



Springfield Post No. 32 The American Legion



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A SHORT HISTORY ON THE Springfield Post No. 32 The American Legion Annual Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln Every year on his birthday, February 12th, since 1935

Springfield Post #32, The American Legion has sponsored the Annual Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln since February 11 & 12, 1935. It is the longest running commemoration of Mr. Lincoln's birthday that has been held on his birthday, February 12th, since 1935.

Back in 1935 the World War I Veterans and members of The American Legion wanted to honor Springfield's #1 Son, President Abraham Lincoln and also the many Civil War Veterans who lived in Springfield. So they worked together and decided to do the Annual Pilgrimage on Mr. Lincoln's Birthday to honor him and at the time the living Civil War Veterans.

Since its inception in 1935 the Pilgrimage has had a total of six (6) Chairmen. The first pilgrimage chairman was Herbert N. Tragethon, a World War I veteran. Noel C. "Whitey" Moore, a World War II veteran took over for Mr. Tragethon, but we are not sure what year Whitey assumed the reins. Michael E. Walton, a Vietnam Veteran took over from Whitey in 1978 and served as Chairman through 2012, serving a total of 35 years as General Chairman. Retired Colonel Anthony P. "Tony" Libri Jr. a veteran of Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Kuwait, and Panama took over in 2013 and was Chairman through 2019. After the 2019 Pilgrimage and for 2020 - 2024, Vietnam Marine Corps Veteran Robert "Bob" Wesley took over until 2025 and for the 91st Annual Pilgrimage forward our new Chairman is Sons of The American Legion member James Peters Jr., who now holds the honor of being General Chairman.

The Lincoln Day Pilgrimage each year begins on **February 11th** with The American Legion National Commander; American Legion Auxiliary National President; Sons of The American Legion National Commander and American Legion dignitaries from Illinois and throughout the United States coming to Springfield to honor our 16th President on his Birthday. An American Legion Family Leadership Reception is held at the headquarters hotel from 4:30 – 6 p.m. and then everyone attends the Open House at Springfield Post #32, 1120 Sangamon Avenue. **On Lincoln's Birthday, February 12th**, an American Legion Family Breakfast is held at the headquarters hotel with The American Legion Auxiliary National President as the keynote speaker. At 10 a.m. all assemble in front of the headquarters hotel and with a Springfield Police escort they Pilgrimage/Journey to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln, located in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois. At 10:30 a.m. and inside Lincoln's Tomb, wreaths are placed honoring President Lincoln and remarks are made by our visiting American Legion Family dignitaries and many political figures. Upon completion of the ceremonies inside of Mr. Lincoln's Tomb the attendees return to the headquarters hotel, where at 12:30 p.m. the **Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon** is held. We are honored each year to have The American Legion National Commander as the keynote speaker of the Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon. This luncheon is attended by members of The American Legion Family, political figures, media and interested citizens.

The members of Springfield Post #32, The American Legion are proud to continue this honored tradition of honoring Springfield's #1 Son, our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln.