all, we believe in law and order. Those sentiments were thoughtfully shared in a recent special two-part episode of The American Legion's Tango Alpha Lima podcast. We encourage everyone to listen and reflect on the messages brought forth by the guests, all of whom are Legionnaires with unique stories to share regarding their experiences in law enforcement.

At this time, we have seen tensions rise. Rioters have taken advantage of peaceful protests to burn and loot buildings. White supremacists have targeted black Americans going about their daily lives. Angry citizens have recklessly hurled objects and insults at law enforcement officers.

It has to stop. America is better than this. We are better than this. Together, let's find common ground to stand on so that every American can enjoy the freedoms we vowed to protect with our lives.

For God and country,



James W. "Bill" Oxford
National Commander

Post Remodel Update *by Mike White*

The Post Remodel effort has been progressing very well. We got started in June by stripping the plaster and lathe from the south wall. This was a dirty job, but we had good participation, and I think everyone was pleased with the result. Double D supplied the trailer for the debris and took it to the Cripple Creek Transfer Station. When we were done for the day, the project was officially underway. Since that first day of demolition, much has occurred!

Basement:

- The old furnace was removed, and a footing and wall were built to support the missing floor joists.
- The floor joists were repaired as well as the old coal chute was blocked and supported.
- Shelves were built on the support wall for storage.
- The electrical panel was replaced and upgraded to a 200 amp service.
- The basement wiring was upgraded to code and with lots of lighting installed.
- The lower bathroom plumbing was completely redone to support the upstairs bathroom, water heater, new sink, and floor drain.

Main level:

- South wall was completely stripped and made ready for new electrical.
- New bathroom and kitchen walls were framed.
- Electrical installed for outlets, lighting, and appliances.
- Plumbing installed for bathroom and kitchen facilities.
- Gas line installed for new ceiling-mounted heater.
- Electrical, plumbing, mechanical and framing inspections were all passed.
- Insulation was installed in the flat ceilings and south wall, new kitchen and bath framing, and basement bathroom. It also passed inspection along with bathroom fan and plumbing vents.
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) was installed on the large south wall as solid connection surface for the future Wall of Heroes military memorabilia.

That may not seem like a lot, but it is a lot of work by both contractors and Post members all of which deserve our thanks for their time and effort.

What is next? Gold Standard Construction will hang the sheetrock and finish it. We will paint everything. After that it's down to the floor, finish work, doors, handles, outlets, sinks and heater and much more. After construction is completed, we will put together the memorabilia display.

I don't want to forget continued donations by Post members and the Riders toward the match, as well as \$5,000.00 from Community of Caring Foundation and \$2,500.00 toward a pledge of \$5,000.00 from Gary Ledford. Finally, we still need about \$5,000.00 to equip and finish the kitchen.

The next update should be about our completed construction project or close to that point.



Post Members Working Hard from Beginning to About Mid-way Through the Remodel Project

Americanism—OUR MISSION! *by Michael Lindsey*

As veterans who served to protect our Democratic Republic, we joined together to form an organization with the mission of continuing to promote the welfare of our nation. The preamble to our constitution is a complex document. However, a brief note of two lines from the 10 clauses of the preamble to the American Legion Constitution outlines our mission and makes it clear that we stand for the rule of law and against autocracy. The preamble states we committed to:

Maintain law and order. Without law and order, liberty would become license. Law and order protect our pursuit of happiness, one of our God-given rights. Members of The American Legion served in wars to uphold law and order among nations. It is just as important to maintain the due processes of law in our domestic affairs.

Combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses. All groups within the mass must feel assured that in this nation, reason and fairness will prevail in all human activities and relations.

In addition to those two lines, the Legion position on equal treatment, law, and order are outlined in the form of a National Resolution in 1923 that states:

“That we consider any individual, group of individuals, or organizations, which creates, or fosters racial, religious, or class strife among our people, or which takes into its own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law; and be it finally

Resolved: That we consider such actions by any individual, groups, or organizations, to be inconsistent with ideals and purposes of The American Legion.” For more on this see the Commander’s message in the August 2020 *American Legion Magazine*.

So where is our country related to the rule of law, the autocracy of the masses and classes, and the basic ideals of the American Legion? A brief review of events suggests that we are in a serious crisis that has the potential to unravel the bonds that hold our society together.

For the month of June 2020, the number of people victimized by gun violence and murder in New York City spiked significantly, when compared to the same period in 2019. Between June 1 and June 30, there was a 130% increase in the number of shooting incidents across the city (205 vs. 89) as the number of shootings rose in every borough of New York. The number of people murdered citywide increased to 39 vs. 30, (+ 30%) for the month, while the number of burglaries increased to 1,783 vs. 817 (+118%) and the number of auto thefts increased to 696 vs. 462 (+51%) citywide.

Riots in Portland went on for over 90 days with dozens of serious injuries to law-enforcement. The riots spread to Eugene, Oregon where property was damaged and streets were blocked, and to Bend Oregon where ICE agents were prevented from enforcing immigration laws. In Colorado Springs a Law Enforcement memorial was vandalized. A group took over six square blocks of Seattle and named it the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone. In Denver, a group of pro-police demonstrators were attacked by radical left-wing groups. The Capitol and other government buildings are heavily covered with graffiti, vandalized, and the cost of clean-up will likely run into the millions.

Congressional leaders have referred to law enforcement officers as storm troopers and Nazis. Congressional leaders have refused to even admit that there is a loose coalition of left-wing radicals called Antifa, referring to the idea as a myth. One antifa-affiliated group is the Pacific Northwest Youth Collective which has a web page that outlines their far-left ideology and includes the following statement, “We are an autonomous network of youth and student collectives dedicated to the liberation of all people through any means necessary”. The “through any means necessary” part of that statement is a concept of great concern, along with the question, “liberated from what?”.

An article written by Penny Starr, in the June 2020 Wall Street Journal, describes the rise in violence in other cities that began before the recent riots:

“Even before the recent riots, crime had been surging this year in many of America’s big cities. In Minneapolis, car-jackings were up 45 percent, homicides 60 percent, arson 58 percent and burglaries 28 percent from January through May 30 compared to the same period last year. Violent crime overall was 16 percent higher and property crime 20 percent higher than recent low points in 2018.

In San Francisco, homicides before the riots this year had increased by 19 percent, burglaries by 23 percent and arson by 39 percent over last. Philadelphia reported a 28 percent increase in commercial burglaries, 51 percent in shootings, 22 percent in auto theft and 28 percent in retail theft from last year. Residential burglaries and larceny have fallen in many places, but that’s no doubt because people were at home.”

The rise in crime can in part be blamed on the ongoing liberalization of criminal justice system policies such as prosecutors refusing to bring certain cases before the court and changes in bail laws.

So at this point, cities are under siege, statues are torn down, law-enforcement defunded, bail reform lets dangerous criminals back out on the street, thousands of felons are released from jail and prisons, our institutions attacked and government officials refuse to regain control of our country.

We can add into the above with recognition that “Cancel Culture” –the new McCarthyism–rips throughout institutions destroying lives and crippling the freedom of speech.

There are three additional forces that compound the chaos and destruction outlined above. First, are the right-wing militias and other organizations such as the "boogaloo" movement, which has regained national attention in the wake of mass protest, particularly after investigators linked a suspect in the shooting of two California officers to the extremist anti-government group. It seems that the boogaloos (or boogaloo bois)—an anti-government group that identifies as a libertarian citizen militia--are using the violent protest to ignite conflict in the hope of creating a race war. Second, is the narrative of white privilege, which has become a process through which one group silences opposition by determining that all people of one race have been and are oppressive. The narrative assigns collective guilt for past sins of slavery and an automatically designates one race to be of racists based on skin color. Third, uncontrolled mass migration creates competition for resources, jobs, housing, and education

among the poorest of our society further deepening the struggle for survival and upward mobility for our poorest citizens.

These three forces add stress to our country and create additional cracks in our social and institutional bonds that radical groups can exploit as a means for furthering their efforts to destroy the Republic and build a new system to their liking. This tearing down of our country is a goal that the radical groups and specific political leaders have vowed to do.

The violent attack on our society, the erosion of governance, and the loss of respect for the rule of law, including the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, cannot be allowed to go unchecked.

As veterans we can act in a bi-partisan fashion and insist on a return to governance that our constitution outlines. Governance based on dialogue and compromise. We can confront national issues such as racism, criminal justice system reform, mass migration, opioid epidemics, and the destructive nature of identity politics, gangs, and radical attacks on the constitution of the United States. Change is required but that change will be destructive if it is driven by mob violence and not civil discourse.

What we can do:

1. **Vote and get others to vote.** Educate yourself on policies of the candidates and educate others.
2. **Stand up against cancel culture.** Demand that our elected officials make sure that the tech giants do not act as a biased filter against open discussion in the public square. On Facebook, twitter, and in your personal network call out “cancel culture” as an oppressive tool utilized by radical minorities to intimidate and silence others. Name it for what it is, the new McCarthyism--and don’t cooperate with it and don’t do it yourself.
3. **Speak up.** Call your elected representatives and give them your thoughts about policy. Stop ceding the public square to radicals. If all you do is sit around and complain yet take no action, then the outcome is at least partially your fault.
4. **Organize** a systematic response by connecting to like-minded citizens using the values of the Legion to promote our values of equality and justice for everyone.

MEET YOUR OFFICERS

Commander: Shannon Taylor
Sr. Vice Commander: Mike White
Jr. Vice Commander: David Donatto
Adjutant: Rich Ingold
Finance Officer: John Bergland
Historian: Mark Green
Service Officer: Chip Huffman
Chaplain: Bill Martin
Sergeant at Arms: Dan “DD” Sampson

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<https://www.facebook.com/Victor-Cripple-Creek-American-Legion-Post-171-1398263083658841>

Search the following string: **Victor - Cripple Creek American Legion Post 171**