Greetings: I am honored for another opportunity to lead the Department of Maryland and the confidence you have in me to serve this Great Department for another year. The Department of Maryland held its convention on September 19, 2020 and all Officers remained in place for the administrative year 2020-2021.

Looking forward to serving again with all of the Officers within the Department, but most importantly, with our Posts. With the Department Convention behind us, our year has officially started and I congratulate all of our District, County/Area, and Post Officers and welcome you in joining our membership team for 2020-2021. Our mission this year is to obtain 100% in membership and programs. This past year we achieved 100% in Consolidated Post Reports, which was the first time since 2014. This year we got off to a great start in membership but we are slowing down. The 2020-2021 membership incentive program should have been distributed to all Posts, County/Area and Districts. It was in the Fall Issue of the F.S.W. as well. I encourage all Post Commanders to familiarize yourselves with them because we made changes that will hopefully benefit your Posts in achieving some awards for your accomplishments.

As a reminder, I put out a message to all Posts and D.E.C. members to conduct Buddy Checks for Veterans Day to thank our men and women for their service to our Country and to see how they are doing. Also, I hope you continue with the Buddy Checks throughout the year. Many are struggling and feel isolated from anyone that cares. Please let them know we are here for them always.

I certainly thank all of our men and women veterans that have served our Country and given us freedom, security, and the greatest nation on earth. We are Veterans and one big family. We just experienced a year where the Pandemic placed a big impact on The American Legion. Never before have our Posts and Department been shut down but we continue to work and assist our Districts, CO/Areas, and Posts through on-line meetings as well as holding on-line committee meetings.

Our Department Staff continues to perform under difficult conditions to carry out their office duties at home without the essential equipment they use daily at the Department.

With the guidance of our Department Adjutant in dealing with Covid-19, the Department accomplished a few challenging tasks, such as the reorganization plans and guidelines, and rewriting our C/BL for our reorganization plans and many resolutions. Again, our sincere thanks and appreciation for his devotion and many hours of hard work put forth to achieve these goals.

With the holidays approaching, the Department will not hold a Christmas Party this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. We must keep the safety of our members first and foremost. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and pray for relief from Covid-19 in our new year. Please be careful and stay safe.

Philip R. Dorsey
Department Commander

Ongoing help for veterans, children

I asked, and you responded. In my September Commander’s Message, I asked American Legion Family members and friends to journey 100 miles for veterans and children. I say “journey” because it really wasn’t important to me whether you walked, ran, biked, swam, rowed or surfed. It was the why, not the how, that mattered.

By late October, more than 4,700 had registered for our 100 Miles for Hope challenge. The campaign, which ran through Veterans Day, raised funds for The American Legion’s Veterans & Children Foundation. There is never a bad time to support two of our organization’s founding pillars: veterans and children. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, both groups are facing tremendous hardships.

The V&CF provides Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grants to eligible veterans and military members with minor children at home. It also funds valuable training for American Legion service officers, who work tirelessly to help veterans obtain the benefits they have earned.

The veterans unemployment rate is nearly double what it was a year ago. Those who worked for, or own, small businesses have been hit especially hard. Yet the need to provide food, health care and shelter for their children continues even if those veterans’ income is cut off. This is where The American Legion can demonstrate “our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

The pandemic isn’t the only recent emergency to tax TFA’s resources. During the prolonged government shutdown in 2019, the Legion’s Veterans & Children Foundation provided more than $1 million in grants to Coast Guard families who were affected by interruptions in their pay. Requests for TFA grants also increase when hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters devastate communities.

I have been inspired by the hundreds of stories I’ve heard from dedicated participants of our 100 Miles for Hope campaign. One message that stands out was posted by Legionnaire Michael Klasno of Kingwood, Texas, on Aug. 22.

“I am a Gold Star Dad running in honor of my son, Army Sgt. Rhys W. Klasno, killed in action 13 May 2007 in Haditha, Iraq. I’m a 69-year-old Marine veteran who just had open-heart surgery on June 13. I am just starting a walking regimen, with two miles per day. This 100-mile commitment may take me a while, but I will make the Veterans Day deadline. Semper Fi.”

The 100 Miles for Hope challenge ended on Veterans Day, but there’s always a need for the help provided by the Veterans & Children Foundation. I recently appointed Past National Commander Denise Rohan to chair a steering committee with a mission to raise $25 million to ensure a robust and sustaining Veterans & Children Foundation capable of responding to future emergencies.

The generosity of the American Legion Family continues to amaze me. You can support this important mission by visiting legion.org/donate.

Bill Oxford
National Commander
Reflections of an Adjutant
By Russell W. Myers, Jr.

This article marks my eight full year serving as the Department Adjutant. As in previous years, I would like to take this time to thank everyone for their support, and hope we can continue to serve our veterans, youth, and our communities together. I see every day the impact our Legion Family makes, and it makes me proud to assist you in any way possible. The job truly is rewarding when making a difference in the lives of so many.

Another holiday season is here, this one brings unique challenges and complications. The disconnection and isolation has unwanted impacts on health, both physical and mental. Many of our members are facing holidays in a more stark and lonely environment surrounding this holiday season. During other years many would spend this time remembering good times with family and friends, and continuing to make the good times roll. The situation this year may cause some families to not get together, and others to have smaller affairs. My wish is for everyone to enjoy time safely with those you love and reach out to those in need.

Every year I like to remind our members that the holidays mark a time of celebration and renewal of our bonds together. This year it is truer than ever that we all face a difficult few months, no matter the reason for the struggles. As the last line of our preamble so ably charges us, “To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness”, remember and heed these words during this time and every day of the year. Don’t forget to check on your sisters and brothers in arms, and make sure the holidays, separation, or any other woe are not leaving them feeling empty or alone. Take some time to catch up with old friends, and to share the holiday spirit with all our fellow veterans and their families. Conduct Buddy Checks and just let someone know that they are not alone! Donations to community services is essential to get through the difficult cold months, and we all know The American Legion Posts are working to have impacts on the lives of others every day. Let us commit to never allowing this mission to fail, or our organization to not be there when our nation’s veterans need our help.

Every year in this edition I speak about charity and helping others while highlighting how The American Legion aids in these endeavors. It has been a full year since I wrote on the challenges of the future and we all know COVID-19, and the turmoil surrounding it, have added yet another challenge. But there are Posts in our Department that are rising to the occasion and in many cases doing with input of sweat equity, and caring. This current situation will hopefully soon be behind us, and the health of our Posts is a concern to all of us. I want to repeat my thoughts from last year. One year ago this month, and remind everyone we still have work to do in improving our organization and ensuring our foundation is strong, and the future is secured. If you did not read the article last year, take the time to think about the points, and if you did read it take a few minutes to read it and think about how we can move the organization forward. Then share those ideas with all of us, we need your input!!

When I talk to Post leaders about this concept I usually get the same remarks. They include, “We don’t have the time”, “We don’t do it like that in our Post”, “We can’t afford to do anything outside the Post”, and if I missed the excuse used “We don’t have the time”, “We don’t do it like that in our Post”, “We can’t get any volunteers away. Post Commanders: don’t be afraid or procrastinating. Second, look at the necessary numbers to achieve goal in December (75%), January (80%), and February (85%). Getting behind now is going to make catching up next to impossible later on. Don’t sit on any dues that you do have. Send it forward right away. Post Commanders: don’t be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help! And, above all, don’t wait until it is too late!

The 2021 Incentives descriptions have been distributed. There are quite a few nice awards for those that excel during the coming year. We still have Commander’s Challenge Coins for anyone that recruits 3 new members! We have been hampered getting these out to those who are eligible by the closures, but will soon catch up.

“Buddy Checks” are especially important right now. You know who your vulnerable people are, so stay with them. Call – or visit – often. Tend to their needs. Show them that we care! Run your call list from last spring. No one should be left alone this time of year, especially with everything else that is going on.

Finally, a personal word about Past National Commander Clarence Bacon. He was a mentor and advocate for me. And, yes, a friend. I last visited with him at the Post 136 Installation of Officers last year. I thanked him and he encouraged me to continue on as a leader in the Department of Maryland. I just hope I can still make a contribution when I am 94!

“And now that I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me; till I make known your strength to this generation and your power to all who are to come!”~Psalm 71:18

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department 1st Vice Commander

Our Membership Year is off to a fantastic start, but can we maintain the momentum? North Eastern Shore District continues to lead with greater than 75% of goal, surpassing December’s goal! They have been the leader for the last month with Western Maryland District in hot pursuit (73%). Mountain District has been #3, but was recently passed by Northern Central District, but by only about half of a percent! All Districts have met or exceeded the current milestones of 50%, 55%, and 65%. But there is cause for concern.

Looking at the weekly report, most of the Red Ink shows up in one particular column: the comparison of where you are now compared to where you were a year ago! Some of these numbers can be easily taken care of, but others are rather substantial. District, County and Post Commanders need to review these numbers and see who needs the most help. The First question to ask is: why? I suppose we can blame the pandemic and our late start for 2021. Together with restricted activity at the post and in the community hampering dues collection. That just means working harder and not procrastinating. Second, look at the necessary numbers to achieve goal in December (75%), January (80%), and February (85%). Getting behind now is going to make catching up next to impossible later on. Don’t sit on any dues that you do have. Send it forward right away. Post Commanders: don’t be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help! And, above all, don’t wait until it is too late!

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Will Trotter
Department 1st Vice Commander

THE FREE STATE WARRIOR

Winter 2021

THE FREE STATE WARRIOR Subscription: $3.00 per year to non-members of The American Legion. Members of the Department of Maryland, $1.50 of the yearly dues pay for this publication.

You are eligible to belong to The American Legion if you served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States during these periods: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941 to the cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. Congress.

By Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Greetings: My prayer is that everyone is staying safe, wearing face masks and practicing social distancing to protect themselves and their family during these days of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic. It’s been difficult for the Districts and Posts to have meetings, events and opening the Canteen and Hall to full capacity as it has been difficult for me to visit the Districts and Post meetings and events. We must remember to continue to make Buddy Check Calls to see how our comrades and their families are doing and to offer your support. Congratulations to the District and Post Administrators that are maintaining the business operations of the Posts and communicating with their membership.

October 17, 2020 was the kickoff to the online Department Training Resources Course. The lessons are designed mainly for the Post Adjutants and membership Chairpersons who will utilize myLegion.org. It’s also useful for those interested in learning about Post Administration and myLegion in preparation for the future. This course has no prerequisites and anyone can attend and learn from the sessions. This is a great opportunity for all Legionnaires. I hope that you will take time to register on mdlegion.org/training.htm and the page can be found on the Dept. Homepage at www.mdlegion.org under the hot topic area. The webpage contains many great resources: American Legion Basic Training / Department Officers Orientation / Post Inspection / Judge Advocate Manual / Post Online Transmittal / Chaplain Training / Consolidated Post Report and a host of other information that you will find interesting.

October 27, 2020 was the kickoff to the National Training Resources Course (myLegion.org) Training session will be held the last Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. The lessons are for the Post Commanders and Adjutants. Contact the Dept. Adjutant Russell Myers for more information. (410 752-3104)

Congratulations to all the newly elected officers and the officers who are sitting for a 2nd term for year 2020-21. I’m looking forward to working with the Newly Elected Officers, especially with the Post Adjutants and Membership Chairperson. Remember if we work together as a team we can accomplish the goals that we are working on.

By the time you receive this issue of the Free State Warrior, Veterans Day would have passed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the veterans that have served to protect our Nation’s Freedom and those who are still serving in harm’s way to protect our Freedom. Remember to take time out of your busy day to remember those who have served and sacrificed their lives in the bombing attack on Pearl Harbor.

My family and I would like to wish everyone an enjoyable Family Thanksgiving Feast and a very Merry Christmas and have a safe, prosperous and Happy New Year and remember to treat your sweetie on Valentine’s Day.

Let’s not forget that if everyone would recruit one new member it will extend the life of this great organization known all over the world as The American Legion.


Please Stay Safe…

By Ronald L. Holcombe
Department 2nd Vice Commander

Greetings to all! Since my last article, I have traveled over 2,400 miles, attended several membership meetings as well as attended virtual/teleconferences. I continue to make Buddy Checks and keep the Department Calendar updated. If you have any submissions, please email them to me at: ruthhiggins01@comcast.net.

For County/Area Commanders, the following is the schedule for Post Inspections Reports:

**October 30th:** BD: Area A; SESD: Dorchester, Somerset; NESD: Caroline, Cecil, Queen Anne, Talbot
**November 30th:** BD: Area B, Area C; MD: Allegany; WMD: Calvert, St. Mary’s; NESD: Kent
**December 30th:** NCD: Harford; WMD: Washington; SMD: Anne Arundel, Montgomery; SESD: Wicomico, Worcester
**January 30th:** NCD: Baltimore; SMD: Prince George’s

Please send them to Ebony Dixon at Ebony@mdlegion.org or The American Legion, Department Headquarters, Room E, 101 N. Gay Street, Baltimore, MD. 21202. Ebony will see that I receive a copy.

* Please note the above were not received as of the date due for this Warrior Article, if you have sent them in, I thank you.

May you all have a wonderful holiday season, filled with memories to cherish and a Happy, Healthy 2021! As always, remember to “Preserve” our memories, “Protect” our benefits and “Promote” The American Legion, its programs and our youth.

Yours in service,

Ruth A. Higgins
Department 3rd Vice Commander

This year can’t come to an end quick enough. By the time you see this, the elections will be over, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be over and I hope and pray the New Year will be better.

I bring greetings from our National Commander William (Bill) Oxford. On October 5th, I participated in the Virtual Convention Commission meeting. We discussed Indianapolis National Convention and how successful it was. We listened to many presentations from different Cities who were bidding to host the 2025 National Convention. Tampa Bay was selected to host the 2025 National Convention. On October 14th and 15th I participated in the virtual NEC meeting. It was good to see everyone even though it wasn’t in person. We discussed many resolutions which were passed and two were held for further information. Voted on and passed all National appointments. I hope everyone had a great Holiday Season and I wish you all a great New Year.

By Patricia McCoy
Department 3rd Vice Commander

If you haven’t given since the last Warrior, it is time to schedule an appointment. Please give if you are able. THANK YOU!
Legislation

Legislative Commission Presses for Veteran-Friendly Legislative In Advance of the 2021 Opening Maryland Legislature Session

The Legislative Commission is asking state legislators to re-introduce bills to aid veterans prior to the opening of the 2021 session. These measures cover the areas of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Veteran Entrepreneurship and Retirement Income for career military members. These bills include:

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

SB 324  (Sen. Simonaire) Establishes a mental health first aid program assisting veterans and caregivers

RATIONALE:  SB 324 is a realistic program not dependent on local government aid or matching grants as other programs of this nature are. Its chief sponsor has an established record for supporting veteran-related bills and causes.

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HB1007/  (Del. Young) Creates a task force to review policies designed to aid veteran-owned small business enterprise program

RATIONALE:  HB 1007 and its companion bill SB 532 has immediate benefit for the small business entrepreneur and, hopefully, will lead the way to capital investments and business loans. The chief sponsors are the leadership of the Legislature’s Joint Veterans Caucus.

HB 389/  (Del. Rogers) Establishes an income tax checkoff box to benefit the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund

RATIONALE:  A critical bill since the Veteran’s Trust Fund main means for support is casino donations which most players are not aware of the existence of donation box. Delegate Rogers, a veteran Army Lt. Colonel, is a prolific supporter of veteran causes. Senator Elfreth sponsored three veteran related bill in the 2020 session.

Patrick J. Guibao
Chair, Department Legislative Commission

Baseball

Baseball is back after a year off due to Covid 19. We are now making plans to play this summer. If your Post is going to have a team, be sure to get them registered on line at National (there is no charge for this) by January 31st.

There will be 3 divisions; the senior team (17-19), Jr. team (15-17), sandlot (13 and under). There will not be any waiver for any player who completed their eligibility last year. Our state tournament will be held starting Monday July 26th through Friday July 30th. The regionals will be Aug 3rd through August 8th. Any post or team that would like to host the state tournament will have their bids in at the January 17th meeting at Laurel Post 60.

There is still a lot of work to be completed before the start of the season. We still have to complete our web site and the rules for Covid 19 protection. National said there will not be any printed copies of the rule book starting with the 2021 season. Rules will be on line at the National web site.

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, January 17th, 2021 at Laurel Post 60 at 12:30 pm, in the main hall.

Please be safe and have a happy holiday. See you all next year.

Mike Riston
Baseball Chairman

Scouting in Maryland

As some of you may have noticed the Boy Scout Committee Award was not among the presented awards at the 102nd Convention this year. The data I was able to glean from the Consolidated Post Reports, in the absence of the report forms from Department Headquarters, was insufficient to select a winner. From my experience, I know that there are many Posts that conduct excellent Scouting programs in Maryland, but in this calamitous year our accomplishments must go unsung.

The Consolidated Post Report form gives National a “temperature check” each year as to the health of Legion Post activities. They take all the information from all the Posts in all of the state Departments and use that information in their report to Congress as to how the health of this federally chartered organization is doing. The Scouting portion of the CPR asks only if your Post is participating, how many youth are in the program and how much does your Post contribute monetarily to the program.

For the Boy Scout Committee Report your knowledgeable Adjutant or the Chartered Organization Representative, that’s the Legionnaire that works directly with the Scout units, will complete the our form with all sorts of information that would give our committee a much more nuanced view of your program in relation to Scouting.

This information would be like how many and what type of units does your Post sponsor and for how long. How many other Legionnaires are involved? Did your units achieve a satisfactory “Journey to Excellence” rating, which is the way Scouting, USA gauges the health of their units. And finally, the committee asks that you give us a little narrative of how your Post interacts with Scouting. In the past some Posts even included photos of their activities with the scouts, at flag disposal ceremonies, at cemeteries decorating for Memorial Day or helping the scout with a merit badge.

Ours is a service organization and through Scouting we fulfill one of our founding pillars and improve our community.

Jack McLaughlin
Scouting Committee Chair

TRICARE
Select recipients must pay new fee or lose coverage

Starting Jan. 1, 2021, TRICARE Select Group A retirees must begin paying enrollment fees to maintain health coverage, according to Defense Health Agency (DHA) officials. Hundreds of thousands of retirees will no longer be enrolled if they don’t set up a payment plan by this date.

The change in coverage for Group A retired beneficiaries will affect those whose initial enlistment, or appointment or that of their uniformed services sponsor, began before Jan. 1, 2018.

The new TRICARE Select enrollment fees for Group A retired beneficiaries are $12.50 per month or $150 annually for an individual plan. And $25 per month or $300 annually for a family plan. Additionally, the catastrophic cap will increase from $3,000 to $3,500.

Enrollment fees will be waived for those who are an active duty family member, a medically retired retiree or family member or a survivor of an active duty sponsor or medically retired retiree.

This change will not affect those who are enrolled in TRICARE For Life, TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve or TRICARE Young Adult. These beneficiaries do not need to take any action to keep their current coverage.

DHA is urging Group A retired beneficiaries to take action to set up a payment plan by contacting their regional TRICARE contractor immediately.

For more information on this change and how to set up your payment plan, visit https://www.tricare.mil/Plans/Enroll/Select/EnrollmentFees.
pushing small churches to the brink.”

Any of this sounds familiar yet? The American Legion’s good name has been tarnished and Posts are on the brink? Remember my articles in the September 2018, September 2019, and December 2019 issues of the Warrior? What will they do to fix the issues and succeed, or will they sit in their pews and wait for new believers to find their message of “Love Thy Neighbor.”

A new pastor arrived and came with a tough message. After looking around at 20 members, and enough money to run the church for 18 more months before having to sell the building he took the altar on a Sunday and pronounced, “This church is dead, now what are you going to do about it?” His idea is one we can all take note of for our future. He understood that the church was founded on the principle of mutual support and love, and “Love Thy Neighbor” had been lost in this congregation.

Their solution was to return to the basics! They leafleted the small community where they were a forgotten entity. The residents didn’t even know the church was still open as there was never any activity or news about the old church. There offer on the leaflet was offering to roof houses, fix plumbing, repair anything in need, free of charge. There were no requirements. No membership required, no income tests, and no faith precondition or obligation. Kotz describes the apprehension in the community to accept help, “There was also the natural suspicion of anything religious, and the assumption that “free” would come with a downpour of proselytizing.” The first leaflets produced two requests for minor repairs, and soon word spread that it was serious that the church wasn’t trying to get more members but was only trying to be a loving and giving member of the community. The members of the church helped pour garage floors, fix or replace broken items around homes, and became the go to source for HELP. Although the church never asked for membership or anything in return, the membership grew by 3-4 fold over time, and while money was always a concern, somehow donations and kindness always won the day, allowing the church to meet the needs (sometimes taking longer than others) of the community. Most importantly they remained committed to “Loving Thy Neighbor.” I encourage you to search about Peace Lutheran Church “Loving Thy Neighbor” in the City Paper of Minneapolis. The article is way too long to reprint, and is available on the internet. Great story, but I am sure by now you can see how this connects to our organization!!!

A century ago our founders started on ONE principle. Service to our brothers and sisters and their orphans and widows, and making sure the bonds of service and the comradeship does not die after they return home was the drive. VETERANS SERVING VETERANS! It was the reason our organization thrived from the beginning. Over the decades many entities and people within our organization have lost the focus of this founding ideal. Odd as service to others and the community is usually the cheapest program we run, and has the most impact for the expense. Many talk the talk of helping veterans. I hear it at Post homes all the time, but do we really HELP? Are we the GO TO ORGANIZATION? If not, why, and how do get back to that now? We have to stop talking and start helping. If Posts are doing this now, I applaud you and encourage you to continue, but share your story of how it is working so we can collaborate on best practices.

For the next century this is the challenge, and the way forward. Remember all the excuses from the beginning of the article. All of them are answered by being the change and the GO TO ORGANIZATION. New members will come to serve in that Post. Be the inspiration for Veterans young and old to come together to serve others. Empower all members to assist the community. It is far better spending every penny a Post has benefitting others, compared to maintaining cheap beer and food at the bar while the Post runs deficits in their operations, and eventually stops paying bills and looks to the Department to help sell their building and “downsize”. If you think any of what I am saying isn’t happening, and happening a lot you are merely fooling yourself. This is not an easy message, and it will make some angry. It is time to get angry, and stop talking about it, and start HELPING. Please send me details of community events and projects the Post is planning, conducting, or participating in over the next year (not recruiting tables set up at a fair, as that is a part of the visibility but not the best method). In a recent study 75% of respondents said Veteran Services and Rehabilitation programs are the most important aspect of our Posts and Department. Surprisingly no respondent said the most important aspect was the Post bar!!

Experiential, and participatory, event-based giving is a growing phenomenon in society today, and we are not keeping up with the trend. Sixth Branch is a Veterans Group we have worked with and supported in the past. Why are they successful? They have a Great mission of helping communities in Baltimore with green-space utilization projects, low overhead, and an infectious spirit of goodwill. Corporate and education entities join them weekly working with their hands and bringing their community together.

Why do these projects and events work? The three BE’s that add to the participants life and benefits the organization at the same time. BE HAPPY, BE CONNECTED, and BE RECOGNIZED. Happiness is achieved as experiences last 3-times longer than a product purchase. Connections are established as 79% of people say events deepen relationships, while 69% say events build sense of community (a win-win combination). Organizational recognition grows as 70% of respondents admit to F.O.M.O. (fear of missing out) on events occurring which provides a strong motivator to attend these events. At the same time 98% of respondents will create digital or social content based off of the experience of the event. This is evidence of shifting interests and population in our communities, and we have failed to keep up with the changes and it could spell doom if we don’t pay attention. Let us look at the other side of the story.

Formed in 1886, Sears Roebuck started as a watch business. Their first catalog, which sold watches and jewelry, was printed in 1896. The Sears catalog was how many Americans were introduced to mass-produced goods. That was an enormous shift for people who lived on farms and in small towns, used to making many of the goods they needed on their own. Sears’ stores helped reshape America, drawing shoppers away from the traditional Main Street merchants. It launched malls, contributed to the suburbanization of America in the post-World War II era. It introduced many American homes to labor-saving devices that changed family dynamics. Its Craftsman tools and their lifetime guarantees were everywhere. Sears truly changed America.

Now, Sears was once the nation’s largest retailer and its largest employer.

The American Legion has CHANGED AMERICA and we are the largest Veteran Service Organization. However, our organization truly has to change, and change now, to set the stage for the future. Read over the experiences of the Church, the changing demographics of our communities, and the story of Sears. Which way will the organization choose?

Return to service to others, stop talking about the past or what you could do “if”, and make a full scale assault to regain our position as the GO TO ORGANIZATION in the communities across Maryland. We can do it, and I have faith in the Posts to make the difference and not end up like so many other Posts that have refused to change and are now no longer part of the organization. Over 300 Posts have existed in the past 100 years within our Department. Now there are 133! Don’t take this as a negative. It is just proof of doing the right things, and staying true to our founding principle is the best way to ensure the future of any Post and the Department. There are plenty of good news stories of Posts doing great things. But as in most things in life, the horror stories get the most press. Thanks for your work and efforts on behalf of all our veterans, and the hope is this marks the beginning of a monumental effort to change the organization by returning to an idea 100 years old.

In closing, I pass along well wishes from my family for a wonderful holiday season, Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to everyone. Enjoy the time with family and friends if possible, reach out to those isolated, and always keep in mind those sisters and brothers, and their children in need.

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department Adjutant
Resolution No._D8420__________________________  

Subject: Initial Distribution of Posts of the Department among the Regional and District Councils

WHEREAS, The 102nd Convention of The American Legion, Department of Maryland adopted Resolution C03-2020; and
WHEREAS, Resolution C03-2020 approved an amendment to the Department Constitution and Bylaws setting forth a reorganization of the Department to be placed into action over a transition period from September 2020 through the adjournment of the 103rd Department Convention in July 2021; and
WHEREAS, Resolution C03-2020 included a resolve clause that set forth the Department Executive Committee’s (DEC) authority regarding documents and the transition actions while the Convention is not in session as outlined in the Department Constitution and Bylaws by resolving, “That the Department Executive Committee is hereby empowered to act, and retain authority over the documents required to enact the reorganization, including, but not limited to, the final recommended initial composition of the Posts within the various Regions (Attachment 2), the Region Constitution and Bylaws (Attachment 3), District Constitutions and Bylaws (Attachment 4), and rules and procedures for Chartering, Suspending, and Revoking/Canceling the Charter of Intermediate Bodies of the Department of Maryland (Attachment 5)”; and
WHEREAS, The reorganization includes establishing Regions within the Department as intermediate bodies, and restructures the current Districts; and
WHEREAS, Establishing the initial distribution of Posts among the various Regions and Districts is critical to the transformation of the Department organization, and allows for the final preparations to be accomplished; and
WHEREAS, The Internal Affairs Commission has considered and approved for consideration of the DEC Initial Distribution of Posts of the Department among the Regional and District Councils to be used during the transition and for at least the first year of the new organizational structure; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion, Department of Maryland, Inc. in a regular meeting assembled at Edwin C. Creeger Post 168, in Thurmont, Maryland, on November 15, 2020, that The American Legion Department of Maryland Executive Committee (hereafter, DEC) does hereby adopt the Initial Distribution of Posts of the Department among the Regional and District Councils contained at Attachment 1; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such distribution will be used during transition period and for at least the first year after the new organizational structure takes effect following the 103rd Department Convention; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such distribution will be used by the transitional committees so appointed for each Region in their planning for the future of the Regions and Districts; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That per the Department Constitution and Bylaws the DEC retains authority to amend the Distribution of Posts of the Department among the Regional and District Councils from time to time, as necessary.
General speaking, informing Maryland American Legion posts of the Valor Medals Review Project is beneficial to honoring these First World War I veterans. The Robb Centre Team has identified, at this time, eleven Marylanders that meet the criteria for the Project review (e.g., received the Distinguished Service Cross/Navy Cross, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, or an actual nomination for the Medal of Honor) mentioned below. The post listed is our best estimation of the post that the veteran may/could have been affiliated with their post. The Robb Centre, very soon I shall forward as an email attachment that I shall be receiving an updated tri-fold brochure, related to the Robb Centre, very soon that I shall forward as an email attachment that you may forward. I meet with the Robb Centre staff this morning and we have a couple of newsletter stories under consideration. I look forward working with you as the project continues.

Sincerely,

Timothy C. Westcott, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History; Chair, Department of History, Political Science and Interdisciplinary Studies; Associate University Archivist; Program Coordinator for the Disciplines of Anthropology and History; and Director, George S. Robb Centre for the Study of the Great War at Park University

Learn more & donate online at gsr.park.edu

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**VALOR MEDALS REVIEW PROJECT**

The Valor Medals Review Project leads the investigation of World War I veterans (African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Jewish American, and Native American) who, despite deserving deeds, may have been unjustly denied high-level valor awards due to bias, discrimination, or confusion by changing standards surrounding Medal of Honor awards. While the United States military has conducted systematic reviews for Medal of Honor awards to minority servicemembers in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and all subsequent American wars, no such review has been made for World War I minority veterans. America has a sacred bond with those who swore to defend her, and there is no more powerful manifestation of that covenant than the Medal of Honor. The Project is federally recognized by the Valor Medals Reviews Act, H.R.2240/S.1218, included within the National Defense authorization Act (NDAA) for the Fiscal Year 2020, S. 1790.

**THE PAPERS OF JOHN J. PERSHING**

The Papers of John J. Pershing will be a 13 volume digitized edition of the papers of John J. Pershing. The project shall transcribe, annotate and index documents from international and national repositories and collections, maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. The edition will incorporate new technologies including XML software, content management systems, databases, interactive mapping, and websites for the series.

**THE PAPERS OF CHARLES YOUNG**

The Papers of Charles Young will be a 12 volume digitized edition of the papers of Charles Young. The project shall transcribe, annotate and index documents from international and national repositories and collections, maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. The edition will incorporate new technologies including XML software, content management systems, databases, interactive mapping, and websites for the series.
Welcome and good day from the Mountain District, the most beautiful place in Maryland!! We hope you are all staying safe, and doing well in this continued time of trial and tribulation of Covid-19. All Posts in the district are consciously practicing safe distancing and face masks, and even deep cleaning when the threat has been detected inside our walls. Covid forced the cancellation of our Martinsburg VAMC visit in October, but we were able to provide items of need and Canteen Books with a scheduled appointment. Most events for Veterans Day were cancelled; however the outdoors remembrance at Oakland’s Veteran Memorial Park and the outdoor Friendsville Veterans Memorial events were held in the pouring rain. The NHC JROTC did open their door in welcome to all veterans presenting thank you gifts, and pictures were taken with Cadets. Accident did hold their Veterans Day dinner and remembrance, and other small events were scaled down for safety reasons.

Membership remains good in the Mountain district, and while we’re not #1 in the state, our District Membership numbers are still reporting good numbers. In all three meetings I heard many great thoughts on how to best execute our wonderful American Legion programs. From Blood Drives to Public Safety the NCD is ready to serve the community, our veterans and our Posts. Our County Commanders are conducting our Post inspections and expect to be completed well before the deadline of December 31st. Lastly our District Membership numbers are looking very good so far, we are in fourth position in the Department at 68.7% of goal this year and working very hard to improve both numbers. Take care and be safe.

For God and Country,

Jody R. McCourt
Northern Central District Commander

My Brother and Sister Legionnaires from the Great Southern Maryland District (SMD) – it is my honor to serve as the Commander of this great district – for the final year as we know it. Over the next year the keywords we need to repeat are “adapt and overcome” and “think outside the box”. Most people don’t like change – but change can be great if done with a proper plan and executed smartly. We all want what is best for The American Legion – so let’s make it happen. A few thoughts I hope to stress over this next year: 1) We need to tell our younger Legionnaires – you only get from the Legion what you put into it. If you sit in a meeting and don’t get involved and don’t ask questions – chances are you will find the meeting boring and not come back. If you get involved, you will see The American Legion does so much at every level, and you can be involved as much or as little as you want (from the Post all the way to the National Level - where you can be sitting in front of a joint session of Congress or meeting with Ambassadors, or being asked to stand alongside the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in ceremonies). If you don’t get involved, including attending meetings above the Post level, you will never see what The American Legion does. 2) The Post Commander or Post Adjutant who does everything for the Post is failing their membership. In the past year, we closed one Post (with a post home and 4 ½ acres of land) and merged a second post within the Great SMD (because of “one-man shows”) – which hurts our reputation and lowers our membership since many of these members end up not renewing. If you aren’t grooming your replacement, you are doing your post a disservice; if you are a “one-man show” you have doomed your Post unless you change immediately. If your answer is there is no replacement, then you need to start action NOW. You either revitalize the post, you look at merging with a successful Post or look at closing (there are no other options). If you keep the post open just so there is a “bar” for a few members – you fail our

Steve A. Brennan
District Commander, Southern Maryland District
We are living in a challenging time. Due to this Covid 19, most all holiday events at our posts have either been changed or cancelled, children’s parties cancelled and events at our posts have either been changed or cancelled. Families of 2 fallen GI’s to dedicate 2 bridges in their name. In Woodsboro, Post 282, is working to dedicate a bridge in Frederick Co., in the name of a local Serviceman who lost his life in the service of his country. Hopefully 2021 will offer us a better ending then 2020 is giving us. Wishing all of you and your families a Happy Holiday and a Safe and Healthy 2021. 

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Greetings from the South Eastern Shore District Congratulations to all of the new and continuing officers of the Department, Districts, Counties and Posts. As we all know, the 2020-2021 Legion year is in full swing and moving along as best we can with necessary precautions. Over the last few months, we have conducted our regularly scheduled meetings to conduct legion business and discuss the NEW American Legion Dept. of Maryland that will be taking place in the near future. As we all know, Membership is the key to keeping The American Legion alive so let’s keep that ball rolling right along. Congratulations to the posts who have achieved the Department membership goals but let’s not stop there, let’s get ahead of these goals and stay ahead of the goals. The South Eastern Shore has conducted 2 meaningful district meetings up to this point and a lot was covered. I want to thank the Past District Commanders, DEC Members as well as Past Department Commander Melvin Smullen for their insight and their wisdom and allowing me to learn from them, believe me, it is GREATLY appreciated. I had the GREAT pleasure of installing the 2020-2021 Officers of Synepuxent Post 166 and look forward to working with ALL of the great posts within the South Eastern Shore District as well as the Department of Maryland American Legion family. With the holidays fast approaching, I would like to wish you and your families the happiest of holidays and a joyous New Year from the South Eastern Shore District. I would like to send condolences to the family of Past SESD District Chaplain Russell Franklin who transferred to Post Everlasting in September. Yours in Legion Service

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Greetings Comrades in the Baltimore District. I am humbled and grateful that you have instilled your trust in me to be your commander for the 2020-2021 legion year. Congratulations to all the newly elected officers in our legion family. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to our outgoing officers for their years of hard work and dedication. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic state and local restrictions, several of our annual veteran and community programs have been canceled until further notice. Our remaining meetings will be held virtually. We are living in a challenging time and making the best of it. Completing our mission may be more difficult, but not impossible. I am confident that we can work together and overcome these obstacles and continue the mission of supporting our veterans and communities, through the strengthening of the American Legion’s four pillars. Thank you in advance for your dedication and support in increasing membership and performing buddy checks.

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When asking an eligible person to join The American Legion, Auxiliary, SAL or Riders, remember to extend the offer to include their eligible friends and family members.
Goodwill Ambassador from Taiwan

American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford accepted a donation of 250,000 masks from Ambassador Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan’s representative to the United States. A ceremony celebrating the gesture of goodwill took place July 28 at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Washington, D.C.

“This gift of masks will save lives,” Oxford said in his remarks. “Even before COVID-19, it was not unusual to see people – mostly in the Far East – wear facemasks out of consideration for others. It truly is a selfless act. We will ensure that veterans across the country receive these masks.”

Also pictured the National Commander and Steven Brennan from Maryland (along with National Security Division Staff) picking up the masks from the “Taipei Economic and Cultural Center” in Washington DC (which is like their embassy - but because of the “One China” policy - they can’t have an embassy).

HELP FOR THE HOMELESS VETERAN MOM...

The Department Women Veterans Outreach Committee has identified a population of female Veterans with few resources, those female Veterans who are homeless, with the responsibility of children.

Final Salute, Inc. is a non-profit organization based in the Eisenhower Center in Alexandria, Virginia with many wonderful programs, one of which is the Housing Outreach Mentorship Encouragement (H.O.M.E) Program. This program provides transitional housing, on-site case management, food, clothing, transportation, child care subsidy/assistance, employment support and other essential supportive services to homeless women Veterans and their children.

The H.O.M.E Program focuses on integrating women Veterans back into their local communities and providing vast, safe and suitable residential areas to choose from. It is a collaboration with resource partners that includes targeted supportive services to assist women Veterans in reaching their goals. This, one of many of their programs, is based in the DC Metro Area, but has assisted women Veterans and children in over 30 States and Territories. They also assist with permanent placement once Veterans are ready to transition from their residential facilities.

To be eligible for this program, women Veterans must have an “honorable or under honorable conditions” discharge, verified by a DD-214* (Requires completion of initial service obligation (ISO), unless medically discharged); must be willing to adhere to the terms of the Resident Agreement and a 2-Year Plan for Independence. Discharges beyond under honorable conditions will be looked at on a case by case basis, and Financial Education Classes are a mandatory part of the program. To apply for H.O.M.E. (housing assistance), visit the website https://www.finalsaluteinc.org/AssistanceRequest.html and fill out the form.

We are actively soliciting financial donations throughout the year so that we may continue to support this exceptional one-of-a-kind program. Myriad testimonials bear witness to the need among our female Veteran population . . . and their success rate!

Linda M. Bishop, Chairperson
Department Women Veterans Outreach Committee

New Product Announcement from Your Legionnaire Insurance Trust

The LIT is pleased to announce the availability of new insurance products designed to help serve the needs of Department members. They are accessible on www.theLIT.com.

We now are able to offer:

- HEALTH INSURANCE - This product is available for members under age 65 that need health coverage. The site offers a variety of medical plans to meet your individual or family needs. The site is able to qualify you if you are eligible for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. Obamacare).

- DENTAL INSURANCE – The offerings include a full range of dental plans that are available to individuals and families. We invite you to shop for the plan that best fits your needs

- SHORT TERM HEALTH INSURANCE – This is the type of medical insurance needed by people such as those between jobs who have no medical coverage. The coverage period and premiums are adjustable to meet your requirements.

- TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE – There are numerous plans available for different situations while you are travelling or working overseas.

Below is just a sample of the insurance carriers that are offered.

Please let your members know through your newsletter or by email.

Thank you!

Pictured is Maryland DEC member Alexander Whitney and his son, SAL member AJ Whitney presenting the donation of masks to MCVET Executive Director Jeffery Kendrick.
From the Chaplain’s Desk

Love endures with patience and serenity, love is kind and thoughtful, and is not jealous or envious; love does not brag and is not proud or arrogant. 5 It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong endured. 6 It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail]. 7 Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], and endures all things [without weakening]. 1Corinthians13:4-7-Amplified

Although our latest pandemic prevented us from getting together for our Annual Department Convention and our Chaplains training in person we were able to have our first Virtual Chaplains training on October 3rd. I would like to personally thank all the Chaplains that participated and for their commitment and input. We had a great turnout. During the training we discussed several aspects like who can be a Chaplain in The American Legion as well as what our responsibilities are to our community, state and Nation. Of course first and foremost to serve as a Chaplain for The American Legion you must LOVE GOD and Love People. For all you Chaplains who were not able to attend the training please go on the Department of Maryland website and you can view at your convenience. I want to also Thank Russell Myers for his expertise in making it possible for us to have this training.

We are swiftly approaching the end of another year. This year has brought us many challenges and I encourage you all to not lose hope. There are many attributes through all we have gone through this year that has allowed us to continue supporting, encouraging, and being the awesome American Legion family. There are a few things I want to share that have kept our American Legion family focused and supportive of one another. One thing we have continued to realize is the importance of giving one another more Grace daily. What does giving grace mean? Giving someone something they may not deserve. This is truly the epitome of what has kept our family strong this year. Our love, attention, help, support, forgiveness, and acceptance have been given to all whether it was deserved or not. It is one of the best things about being in a family. It is also the basis where we learn to give grace to others outside of our family. Forgiveness can go hand in hand with grace sometimes. Being a family means constantly forgiving. It means forgiving and forgetting - for the big things and little things. Family means standing by each other and being faithful to all members of the family no matter what happens in life. Respect makes a family happy, whole, and thriving. We may not always agree with the choices our family members however; family respects and cherishes those differences. Family is a lab for learning how to deal with those who are different from us; those who hold different views, think differently, act differently or see the world through a lens we may not. Family means supporting the members throughout their lives. It may be as little as making time to go to all of their performances, games, or special days at school. It may be as big as being by their side caring for them at the end of their lives. Trust is one of the most important values in our family. It is what allows us to take risks, dream big, and show up every day being vulnerable, honest, and able to share our hopes and fears. True vulnerability is intimacy. Your family is the one place in the world you can just be you. You can be vulnerable enough to let them know your thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes, and problems. Family means unconditional love. What I know about our American Legion family is we all know there is nothing we can do, say, or believe - no way we will behave, or a choice we will make - that will cut us off from the others’ love and acceptance. Unconditional love means we embrace family member’s choices, marriages, careers, decisions, friends, choices - whether they are the same ones we would make or not. Unconditional love is one of the strongest bonds in a family. It is what keeps us together through the good times and bad knowing that no matter what happens in life, we will always have each other. I hope you all know we are family and together we will ALL get through these challenging times. Please check on each other, encourage each other and help each other. I pray you all have a Happy Holiday season. The best is yet to come!

“The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us.” – Anonymous

Curtis Lee Jones
(240)383-6920
Department of Maryland Chaplain

Oratorical Contest 2021 Still A Go!

The 2021 Oratorical Contest season is now underway although being affected by the continuing pandemic closures, delays and shut-downs throughout the state. However, Department of Maryland posts that traditionally work Oratorical are well underway. The National Championship Oratorical Contest is still planned and scheduled for April 9 – 11, 2021 in Indianapolis. Our Maryland Contest is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, March 7, 2021, at Stevenson University in Owings Mills. As of this writing, Stevenson has not informed us of any changes, but they did restrict outside organizations during the just completed Fall Semester. We are seeking a back-up location just in case. We plan to hold our contest even if the National Contest is cancelled.

Students schooling at home can work on speeches and really prepare. This is why home schoolers traditionally do very well. Again, students will be looking for scholarship opportunities and just getting out of the house!! Keep providing the websites wherever and whenever you can. Keep in touch with your school counselors. Search engines will many times find us.

The Maryland and National Websites have everything you and potential candidates need. AND, now that you have a potential candidate’s interest, stick with them.

Remember, Posts and Counties are not required to have a “contest” in order to present a candidate. Only our State Finals must follow the rules to the letter. So, perhaps rather than have a full-up contest at the post, posts could mentor and have practice sessions with their candidates and committee members. If we do that, the District would be the first judged and awarded contest. If necessary, you could have 2 rounds at the District level, much like the National Contest has quarterfinals.

Maryland has a proud tradition in the Oratorical arena. Only California has had more National Winners than Maryland. We’ve had numerous second and third place finishers over the years. It’s up to us to keep this tradition going.

Anita Trotter,
Oratorical Committee Chairperson

Pictured 2nd from left Jenee Anekwe, a senior at Marriotts Ridge High School came in first earning her a Department Scholarship Award of $3000. She was sponsored by the Northern Central District.
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<td>Jeff Davis Post 18, Centreville</td>
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<td>Alvin S Athey</td>
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<td>Charles P Williams</td>
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<td>Bernard F Beavon</td>
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MEMORIAL BOOK INSCRIPTIONS

In memory of PNC Clarence M. Bacon from Department of Maryland The American Legion
It is our solemn duty to announce the transfer to Post Everlasting of Past National Commander Clarence M. Bacon on the evening of November 10, 2020. PNC Bacon served in roles within The American Legion from Post, County, District, and Department, served as Department Commander in 1974-1975, and served as National Commander in 1984-1985. Clarence served as a leader, mentor, and friend to so many Legionnaires in his over sixty years of leadership in the Department and National organizations. He was a central force for the improvement of our organization and our missions, and was a guiding light for countless members and leaders.

Clarence was far more than a leader, and was a dear friend to many of us! His support and friendship could always be counted on, and his dedication to being a good man was a character trait that personified Commander Bacon.

We could recount Clarence’s many accomplishments and service, but I found it comforting this morning to listen to the calm soothing tones of Clarence recounting that service. Many times I can remember calling to hear that voice in challenging times, and in times to share a laugh. A consummate professional and dear friend to The American Legion has transferred to Post Everlasting. Please listen again to the video links provided and for those that knew Clarence reminisce on times of fellowship from the Past, and for those that never had the opportunity to meet the man, enjoy getting to know Clarence.

As more information is received we will of course pass along. Please keep the family and friends in your thoughts and prayers. We will also provide information on memorial contributions and an address for mailing condolences in the near future, once received from the family.

https://www legion org/legiontv/PLCBDBA12207563F8C/WJ2eonYfhvQ (PNC Perspectives)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrO4SGZoy (8 minute speech from PG County TV)
As part of a week-long tribute to local veterans, The Daniel-Jeffers American Legion Post 247 has created a tribute of poster photographs of local members listing their name, branch of service, rank, and years of service. The display will remain at the monument area on Whalen Commons through Veterans Day, November 11, 2020.

The Post invites the general public to join them on Veterans Day, November 11 at Whalen Commons for a tribute to all those who have served our nation in military service. The Post will welcome, for the first time, the United States Space Force. The ceremony starts precisely at 11:11 a.m., as that was the exact time the armistice for World War I was signed. Originally called Armistice Day, it is now called as Veterans Day.

The short tribute will include opening remarks by the commander, a prayer for those who served and serve, pledge of allegiance, national anthem, and an invitation to the guests from the general public to offer tribute to any of their friends or family who served. The post is anticipating Fox News Channel 5 and DVM. com to cover this news event.

American Legion Post 247 was charted in October of 1949, after an organizing meeting held in Dickerson, Maryland. The charter officers were: Commander Mansfield W. Daniel, Vice Commander Charles H. Jamison, Adjutant Charles E. Orme, Service Officer Gorman Lee Butler, Historian Wellstood White Tipton, Chaplain. Herbert T. Dixon, Sergaeant-at-Arms Robert Day, Senior Color Bearer John Moore, Junior Color Bearers Charles Jamison and Harry C. Ward. There were 20 local vets at the time of charter.

Within its first year, the group held raffles and dances to raise funds for a future permanent home, something never accomplished. Today Post 247 meets at the Calleva offices in Poolesville.

In the early year’s community service included American flags for vets at local cemeteries, funds for polio research and heart disease, toys for youngsters in need, and funds to assist hospitalized veterans.

Post 247 continues as a veteran’s organization devoted to service of others, not only to members other vets, but to the community as a whole. This “band of brothers” proudly boasts sixty-three members, including seven women.

In our community, Post 247 has given out awards to Poolesville elementary, middle, and high schools students including scholarships; sponsored Oratorical Contests at the high school, scholarship provide to Boys State candidates, contributed to the Wounded Warrior Program and Fisher House, planted flags on graves, and much more. The organization prides itself in sponsoring events that have social and historical benefits such as a recent crossing of White’s Ford on foot, joined by local girl scouts, a social dinner at the “old saloon” at Calleva, its annual barn dance fundraiser, and other historical field trips. Local vets interested in joining Post 247 can email jsingh@crossroadstalent.net.

S.A.L. Commander

Greetings Fellow Sons,
Well it’s a new year, and let’s all hope we return to a sense of normalcy sooner than later. Our 47th Annual Convention was well attended, and I believe we accomplished our mission. I would like to thank my officers, chairmen and District Commanders who served with me last year for your dedication and I look forward to serving the coming year. I also want to thank all who supported the Commanders project last year. We raised $53,000 and were able to meet all our goals and project donations. Thanks!

This year our project is in support of local charitable programs that may have been hit hard by COVID-19. The one project I want to focus on for the Detachment is the “Catch-A-Lift” Program. This was one of my focal points last year and under these challenging times they need our help desperately. One cannot put into words the appreciation the veterans have after this program touches their lives in a positive and uplifting manner. This is a project that I know we can get behind once again. The other aspect of my project is where you are direct participants in determining who we donate to. Bobby Miller Jr of Squadron 40 has taken on the Project Chairman position and will be bringing you updates and coordinating our fundraising activities for the year. We have T-Shirts available for a $20 donation to the project, these shirts are grey and feature the slogan “Sons Stronger Together” with the SAL Emblem. Reminder, if you send a check to a local charity that meets our project guidelines and would like to have this counted for the project, make sure to send a photocopy of your check to Adjutant Matoska, without a check copy we cannot give your Squadron the credit you deserve.

All donation checks should be made out to: Detachment of Maryland and earmarked Commanders Project. Donations are encouraged to be presented at a DEC meeting, or can be mailed to:

Detachment of Maryland
3115 Orchard Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21234

Our Mid-Winter Conference and DEC takes place January 30th and 31st. Training will be held on the next block of Legion Basic Training on the 30th followed by our Children Youth Draw Down. Both events are at the Grand and the meeting on the 31st is also at the Grand. There will be a room code for the Grand Hotel, this information will be relayed to all.

Remember to send flyers of your events to Bear Weinzirl so he can post them on the Detachment website, get the word out and you may see some new faces at your events.

The next DEC meeting is December 12th at Hampstead Post 200. This meeting begins at 1 PM and under the new state COVID-19 guidelines, this will be a virtual meeting for our general membership. Information as to how to log on and view the DEC meeting will be available on the Detachment website.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

“Sons Stronger Together”
Yours in Service,

Bob Manzo
Detachment Commander
Sons of The American Legion

Caption: Department Commander Philip Dorsey and 1st Vice Commander Ronald Holcombe accept a Plaque from National for reaching 100% on collection of Consolidated Post Reports (CPR's) presented at DEC meeting at Edwin C. Creeger, Jr. Post 168 in Thurmont, Maryland by NEC Patricia McCoy.
**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

Virtual meetings and technology are the key to the future – thanks to the Pandemic! Here we go again with another round of COVID-19. However, we continue to thrive as a team working together for the Legion Family, the Veterans, and the Community! We can, and will, survive and come out on top!

Our theme this year is: “Birds of A Feather Flocking Together for God & Country” in Unity, Love, Faith, and Charity dedicated to the Veterans, the Military and their Spouses, Our Youth and our Communities. We have new pin and V-Neck T-Shirts in Red and Navy Blue depicting the theme. Want one, send me an e-mail (Small to XL, $12). Unfortunately, we are out of Sizes 2X and 3X, but we can place an order for later shipment.

Continue to call those shut in during this Pandemic and offer assistance to those in need – there is a lot that can be done to help your Post, Unit, SAL and community. Keep up the good work, and keep the Birds flying in through your membership!

The American Legion Auxiliary members are awesome gathering the membership birds through Teamwork in Service-Not Self. Volunteers Brighten Lives for the Veterans and our Communities! Let’s all be a part of the team encouraging diversity, caring and kindness to bring forth new opportunities and solutions to an ever-changing environment. Again, we are Family as we celebrate A Century of Service!

In 2020-2021.

For God & Country,

Linda L. Green
The American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Maryland President
202-230-2431 – Cell
E-Mail: cjsllg@aol.com

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**Eight & Forty**

LA BOUTIQUE DES HUIT CHAPEAUX ET QUARANTE FEMMES DEPARTEMENTAL DE MARYLAND SALON 39

Bon Jour, Partners and all: These difficult times we are living in have greatly impacted the work we do for our special children, however, it has not stopped us. Innovation and imagination are evident in the ways we have coped. This has been evident of our Partners since our beginning in 1921, a hundred years ago. At that time, the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary organized us as a common ground for the hard-working members of the ALA to come together for Fun and Fellowship. After a few years, a service to children suffering from all respiratory diseases, including asthma and cystic fibrosis was added, as well as service to National Jewish Hospital located in Denver, CO. which was and is the most distinguished facility of its kind treating all respiratory diseases. The Eight & Forty, as we are called, have adopted a specific need each year for the hospital donating many thousands of dollars each year to fund the need. Over the years, millions have been donated to the All Partner Projects, The Recreation Fund, The Shower of Checks and The Pediatric Fund. Not to mention the many boxes of gifts sent each year for the gift closet, as every child receives a gift on entering National Jewish as well as a gift when discharged. Over the years many Salons have adopted affected children and assisted their families with medical expenses while remembering the child on special occasions like birthdays and holidays. Becoming their fan clubs so to speak. The need for our assistance does not diminish. The children and their families depend upon our being there for them. There is no greater honor than “helping a child to breathe”.

We have a fund raiser taking place to raise the monies needed to support these projects. As we are restricted from coming together, this one is being held by mail. If you would like to contribute to the cause, you can send a check made payable to Salon 39 to our treasurer, Marian James at 6026 Berkeley Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209-4104.

In all the years I have written for the Free State Warrior, I never heard from anyone regarding my columns until the last issue. I heard from two readers. I welcome all comments, both positive and negative. This lets me know you are reading the messages. Stay as safe as you can.

Ivy Christoffers, CNP, CDP  
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American Legion Post 275 wreath laying ceremony Veterans Day in Fairmount Heights, Seat Pleasant and Glenarden Maryland. Deligate Nick Charles legislative district 25 presented a letter of appreciation for the service of our veterans. Department Second Vice Commander Ronald Holcombe read a Proclamation from the Governor.

Also present: Chaplain Loretta Houston, 1st Vice Commander Felicia Powell, Post Commander Clarence Gatling, SAL Commander Gregory Taylor, Department Judge Advocate Frank Porter, Paul Smallwood, Thomas Byrd, Legion Riders Director Eric Waters, Post Adjutant Michell Adjutant, Delegate Nick Charles, Past Southern Maryland District Commander Stan Shaw, Department 2nd Vice Commander Ronald Holcombe, Post 196 Commander Will Speight, Post Judge Advocate Melvin Graves, Ken Greenhouse, Edgar Hopson, Auxiliary Unit 275 President Carmin Brittain, Past SMD Auxiliary President Diane Clemons, Isiahnetta Burton-Graves, LaVern Lowrey, G. Renee Hunt, Auxiliary Unit 196 President Melinda Speight and Brenda Sessions-Walton.
Greetings Legionnaires, I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy. This COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we conduct our daily routines and the amount of cases is starting to rise once again; the death toll in Maryland has exceeded 170,000. This pandemic has changed how our office conducts business. For the past few months, we’ve been working from the office once again. I was working from my post (Carroll Post 31) on Mondays and Doug was working from his post (Talbot Post 70) on Fridays; we were seeing Veterans by appointment only. On Monday/16 November 2020, the Baltimore Regional Office opened their doors to see Veterans by appointment only. The same applies to all the Veteran Service Organizations that have an office space in the Federal Building. Please help us disseminate these changes to our Veterans and Post Service Officers. I will be conducting a virtual Post Service Officer training session soon; there will be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. Our Department Adjutant will send out the time and date.

**Updates for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**

House and Senate conferences are negotiating contentious provisions in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which should be completed soon. The Senate version of the NDAA would raise direct spending by an additional $8 billion from 2021 to 2030, according to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate. Of that amount, $79 billion comes from the addition of bladder cancer, Parkinson’s-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism to the list of Agent Orange presumptives. While high, the figure is $2 billion less than previous estimates.

**Updates for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

The Veterans Health Administration is encouraging Veterans to get their flu shots through their VA facility or any of the participating pharmacies. Here’s the postcard that went out to Veterans enrolled in the VA Maryland Health Care System and the flyer for drive-thru flu shots for all participating Maryland VA Medical Centers and Outpatient Clinics.

### The Women’s Health Transition Training

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is offering virtual training for women servicemembers transitioning from active duty to reserve components or who are making the transition into civilian life. Women’s Health Transition Training is designed to complement the existing Transition Assistance Program by providing servicewomen training and information on women-centric issues, such as VA’s whole-health approach to women’s health care, services available to women veterans and how to enroll in VA health care. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to encourage more women to see that there is a place for them in the VA health-care system by educating them on the services that VA has to offer.

The Women’s Health Transition Training is led by a woman veteran who uses VA health care and consists of five phases:

1. **Phase 1 — The Shift from Active Duty.** You will learn about the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the transition from active duty to civilian or Guard/reserve and making the change from the military health system to VHA.
2. **Phase 2 — Understanding the VHA.** You will learn about the VA, women’s health providers, the MISSION Act and programs that support the need for women-specific health care.
3. **Phase 3 — Available Women’s Health Services.** You will hear about the health services available to you if you enroll in VA health care.
4. **Phase 4 — Enrolling in the VA.** You will learn about the enrollment process.
5. **Phase 5 — Transition Assistance.** You will learn about other available support services and partners as you transition out of active duty.

Virtual sessions will be held twice daily through Dec. 21, 2020. To enroll in the training, visit [https://www.va.gov/wwmn/wh/](https://www.va.gov/wwmn/wh/)

### Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCACF) offers enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured. These changes are based on the new “Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCACF) Improvements and Amendments Under the VA MISSION Act of 2018”, effective October 1, 2020. The changes include: Expanding eligibility for the PCACF, offering legal and financial services for designated Primary Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans in 2021 and making other changes affecting program eligibility and VA’s evaluation of PCACF application.

**WHO QUALIFIES? Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury (including a serious illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, or on or before May 7, 1975.**

**WHO SHOULD CONSIDER APPLYING?**

A Veteran who has a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more, and who is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on either: An inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL) each time the activity is performed, OR a need for supervision, protection, or instruction, which means a functional impairment that directly impacts his/her ability to maintain his/her personal safety, on a daily basis.

For more information visit the [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) and download VA Form 10-10CG. Mail the completed form to: Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Health Eligibility Center 2957 Clairmont Road, NE, Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

Applying in person through a local Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Caregiver Support Coordinator. Please send any questions to [serviceofficer@mdlegion.org](mailto:serviceofficer@mdlegion.org). Our office is open normal hours so please call or leave a voicemail message... Thank you.

Adrian G. Gamboa
Department Service Officer

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**Reminder:** To continue to receive the Warrior please make sure your dues are paid by the end of the year.

The American Legion
Department of Maryland, Inc.
The War Memorial
101 N. Gay Street, Rm. E
Baltimore, MD 21202

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**Drive-Thru Flu Clinics**

**VA Maryland Health Care System**

**Baltimore**

VA Medical Center 9 a.m. to noon & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Parking Garage, Level P1
Walk-up Flu Clinic 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Medical Center Entrance

Perry Point

VA Medical Center 8 a.m. to noon & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Primary Care Clinic Blog 361, Parking Lot I

Loch Raven

VA Medical Center 8 a.m. to noon & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Outpatient Clinic Parking Lot I

Fort Meade

VA Outpatient Clinic 8 a.m. to noon & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Primary Care Clinic Entrance

Cambridge

VA Outpatient Clinic 8 a.m. to noon & 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
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