Commander’s Message

Philip R. Dorsey, Commander, Department of Maryland

The year is moving fast, but is most enjoyable. Now that the installations are over, I certainly congratulate all of the elected Post Officers for 2019-2020 and wish you all a very successful year. Many Posts have conducted their Veterans Day programs honoring all of our Veterans and I thank you for conducting this great program.

Now is the time to turn our attention to our membership, Post Inspections, and Consolidated Post Reports. I know our Department Membership Chairman will cover this topic, but I will speak briefly on Membership. We are doing well, but could do a lot better. We have a lot of Posts behind last year’s totals, and we need to get up to speed. There are 330,000 eligible members in the State that we have not taken advantage of. With the new American Legion Act, which opens up 4.2 million eligible Veterans nationwide, you can see we have some resources for recruitment. We need to target these eligible Veterans to join our American Legion Family. THAT BRINGS ME TO FAMILY. We are a family of Veterans which include our Auxiliaries, S.A.L., and our Riders. Every Veteran should belong to our family of Veterans. Family looks out for the welfare and well-being of its family members and that’s what we do. We need to emphasize this fact to the Veterans when trying to recruit.

This year, I would like to see our Department be 100% on our Consolidated Post Reports, and there is no reason why we can’t achieve this goal. This year, National is deleting some items from the report and adding some new ones such as the Buddy Check Program. Remember, once you have completed a program, you can report it to the Department and National at any time. This will save you the work of doing all of your reporting at the year’s end. You may submit a report as often as you like. Visiting the Posts throughout the State, I hear and see what Posts are doing; it’s good work, so please report it.

At our DEC in November at Gold Star Post 191, a video was shown on how to conduct a Buddy Check program. This video shows you how to properly set up and conduct the program with the Do’s and Don’ts. Hopefully, you will have your membership team review this video that will be made available to you.

On Friday, November 8, 2019, our National Commander James Oxford thanked President Trump for signing the Bipartisan Act which will require certain prominent federal properties to display the POW/MIA Flag everyday with the U.S. Flag. Commander Oxford watched the President of the United States sign this symbolic but important legislation. It is important that Americans never forget that there are still more than 82,000 men and women who were taken prisoner or have never had a full accounting. The American Legion reveres their memory and will continue to honor them at all of our meetings.

Just a reminder, the Heroes to Hometown/Wounded Warriors Program was announced as my Special Project for this year. At the August DEC, this program’s name was changed to Veterans Assistance Program (VAP). This change was made so that we could accommodate earlier veterans, such as the Vietnam Veterans who have the highest suicide rate, and who need and deserve our assistance. The H2H program only covered Veterans from 2001 to present. You may send your donations for this worthy program to Department Headquarters earmarked V.A.P. All contributions to this special fund, regardless of the amount, are greatly appreciated.

By the time you receive this news article, Christmas will be upon us. This would be a great time to check on your members and make sure they are prepared to have an enjoyable Christmas.

Don’t forget to join us at Sykesville Memorial Post 223 on December 15, 2019, from 1-5pm for our Christmas Celebration for some holiday cheer and fun for all. NOTE: ALL SOLD OUT

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, please keep our men and women serving in harm’s way in your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you again for your support. God Bless America and our troops.

Philip R. Dorsey
Department Commander

A Mission to Save Lives

The holiday season, for most, is a time of joy and family togetherness. For some, including a significant number of veterans, it’s also a time of serious risk, especially if they are alone or believe they are.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie told Legionnaires at the 101st National Convention in August that suicide prevention among veterans is the department’s No. 1 clinical priority. The problem for VA is finding those who need help, who may be isolated, and connecting them with services and support people. Of the 20 veterans and military personnel lost daily to suicide, only six are enrolled in the VA health-care system.

A 2019 American Legion mental-health survey of more than 13,000 veterans and their families confirmed the need for VA’s call to action. Over 30 percent of respondents said they knew a veteran who had died by suicide. About four in 10 veterans were unsure if they were even eligible for VA mental health-care services. Clearly, we have work to do.

“No VA secretary, no federal department, can solve this problem from Washington, especially when most of those veterans we need to reach are not in our system,” Wilkie said. “We will not get anywhere on veteran suicide until this nation has a national conversation ... and that is a conversation that veterans can start today.”

I would take his suggestion a step further. It has to be more than a conversation. It needs to be our mission. American Legion department chaplains gathered Sept. 21 for a conference in Indianapolis, where a VA suicide-prevention case manager explained that clergy and religious leaders “may be the first person (veterans) turn to for comfort, guidance and help” when facing mental health issues. The mission, we know, is not the responsibility of Legion chaplains alone. It belongs to all of us.

Among the many reasons for American Legion posts to conduct regular Buddy Checks, suicide prevention stands apart in what is described as a national crisis, one quantified by a 22-percent-higher suicide rate among veterans compared to the average adult U.S. population. The Buddy Check program, launched last March, has inspired posts to reach out to members and former members to simply see how they’re doing. How can the Legion help them when they are struggling with life’s difficulties? Their answer is how we execute our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

We are not asking Legionnaires to serve as mental health counselors. We are asking them to help steer veterans and their families to professionals who can help. VA counselors at the chapter conference suggested the Legion become familiar with the S.A.V.E. process: signs, ask, validate and encourage. A training video at psycharmour.org/courses/s-a-v-e provides guidance on how to identify signs of suicidalidity, determine if a veteran is at risk and encourage them to get help.

If the need for help is immediate, the VA Suicide Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year at 1-800-273-8255. Press 1 for veterans, text to 838255, or chat online at veteranscrisisline.net to receive confidential intervention and support.

Nothing is more essential to the existence of The American Legion than direct, personal contact with our fellow veterans -- members or not -- and helping them understand that they are not alone.

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

This article marks my seventh 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, many spend this time remembering good times with family and friends, and continuing to make the good times roll. My wish is for everyone to enjoy time 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. But for far too many this time of the year is cold and lonely. 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 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. 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. But in a larger sense my last article about returning to the basics is where I would like to spend some time.

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 get any volunteers to help”, “We can’t afford to do anything outside the Post”, and if I missed the excuse used at your Post please insert it here. We can talk about how lame these excuses are later, but let us take a diversion for a minute to examine a related story.

I want to start with a story about a church that found itself dying because of lack of membership and no funds to continue the charitable efforts of nearly a decade of service. The Churches strict adherence to doctrine, and inability to change rituals or practices of inclusion (even for those with differing faiths, or none at all), had dwindled the membership to 20 members. To accompany those issues the face of Christendom had stared down many challenges over the last decades including scandals in evangelical circles, priests who abused children, and a generation of young adults that grew up bombarded by the messages of the problems of organized religions. As Pete Kotz proffered in his expose on the Church in City Paper (Minneapolis, MN) on October 23, 2019, “Religion’s good name was soiled for generations, pushing small churches to the brink.”

Any of this sound familiar yet? The American Legion’s good name has been tarnished and Posts are on the brink? Remember my articles in the September 2018 and 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 we sit in pews and talk about “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. Their 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, 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 anything religious, the assumption that “free” would come with a downpour of proselytizing. The residents didn’t even know the church was still open as there was

Continued on page 4
Greetings: By the time you receive this issue of the Free State Warrior, Veterans Day Programs, Thanksgiving Family Celebrations, The American Legion Family Christmas Party, Christmas Day Celebrations, New Year Celebrations and Valentine’s Day Celebrations will have passed. I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a safe and fun-filled Holiday celebration and those Special Family Day Celebrations.

Congratulations to The American Legion Family on celebrating their Birthday this year. Sons of The American Legion celebrated their 87th Birthday September 12th; The Legion Riders celebrated their 26th Birthday September. The Auxiliary celebrated their 100th Birthday November 10th, and The American Legion celebrated their 100th Birthday March 15th.

I hope that everyone had an opportunity to attend a Veterans Day Program. We should always remember to thank our veterans that have served and sacrificed their lives and thank those who are still serving in Harm’s Way to protect the Luxury of our Nations Freedom that we so much enjoy today.

A great big thank you shout out goes to those who attended The American Legion Family Christmas Party on December 15th (everyone enjoyed themselves). I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of Sykesville Memorial Post 223 for hosting the Holiday Celebration. (Great Job)

As year 2019 is coming to an end and we are approaching the New Year 2020. We must remember that we still have a lot of work ahead of us with our membership retention and recruitment of the veterans that weren’t eligible to join The American Legion because of the war era eligibility. (Good News) The new membership Legion Act applications are now available, pick up one or two applications from your Post Adjutant and put them in your wallet, so that you will be ready when you meet a veteran that wants to become a member of The American Legion. Remember to invite and welcome the recruits and their families to your Post Meeting and Events.

Attention Post Adjutants: One of my primary duties as the Department 2nd Vice Commander is making sure that the Consolidated Post Reports are completed and submitted in a timely manner. I want our Department to finish better than last year at 75% of our Post submitting their Consolidated Post Reports in a timely manner.

My goal is to reach 100%. In order to reach that goal, the Post Adjutants must submit their Consolidated Post Report on or prior to June 1st, 2020 to Department Headquarters by the close of the business day, and those reports that are received will be date-stamped and distributed to the appropriate Committee Chairpersons for the purpose of judging, the winners of each membership category will be recognized and awarded at the Department Annual Convention. I know we can reach 100% with a little EFFORT and DEDICATION.

You can Google mdeligion.org, click on resource and then look for Department Forms & Publications then click on Consolidated Post Reports and print out a copy. “PLEASE DON’T BE AFRAID TO FILL OUT THE FORM JUST BECAUSE YOUR POST HASN’T PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE LISTED CATEGORIES.” Your second option: Google my legion.org online Consolidated Reports, look for online Completed Consolidated Post Reports, you can start filling the form out, you can stop at any time and return back to the form to complete it and submit it. National and the Department will receive their copy and you will be able to print the Post copy. Remember you must submit the Consolidated Post Report on or prior to June 1st 2020 for the purpose of being judged and recognized and awarded for your hard work for the year. If you have any problems with filling out the Form, contact me at 443-854-0990 or holcomberl@gmail.com or Dept. Headquarters 410-752-3104.

In closing I have enjoyed attending the Post, County, District Meetings and Events and Programs, and most of all, fellowshipping with the Grassroots members. I’m looking forward to continuing working with each of the Posts. My door is always open to the membership and most of all to the Post Retention and Recruitment Committee Chairperson.

Remember if everyone would recruit one new member, it will extend the life of our great organization known all over the world as The American Legion.
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 “Love 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 to 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 and in small towns, used to making many of the goods they needed on their own. Sears’ stores worked with and supported in the past. Why are they successful? They have a Great mission and empowering veterans to be a part of the community and the story of Sears. Which way will the organization choose?

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

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department Adjutant
Baseball

It's almost winter and a good time for teams to start getting prepared for spring and the start of a new baseball season. Last year we had 11 teams that did not complete their paperwork. The team or post should have an administrative official whose job is to oversee and complete all the forms, purchase insurance, complete form 1 and get the team photo completed and filed on time. The head coach has many other duties running the team, that's why he should not be doing all this paperwork.

We are hoping to upgrade our website with a web administrator. As soon as I receive notice from National, I will inform all of you about any rule changes for the 2020 season.

The baseball meetings are open to all who wish to attend. They are held at Laurel Post 60, starting at noon on the following Sunday dates:

December 8, 2019
January 19, 2020 (Tournament bids due)
March 15, 2020 (Managers meeting in Main Hall)
May 3, 2020

Remember this is your program, so support your team and post.

Mike Riston, Chairman

The 2020 American Legion High School Oratorical Contest

As we enter the holiday season, your candidates should now be identified and working on their speeches! Please provide them with any help they may need and encourage them to seek guidance from teachers before going on Winter Break.

Be sure your judges are ready as well. It is suggested that your judges NOT be post members. Community colleges, other civic organizations, local politicians, government and business leaders are a good source and, as a rule, are delighted to participate. Judges can prepare by viewing the national website and we can help train if you feel that would be helpful. Of course, your many other contest helpers may be Post, Unit, Squadron, and Riders members.

The Department of Maryland High School Oratorical Contest will take place on Sunday, March 8, 2020 at Stevenson University’s Owings Mills Campus. We will again send out specific directions prior to the event. As a reminder, all post, county, and district level contests must occur between January 4 and February 23, 2020. To be safe, you may want to factor in “snow days.” It is also a good idea to avoid the weekends around the period of mid-term exams in your county.

For the Department Contest on March 8, all candidates must be present and checked in at Stevenson not later than 10:00 for a prompt 11:00 start. Candidates may want to plan on an earlier arrival time as tardiness is not excused and we must disqualify anyone who is late. Please also note this is the Sunday we return to Daylight Savings Time! We cancel for weather only when Stevenson tells us to do so. Coffee and such will be available beginning at 9:00.

Districts need to register their candidates using the 2018 “Oratorical Contest Certification for Post/County/District Form,” not later than 24 February 2020. Please fill out the form completely and legibly, being sure it is the 2018 Edition. The form must be signed; late or incomplete forms may jeopardize your candidate’s participation! All candidates will also need to accomplish the NEW Indianapolis Travel form. This will help to save time after the winner is announced.

Our winner on March 8 will represent Maryland at the National Finals in Indianapolis, April 17-19, 2020. Please note that the American Legion has made significant changes to the National Finals Contest for the first time in 22 years.

Fifty-Three candidates (The fifty states, DC, Dept of France and Puerto Rico) will participate in nine quarter final rounds on Saturday Morning. For the first time, two candidates from each quarter final will advance to the semi-finals and not just one.

* Those competing in the first-round quarter final contest will receive $2000 (used to be $1500) each;
* The fifteen first round winners advancing to the second-round semi-final contest who are subsequently eliminated receive an additional $2000;
* The first place National Contest winner will now receive $20,000
* The second place National Contest winner will receive $17,000
* The third place National Contest winner will receive $15,000

In 2021, the final winner award amounts will increase yet again: $25,000 for first place; $22,500 for second; and $20,000 for third!

Three semi-final winners will compete on Sunday morning, April 19, for the new scholarship awards. Sunday morning’s orations will again be available for viewing at the National American Legion Web-Site. Our Maryland winner will also have the opportunity to deliver their Prepared Oration on July 16 at our Convention in Ocean City. Be sure your candidates are aware of this opportunity.

Meanwhile, help is available by phone, email, or in person to help you in any way we can.

The web address is: www.mdlegion-oratorical.org.

Let’s make the greatest youth program in the American Legion a 2020 success! Let us produce a National Winner!

Anita Trotter,
Department of Maryland Contest Facilitator

A Box or a Check... Can You Help?

The Department Women Veterans Outreach Committee is asking if your post will donate a box or a check to show our fidelity to female veterans who find themselves homeless this winter.

Remember your “ditty bags” in the service? We’d like to provide 15 personal hygiene ditty bags, or “Welcome Bags” to 14 shelters this winter -- two shelters per district or 30 veterans per district to be delivered by February 1 – just before the serious cold weather begins.

This project will cost a little more than $3,000 per district to be delivered by February 1 – just before the serious cold weather begins.

We'd like to provide 15 personal hygiene ditty bags, or “Welcome Bags” to 14 shelters this winter.

Female veterans who find themselves homeless.

This winter.

Remember your “ditty bags” in the service?

Are Your Friends and Family . . .
A Member of Our Family?

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

Linda Bishop, Chairperson
Women Veterans Outreach

FREE STATE WARRIOR
Legionnaires from St. Mary’s County American Legion Posts conducted the Flags for 1st Graders Program at Dynard Elementary, Mother Catherine Academy, Father Andrew White, Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary, Benjamin Banneker Elementary, Green Holly Elementary, and St. John’s Schools during the period of 12 – 13 Nov 19. A total of 347 students benefitted from the program activities. The program primarily allows the students to enhance their Americanism and learn about the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy. The history of the English, Scottish, Union, Grand Union, 13-stars & stripes (Flag Act of 1777 - Hopkinson, Cowpens, and Betsy Ross), 15 Stars & Stripes – Star Spangled Banner (Flag Act of 1794), 20-star (Flag Act of 1818), 48-star, and the present U.S. 50-star flag was reviewed. The students were instructed on the proper display of the flag and the rules of flag etiquette. Legionnaires demonstrated the proper way to fold the flag while the National Flag Foundation’s step-by-step overview of the symbolism associated with the folds of the flag was read to the students. Legionnaires answered various questions from the students ranging from flag protocols to civic responsibilities. All the students were presented with a tabletop flag and wooden base, Our Country’s Flag book, and a ruler with the Pledge of Allegiance and a pictorial chronology of U.S. Presidents. 23 of the county’s 24 elementary schools currently receive the program, with approximately 1,261 students benefitting.

St. Mary’s County American Legion Posts Provide Flags for 1st Graders at Green Holly Elementary School

Mike Barbour
American Legion Post 221
Americanism Programs Chairman

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

THANK YOU!
Special Olympics

Special Olympics Maryland is the states largest organization for athletes with intellectual disabilities. More that 8,000 Special Olympics athletes participate in 27 different sports year-round in Maryland. These competitions bring athletes and their families together through sport, helping to create a world where opportunity is not limited by disability.

Fact: In the early 1960s, Eunice Kennedy Shriver began a summer camp in her Rockville backyard to give people with intellectual disabilities equal access to the camp experience. Shriver’s pioneering work grew into Special Olympics.

The Department of Maryland is a proud sponsor and we as a Special Olympics Committee try to attend as many events as we can. The Ft. McHenry 5K Tunnel Run is one of those events. Frank Price (Post #180) and me awakened one chilly morning on 6 October and headed on down to the tunnel. We helped set up the tables and platforms where the medals would be distributed. We then walked through the tunnel to the Ft. McHenry side and manned the table with water cups to hand out to the runners as they turned at the ½ way mark. (5K is 2.3 miles + 36 ft.) When the last runner passed us, we then walked back to the starting line on the Canton side of the tunnel. Believe it or not, it was warm inside the tunnel. We had a great time interacting with the athletes and just listening to what they had to say. To say the least, their enthusiasm is infectious.

Our biggest next event will be the Polar Bear Plunge, and, once again this year I will be sending out donation letters to all he District Commanders for their help. As the prophet once said, “We can’t do it without you”. This year’s plunge will be held on Friday, January 24th at Sandy Point State Park. As Bob Barker used to say, “Come on Down” and get wet with us.

Thank you again for your support and God Bless America.

William J. Ganz, Jr.,
Chairman

INCOME TAX TIME REMINDER

Notes from the Treasurer - November 2019

It’s approaching that time of the year again when many Posts must meet their tax return obligations. What?! Aren’t we tax exempt? Of course we are.

American Legion Posts are included under the National American Legion’s Income Tax Exempt Number 0925, issued by the Internal Revenue Service after it determined the American Legion was a veterans organization as defined by IRS Code 501 (c) 19. The business-related income of the American Legion and its Posts is exempt from Federal Income Tax. This exemption is recognized and honored by the State of Maryland, so we pay no State Income Tax either. Most Maryland jurisdictions also exempt American Legion Posts from real and personal property tax.

Just because you are exempt from Income Tax does not mean you do not have to file a tax return. All Posts are required to file an IRS Form 990 in one form or another. In our case, this tax return is informational (no tax will be due) to the IRS. The return is due on the 15th of the fifth month following the end of your fiscal year. Miss filing three consecutive years, and the IRS will automatically drop the Post from the Legion’s Income Tax Exemption Group 0925. Once out, you cannot get back into the Group. Your Post must apply (at no small cost with an even greater P.I.T.A. factor) for its own income tax exempt determination from the IRS. If granted, the IRS will issue to the Post a unique Income Tax Exemption Number for future Post tax returns.

Depending on business size, you may file using either the full 990, 990EZ or 990N form. Go online to https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search to learn which is good for you. Keep in mind that the 990 Income Tax Return is a public document that may be read by both the IRS and an American Legion adversary. Unless you are filing a 990N, include in the tax return the good works listed on your Post’s Consolidated Post Report to frustrate those of ill will.

You must also file the Maryland Form One, Personal Property Tax Return by April 15th. As with Income Tax, no personal property tax is due while the Post is Federal Income Tax Exempt. Your Post could lose its Corporate good standing status with the Secretary of State if you do not file the return. This business status is required by most permit-issuing entities, such as your local Liquor Board. Plus, banks are reticent to lend to businesses not in good standing.

Be as accurate as you can on your tax returns, especially those items that are used to identify your organization. The more routine your return is to process the fewer problems (can you say “audit”) you will have later. If your role in your Post is not financial, remind your Commander and Finance Officer about the Post’s tax return obligations.

As always, we at Department are ready to help.

Gary Gifford
Treasurer

Kesting Golf Tournament Returns to Ocean City Golf Club

The prelude to the 2020 Department Golf Tournament after moving to another venue will return to the Ocean City Golf Club. Golfers will tee off starting at 8:30 am on Monday, July 13th, one day prior to the Legion College. Ocean City Golf Club has been the home of the golf event for several years but in 2019 had been moved to nearby Rum Pointe Golf Course due to a scheduling conflict. We are thrilled to be back at OC Golf Club said Patrick Guibao, chair of the annual event. “Rum Pointe was very good for our golfers but there were problems in dealing with a large group for lunch and awards presentations,” he added.

The cost will be the same as last year. Chairman Guibao said details on the luncheon will be announced in the March edition of the Free State Warrior.

The Golf Tournament Committee is actively seeking prizes and hole sponsors now and this would be an ideal time to consider participating.
FREE STATE WARRIOR
Winter 2020

MOUNTAIN DISTRICT
Serving Allegany and Garrett Counties

Greetings from the awesome Mountain District, where we’re small but noteworthy that we’ve been #1 as a district for 14 of the 15 weeks reporting membership results. And kudo’s to Garrett County for the same status as counties go for the same time frame. WE LOVE BEING #1!!! Garrett County Cmdr. Carl Gray and Allegheny County Cmdr. Richard Holder shot out like bullets to their posts for their inspection reports and we had them delivered to Department before the fourth week of September. All is good. Great job, both of you!!! I, also, have visited with all of the Mountain District Posts at least once and am very pleased with the Posts, their membership efforts and their efficiency. We’re promoting the new Legion Act changes to every veteran we meet. 

Personally, since the last issue of the Free State Warrior, in addition to the Post meetings, I’ve participated as a donor in the blood drive at Post 71 where they routinely have 50+ pints donated every month and the Autumn Glory Parade with Garrett County Cmdr. Gray where we took 3rd prize in the Military division in his awesomely Military- branches- decorated bright red car and got lots of great comments throughout the parade route. I attended the Post 13 Crab Feast, the first annual Vet Fest at Garrett College, the Post 71 Pig Roast, was speaker for Veterans Day at Post 189, prepared the Veterans Day event for Post 208 with the help of Linda Garcia (and some muscle from the Post) including our JROTC honor guard, attended the Northern Middle School program for Veterans Day, served breakfast for Veterans at Friendsville Elementary School along with the DAR, attended Veterans Day dinner for Post 214, and met several WWII veterans along the trail. What wonderful stories they had to share! I plan to help some of these 

Continued on page 13

NORTH EASTERN SHORE DISTRICT
Serving Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties

As we move on this year we still have a lot to accomplish. We had a team of members that have gone over and updated our Constitution and Bylaws.

Want to Thank everyone for all they are doing with membership, we fell out of 1st place to 2nd by a small margin but I’m not going to complain yet, let’s keep moving forward with it so we can finish well.

I hope everyone was able to enjoy and participate in the Veterans Day programs that were offered to you, my MCL Detachment was asked to join in with the Elkton VFW for their program which we did. I have to apologize for the ones that I could not get to because of some health issues that I have been dealing with.

I have fielded some calls and visited some Post in and out of Maryland and it was an experience. One call I had was from a Legionnaire in Pa. that told me he had resigned from every position he had at his Post because he was tired of the way things have been going and he is on the verge of giving up his membership because of it. He was an Executive Officer at the Post. It’s not hard to believe because I’ve seen this going on at other Post in and outside of the area. We can’t afford to be losing members but it is happening more and more because we and I mean we allow it by letting it happen and not doing anything to stop it. Look around, is this going on in your Post, do you have anything in place to contend with this problem. We can keep turning from this by saying, it’s just one person then again it only takes one. Everyone and I mean everyone needs to get involved with what is going on at your Post. Do you have disgruntled members and if so how are you dealing with it. If we don’t listen to what they may think is a problem and allow it to continue, the doors may be closing soon. We have to strive to make sure it’s not happening to us as we move forward; we have enough problems keeping members in now. Remember, without members we have NO Post. Step up, help out, get involved....

Last I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Joyous Merry Christmas and New Year’s. Have fun but remember be safe.

God Bless

Emidio “Buzz” Taylor
North Eastern Shore District Commander

SOUTHERN MARYLAND DISTRICT
Serving Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s, Montgomery and St. Mary’s Counties

It is truly a great day to be an American Legionnaire! As we begin to move deeper into the holiday season, let us remember those that have worn the uniform and their families. Many have said “we are living in the best of times” and perhaps that is true for many people. However, this is also a season in which sadness and depression can have an impact on others, including members of our military and their families. During the next 90 days, we will measure our success on the number of Veteran’s family we’ve assisted, the number of children we’ve uplifted, and the number of new members that have joined our American Legion. We give thanks to all Legionnaires that continue to help us accomplish the mission of the American Legion. From our Auxiliary Units to the Sons of the American Legion, we are in the business of taking care of our Veterans. This is the best time of the year to reach out to all Veterans and make sure they are aware of our American Legion. Our number one consideration is the health and welfare of the Veteran. We will stand up and fight for their

Continued on page 13

BALTIMORE DISTRICT
Serving Baltimore City

Greetings to the Baltimore District and the American Legion family. Over the last quarter, the district conducted its annual Four Frenchman Service and participated in the Baltimore Veterans Day Program which is led by the Veterans Commissioner Tiger Davis who is also a legionnaire of Otha Springs Post 294. At the Four Frenchman Service, we were honored to have 3 French sailors from the Naval Academy. One of the highlights at the Veterans Day program was when Senator Chris Van Hollen spoke about an African American WWII hero Waverly Woodson. He said, “Woodson was a hero who saved dozens, if not hundreds, of troops on Omaha Beach.” Woodson family and Senator Van Hollen are pushing the Army to award him the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Their efforts kicked off a few years ago, when journalist Linda Hervieux, author of ‘Forgotten: The Untold Story of D-Day’s Black Heroes, At Home and At War, uncovered a document showing that Woodson’s commanding officer had recommended him for the Distinguished Service Cross—the second-highest military award—but that the office of Gen. John C. H. Lee believed he had earned an even more distinguished award: the Medal of Honor.

Van Hollen wrote in a February 2018 letter to the secretary of the Army. “The only thing that stood between him and proper recognition at the time was the color of his skin.” “This case”, he added, “is an opportunity for the Army to right a historic wrong.” The Army, in response to Van Hollen, acknowledged Woodson’s story as “compelling,” but said it could not move forward without “corroborating primary source material.” Unfortunately, nearly all of Woodson’s military records—and those of millions of other veterans—were destroyed in a 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, making that documentation all but impossible to obtain.

Van Hollen has asked the Army to waive its normal rules in Woodson’s case and, as a start, to upgrade his Bronze Star to a Silver Star. In a statement, he says he plans on partnering with the Congressional Black Caucus to bring attention to this issue. I will hope that the American Legion and other veteran’s organization will also partner in this effort.

Happy holidays to all, I wish everyone safe travels during your Christmas and New Year. Please keep our less fortunate in mind during this time of year. We have some Post having dinners for legion members and seniors during the holidays and will also give out food baskets to those in need. Please get in touch with your post for more information or if you know anyone in need.

District upcoming events:
District Oratorical Contest, 30 January 2020
War Memorial Building
Four Chaplains service, 3 February 2020
St. Alphonsus Church
District Reception, 15 March 2020
Northeastern Post 285. “Lean forward in the Foxhole and expect the unexpected”

Your commander,

Austin L. Ball Sr.
Baltimore District Commander
**NORTHERN CENTRAL DISTRICT**

* Serving Baltimore, Harford and Howard Counties*

With the Holidays fast approaching, I want to wish each and every Post within the State of Maryland a very safe and Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas. These are special days as Legionnaires. There’s many ways we can go above and beyond for the many needy families within all our Communities. We also can reach out to our Hospitalized Veterans, so they may see they are never forgotten. As we give Thanks for the Birth of our Lord, let’s not forget those Brave Men and Women who protect us daily. Remember and pray for their families, many celebrating without them for the first time, which serve abroad and are missed so dearly by their loved one. I have asked our Post in the Northern Central District to let families know a great gift for our veterans and active service members would be a 1 year membership at their local Post. We ask everyone to please keep them in our prayers.

I have been very busy attending Post Meetings, Baltimore County Meetings, NCD District meetings and D.E.C Meetings.

As Northern Central District Commander I was asked to Represent Two Gold Star Mother Events, (Hot Rods for Hero’s in Maple Grove Pa. and Quarter Auction at Essex Post 148). What an honor it was to represent the Ladies and families of those we lost. Being a Gold Star Brother, I could see and feel the appreciation of love given to the Gold Star Families. Truly it shows that many understand the loss we suffer daily, missing our loved ones.

For Veterans Day, I participated in three ceremonies. As the Northern Central District Commander (N.C.D.) I participated with the Howard County Veterans in the Veterans Day Parade. I also participated at Dundalk Veterans Park ceremony and also at Dundalk Post 38 Veterans Day ceremony.

In closing, the Northern Central District prays every one cherish each day we are given by our Heavenly Father and support our Loved Ones.

As Legionnaires, we ask all to reach out to our Young ones and help them learn they live in the greatest country in the world.

For God and Country

Mark Phoebus,  
Northern Central District Commander

**SOUTH EASTERN SHORE DISTRICT**

* Serving Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties*

First I would like to make a correction and apology to Wicomico Post 64 for misidentifying them in my first article. Wicomico Post 64 celebrated their 100th Anniversary on September 21, 2019 and their baseball team, the Blue Sox’s came in second place in the District baseball league. All the County Commander’s reports are completed with a few follow-ups required. Thank you to all the County Commanders and Dept. 3rd Vice Commander Higgins for her assistance while visiting several Posts within the District.

The season of Thanksgiving, goodwill, and love to our fellow man and woman is upon us. During the past few months the SESD Legionnaires have hosted many events to aide our veterans from every walk of life. Wicomico Post 64 hosted a Veteran Stand Down and provided services from 18 vendors, from A – Z to over 120 veterans. Post 64 recognized season Legionnaires, Past SESD Chaplain Franklin Russell—28 years and Clarence Myers—60 years, for their combined total of almost 90 years of membership. They also handed out flags to 165 Second graders and a talk about the pledge of allegiance and Veterans. Pocomoke Post 93 hosted a Toys for Tots program and raised more than 1300 dollars and collected blankets to be donated to a local shelter, and after more than six years, Post 87 once again sponsored a Veterans Day Program and dinner for veterans and a guest in Dorchester County. They also donated 25 bags of toiletries made up of shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant, and more to a local shelter. Many programs from Worcester County to Dorchester County were held in honor of Veterans Day. Wicomico Post 64 put out more than 800 flags on the local cemetery and I attended several ceremonies to include the Eastern Shore of Maryland Veteran Cemetery program Hurlock Post 243 Veterans Day Program. Together we shared in the memories of our love ones who served and those that are serving, and never once could we forget those that made the supreme sacrifice. On November 17, 2019 a Comfort Care packing party will take place and I hope as many local Legion members can make it out to help make the holiday brighter for our deployed men and women.

We have said, goodbye to the SESD 1st Vice Commander Michael Powell and Wicomico County Commander Clarence “Eddie” Myers, who resigned from many positions within the District and State for medical reason. Thank you to Anthony Sullivan for stepping up and taking on the position of 1st Vice Commander while maintaining the position of Worcester County Commander—you are doing a great job and I am thankful. We would also like to thank Wicomico County Commander Eddie Myers for his many years of service as a dual member and support to the District, State, and heading up our baseball commission.

All are welcome to join the SESD on December 8, 2019 at Hurlock Post 243 for our annual Christmas celebration. A social hour will begin at 2:30 pm followed by dinner, fun, and entertainment. The cost is $10.00 per person to attend. Please contact Faye Farley (in the book) if you are ready for a great meal and fun. I would like to take this time to wish everyone a wonderful and safe holiday season. Please remember the reason for the season and to care for your fellow person and their families.

Thank you to the men and women of the South Eastern Shore District that make me look good by doing what you do in helping our veterans and community, but most of all thank you for your service to others when you do not have to do it. This is an all-volunteer organization and we give plenty in time, money, and of ourselves for veterans near and far. Please keep our number one hardest working Legionnaire William “Sarge” Garlitz in your prayers—he is a little under the weather and truly missed.

Finally, membership seems to be really a struggle for some, but remember when making those “Buddy Calls and Checkup,” inquire if there something you can do for a fellow Legionnaire that might be on a fixed income or fallen on hard times. Nothing says more than giving of yourself, time and money. Make a past Legion member’s holiday by calling on them and paying for their dues and keeping them up until they are able—imagine the joy they will feel to know someone is still thinking of them and truly thanking them for their service.

Happy Holidays & May you all receive blessing upon blessing today and forever,

Sharon Egerson  
SESD Commander

**WESTERN MARYLAND DISTRICT**

* Serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties*

I was privileged to be invited by the American Legion Auxiliary to attend a Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Stand-down at the VA Medical Center at Martinsburg WV this month. The VAMC had brought in about 50 veterans from local homeless shelters, who were housed at the VAMC for a couple of days and received various benefits including flu shots and other essential needs. The American Legion along with Officials from the, State of Maryland and West Virginia and Veterans Service Organization provided a verity of services to the veterans. The Auxiliary had obtained hand knitted hats, mittens and scarves and distributed them to the veterans who were appreciative for these items. Many of these veterans just wanted someone to talk to about normal daily events. Attending such an event made you appreciate the things you take for granted every day. Some of these veterans may have stood the watch with you many years ago. Anyone of us could have ended up in their place in life if things had been different.

We are quickly coming upon the season of giving. We need to take this time to examine what we do as Legionnaires and as a Legion Post to make life better for others. We often focus on this during Thanksgiving and Christmas season but should focus on giving to others year around.

Are we helping our fellow veterans? Are we improving our community? Recently, I saw an advertisement for Team Rubicon, a veteran group whose purpose is to bring improvement to others throughout the world. If you look online there are several groups reaching out to veterans, including 1st Platoon whose motto is “The Mission Continues”. This group states, “that they empower veterans to continue their service”. These groups are filled with younger veterans who feel the need to provide services to the local communities.

I think we all need to look within our own community and really examine ourselves myself. I believe if we do this, membership would take care of itself. We have younger veterans out there wanting to join an organization that makes changes in their community. Let us encourage them to join us in this important mission of helping others.

Matt Staden  
Western Maryland District Commander

**DISTRICT DATA**
For those traveling long distances and wish to stay for the weekend, the following 3 hotels have blocks of rooms set aside just for us. When calling in your reservation be sure to use the code Nat Legion to receive your discounted room price. Hotel Reservations must be made by March 22, 2020

Accommodation’s

Best Western: 301-695-6200 ext. 781 $75 plus tax (approx. 4 miles from FSK Post 11)

Sleep Inn: 301-668-2003 $70 plus tax (approx. 6.5 miles from FSK post 11)

Hampton Inn and Suites 301-695-1565 $119 plus tax (next door to FSK post 11)

OPEN BAR - 5:30 PM. till 6:30 PM
CASH BAR STARTS AT 6:30 PM
(Bar closed during program)

SOCIAL HOUR
5:30 PM till 6:30 PM

DINNER
6:30 PM till 8:00 PM

PROGRAM
8:00 PM

National Commander
James W. “Bill” Oxford

MENU

Beef, Turkey, gravy, twice baked potatoes, oven roasted potatoes, steamed broccoli and cauliflower mix, baked buttered sweet corn, salad and decadent desserts and coffee bar.

Scouting in Maryland

The American Legion’s support of Scouting in Maryland was recognized at the Department Executive Committee meeting at Gold Star Post # 191 on Sunday 17 November 2019. Manny Fonseca, the Chief Operating Officer of the Baltimore Area Council presented Commander Phil Dorsey with a plaque thanking the Legion for the donation of $2,500.00 for a contingent of scouts and leaders to attend the Normandy D-Day Commemorative Jamboree. The unit that was formed was numbered for the 29th Division that participated in the invasion on June 6th 1944. The plaque is to be displayed in Department Headquarters.

The National organization of the Boy Scouts has raised the fees to belong to Scouting. The Packs, Troops and Crews sponsored by our Legion Posts have had their budgets set for the year before September and with the additional cost of re-chartering those budgets have been broken. It would be in the best interest of our Posts to reach out to the units with aid. Fund raising is a necessary evil when you are providing programs as worthy as Scouting is for our youth.

If your Post sponsors one of these units, the Chartered Organization Representative should have a handle on its budget and the needs of the unit for re-chartering. Help them to keep our Scouting program strong for the youth.

We are entering the season for the judging of our Eagle Scout of the Year. The applications must be to Department Headquarters before March 1, 2020, with the letters of recommendation, a narrative of the applicant’s scouting record and Eagle project, a brief description of what they plan to do with their life and what they have done to make the community a better place. All this for the winning Eagle Scout to receive $500.00 from the Department of Maryland at the Convention in Ocean City and be sent to National where the packet is judged again against all the other state winners. The winner receive a scholarship for $10,000.00 with three runner-ups receiving $2,500.00 each.

When a Scout attains the Eagle rank many doors open for them. The military academies give extra points on selection, as do some colleges. The leadership principles learned in Scouting are as important as the lesson they learn in the schools and some say are more relevant in their daily life.

John McLaughlin
Department Scouting Chairman
Music is my passion; it’s my escape. It’s how I work through things. It’s my therapy; it’s my constitution.” Army veteran, Melvin LeRoy, made this statement in answer to a question about the importance of arts in his life. Melvin won a national medal for his solo vocal performance in the spiritual music division. In the 20 year history of the Auxiliary’s involvement with the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival we have heard sentiments like this over and over again. More importantly, we also hear sentiments like those expressed by artist Brian Small who said, “Creating keeps my mind preoccupied and relieves stress. It makes me feel accomplished and happy to see others enjoy my art as well.” A Marine Corps veteran, Brian’s winning monochromatic drawing indicates that he uses his art to help him heal by bringing the darker periods of his life out into the light.

The opportunity to share their artistry is vital to these veterans’ feelings of accomplishment and self-worth and is the motivation that led us to begin the Maryland Veterans Creative Arts Festival – 10 YEARS AGO! The festival features an exhibition of the work of local medal winners in many fields of the visual arts, an opportunity to meet medal-winning writers and get an autograph or so, topped off with an inspiring stage show. All the veterans in the festival have used the arts to help them heal from mental and physical wounds through the Recreation Therapy Departments in our area VA Medical Centers.

Of course we need financial support of many kinds and information on how to help with that effort is available on the Auxiliary web site at alamd.org or by contacting me. NEW this year: sponsors will not only be featured in our program book but will also be featured on a poster in the lobby of the theater. We’d love to have many names featured!

Most importantly – we need your physical presence along with your family and friends. Free tickets are available for SAL and ALA members under the age of 18, JROTC/ROTC if they wear their uniforms and active duty military Including National Guard members. Remember, the most precious gift we can give our recovering veterans is the gift of our time and encouragement. We would like to see many young people in our audience so they can see that veterans have many dimensions and are continuing to give back to our community long after their military service ends. See you in Bowie on March 22, 2020!

Rusty Beeg, Chairman:
rbeeg5908@gmail.com Phone/text: 301-602-7214
The Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run Turns Five

As the saying goes “Time Flies”. Next June 12-14, 2020 will be the 5th Annual Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run. It seems like just yesterday that about 25 Riders left Towsontown Post 22 on the first Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run. That year we raised $13,500.00. Last year on the 4th Gold Star Legacy Run we raised $55,000.00 for the Legacy Scholarship Run. Through the first four years of this event we have raised $138,500.00 for this cause in the name of the Department of Maryland American Legion.

We have set a goal of $65,000.00 for this year’s MD Gold Star Legacy Run, which will put us over $200,000.00 in scholarship money for the children of our Fallen Soldiers and the children of our Disabled Veterans since 9/11. However, this will only happen with your support.

So, you are now asking…how can I be a part of this noble cause? The answer is simple. Please get with your Post membership and vote to make a pledge to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Last year donations ranged anywhere from $50.00 to $3,500.00. You could also be a sponsor of the Run for $100.00 and get your name on the back of this year’s t-shirt. Finally, please let the Riders in your Post know we will be holding the Run on the weekend of June 12-14, 2020 and encourage them to participate. We will be mailing out to your Post a package with all the details of the 5th Annual MD Gold Star Legacy Run by the end of January 2020. Feel free to reach out to me with questions.

This year, we will be giving out a special trophy for the Legion Family that raises the most money. Last year Harry White-Wilmer raised over $7,000.00 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. They have stated that they want to be the first Legion Family to win this award. Remember, to be eligible for this award, the money must be presented to us on the Gold Star Legacy Run or mailed into us by June 30, 2020. We will present this trophy at the Department Convention next July in Ocean City. I can picture it now, standing on the stage in Ocean City next July presenting that trophy and announcing that we hit our goal of $65,000.00. What a day that will be! But that will not happen without you!

United In Service

Joe Gladden
Co-Chairman Maryland Gold Star
Legacy Run
American Legion Riders
Past SAL National Commander
Joeglad123@aol.com

Mountain District
Continued from page 8

gentlemen participate in the parade in Frostburg December 7 as they are honoring our WWII veterans in particular. Posts are preparing to participate in Wreaths Across America December 14th. I’ll report the results of both events in the next issue. I’ve been part of the committee to help with Post 155 receivership. The property is now listed with a realtor and we’re waiting to see if offers of purchase for the building come through. The Post continues to hold their monthly meeting at the Library.

The Mountain District sponsored a very successful picnic and bingo event at the Martinsburg VAMC 10/19/19 where it was my pleasure to dodge raindrops to greet the Veterans at the VAMC that day. We will see them again in April, along with the Auxiliary, and do it all again.

We are continuing to encourage support of the Boys State, Baseball, Oratorical Contest, and Special Olympics ‘Dunks in the West’ events that are planned. I will attend the 11/17/19 DEC meeting in Mt. Airy followed by the Mountain District meeting 11/24/19 at Post 214, and the December 6 event at Greenbelt Post. The Mountain District has plans to do a calendar raffle for the month of February 2020.

We are saddened in the MTD for the passing to Post Everlasting of Randall Kahl of Post 71. He will be missed.

See you in the mountains, at the Department Christmas Party, and along the trail!!

Veterans Helping Veterans,

Charee Reckner
Mountain District Commander

Southern Maryland District
Continued from page 8

benefits and quality of life. I have advised all district leaders to get to know their comrades, first. We must have a relationship with our members, understand their priorities, and continue to be there when times get tough.

We are instituting the “Buddy” approach to our membership plans, which means this is a chance for you to engage in the plan to take care of a Veteran. A simple phone call, an email, or perhaps a short visit can make a major difference in the life of a Veteran. We have not forgotten your service, nor will we. Every American that has donned the uniform has put their life on the line, and for that we honor you! In the meantime, let us remember to train our younger members and make sure they have the tools to keep a steady strain on the mission and vision of our organization. I am convinced that our honor, courage, and commitment will last for 100 more years with their involvement. Our district has the talent and the willingness to do the work and make a difference in our organization.

The great Southern Maryland District is certainly committed to being out front of the effort to take care of the Veteran.

As you read this article, we are already making strides to get in alignment with our Department Commander’s vision, by being more visible in the community, participating in community events for all citizens, and ensuring your service to our country has not gone unnoticed. Most of our Post meet monthly to make sure we are on path to success. From the beginning, I have informed my administration to be more aggressive in our duties, communicate more efficiently, and to remember the reason we exist.

Today, we ask you to “get into the fight” and make sure your voice is heard in the room, come to a meeting. The voice of the American Legion cannot be silenced, there is too much at stake. We will fight for our Veterans in every conversation and in each corner of the world. We are the Department of Maryland, and every day is Veterans Day. Join us!

Haywood Moss
District Commander,
Southern Maryland District

Legion College:

ATTENTION DISTRICT COMMANDERS: HAVE YOU SCHEDULED YOUR DISTRICT FOR LEGION COLLEGE EVENTS? Let’s get this done! Sincerely your Legion College Team!

Nikki Randolph, Chariperson, Legion College Committee
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

We are now four (4) months into our centennial year, and what a challenge!

Many visits to the Department Office; 100th Anniversary celebrations; a Bartenders Bash – J.R. and Detachment Commander Bob – pretty good bartenders I must say; assisting Units and Districts; Washington DC VA Medical Center picnic, and planning for Department Christmas Party.

Our Chairmen’s meeting was very informative as the Chairmen shared plans for the year to the District Reps and Units.

The Charlotte Hall Carnival, as always, was awesome with themes from the “stone age to The Wizard of Oz to the Roaring 20’s” The Veterans had fun playing games and receiving snacks and prizes from the Units. It is always a pleasure to see the smiles on a Veterans face.

Several American Legion Auxiliary members attend the Baltimore VA Cemetery for the Veterans’ Burial for Captain Phillip Brown, US Army. It was wonderful seeing so many from the Legion Family paying respects to a decorated Veteran.

The Junior Fall Conference was held at American Legion Post #11 in Frederick. There was a K-9 presentation which was awesome and conference was fun. Those Juniors truly are our future leaders. The Senior Fall Conference was another memorable experience. We were honored to have National Eastern Division Vice President, Carolyn Baranowski present – she even dressed up at the costume banquet. It was also an honor to have Department 1st Vice Commander and Detachment Commander attend. The conference was a learning weekend with a lot of fun and raffles.

Mission Training was held in Baltimore and our Department was well represented, including the Honorary Junior President. An experience of learning and sharing by all.

Don’t forget my project this year -- The Johns Hopkins University Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Clinic. Please send your usual generosity by sending donations to our Department Office, check payable to “ALA Department of Maryland, earmarked President’s Project.

The American Legion Auxiliary members are spreading Holiday/Christmas Cheer throughout the Department of Maryland spiriting Teamwork in Service-Not Self and truly make me a proud President. 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!

For God & Country,

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

S.A.L. Commander

Season’s Greetings,

We are entering the holiday season, a time when family and friends gather to celebrate and reflect. As you prepare for this joyous time, take a moment and remember those less fortunate.

Reach out to a homeless shelter or food bank and see what you can do to help. Consider organizing Christmas food and gift baskets with local schools to help a needy family or simply donate some extra cash to a worthy cause.

Since the last issue I have been from the shore to the mountains visiting and participating in events. September saw events at Laurel Post 60 for McVet, our DEC in Woodsboro and finished with our Annual Family Campout at the Southern Maryland Youth Camp. Several of us travelled to Cumberland to attend the Squadron 13 Picnic, thanks to all for your hospitality. October saw us travelling to Indianapolis for the Fall NEC where I completed the Detachment Commanders Training Course. I had the honor of attending the Auxiliary Fall Conference in Ocean City where the Detachment present a donation to President Linda’s Project for ALS.

While there several of us also visited Squadron 16 in Crisfield and enjoyed discussing what is happening in the Detachment and what they are doing for the community. I also had the honor of attending the Francis Scott Key Post 11 dinner for Lebanon/Grenada and Panama veterans, of which I am one. A fine dinner and presentation of various certificates followed, a great event. I also attended Post 11 Veterans Day Ceremony, and Mason Dixon Post 194 Veterans Dinner, Post 194 does an outstanding job with this event and it was an honor to represent the Detachment.

“Generations of Service to Our Veterans”, that is more than a theme, that is a driving force for the Sons of Maryland. So far, my project is starting strong. My primary fundraising is for the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. We are raising money for the purchase and installation of a retractable awning for the Memory Care Wing. Additionally, they have other needs that we plan on supporting with the monies raised. I also am raising funds for a new program to all of us, The Catch A Lift Fund. This is a program that provides grants to wounded and disabled veterans so that they can get gym memberships, home gym equipment or specialized training.

This helps these veterans to rebuild themselves both physically and mentally through exercise. And finally, we want to donate to the American Legion Veterans and Children’s Foundation. This foundation has a two-part mission, first they provide training for Service Officers a key link between veterans and the VA. They also provide grants to veterans with children in need. I feel that these are all worthwhile programs to support, and I hope you will too. I have set a fundraising goal of $70,000 in order to meet these program’s needs. As part of our fundraising efforts, we will be holding a Commanders Project 50/50 Raffle, to be drawn at our June Convention, as well as the Annual Detachment Commanders Drawdown on February 29 at Post 135 in Perryville. Tickets will be available soon, if you are interested, don’t wait until the last minute as these tickets sell quickly.

Please remember to support the American Legion Family Plunge Team for the Annual Polar Bear Plunge on January 24th. This year I put out a challenge, if $ 1,000 is donated under my name, I will take a literal plunge… so if you want me submerged, donate!

This year’s remaining DEC meetings are as follows:

November 16, 1 PM DEC
Post 29 in Denton
January 25 Mid-Winter Training
Grand Hotel Ocean City
January 26, 12 PM DEC
Post 166 in Ocean City
April 5, 1 PM DEC
Post 66 in Bowie

I hope to see you there.

On behalf of the Officers and members of the Detachment of Maryland, I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and best of luck in the new year ahead.

Bob Manzo
Detachment Commander

“Department President, Linda L. Green; National President, Nicole Clapp; Past National President, Linda Newsome, celebrating ‘A Century of Service’ in the Brunswick, MD Parade and Program at Steadman-Keenan Post 96 in the Western Maryland District.”
From Chaplains Desk

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it’s just too bad because there is no one to help him; two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

Fellow Comrades, As we are getting closer to celebrating the holiday season and are nearing the end of the year, my prayer is that God would remind us that because we have food, remember the hungry; because we have jobs, help us to remember the jobless; because we have a home, help us to remember those who are homeless; help us to remember those who are suffering, give us all more compassion, and more concern to help whomever we are able to, by word and deed. The Chaplain’s fall training was held on October 5th at Guy C. Parlett Post 7 in Annapolis. Although the attendance was lower than expected we had a great time learning, listening and sharing. I would like to remind all Posts that the Chaplain’s training is not just for the Post Chaplains, but SAL and Auxiliary Chaplains are welcome to attend. I was incredibly grateful to Post 7 for having their Legion, Auxiliary and Sal chaplains attend the training. Kudos to Commander Jason O’Neil. The Bernard L. Tobin Post 128 has graciously offered to host our next Chaplains training on March 7th from 10am-12pm. Please call no later than March 1st to register. Give your name, number and your post number to Post 128 Chaplain Lewis Geigan at (443) 829-6972 or Sonny Barnhouse at (410) 459-0485 and let them know you will be attending. You do not want to miss it. I believe attending this training will only encourage us all to be a more cohesive team and better equipped to provide the best service we can to meet the needs of our Veterans, our community, our friends and our families.

In closing let us be reminded why we do what we do here at The American Legion. It is because of our love for God and for our country, our comrades, friends, neighbors and families. I would like to share a thought for us to ponder on: Love isn’t perfect. It isn’t a fairytale or a storybook and it doesn’t always come easy. Love is overcoming obstacles, facing challenges, fighting to be together, holding on and never letting go. It is a short word, easy to spell, difficult to define, and impossible to live without. Love is work, but most of all, Love is realizing that every hour, every minute, every second of it was worth it because you did it together, and for someone else. We have had a very blessed year, new opportunities, and new challenges. May we never forget “The Reason for the Season!” Happy Holidays to you all.

“All alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller

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

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

B on Jour, Partners, The blessed holiday season is upon us. There are many children suffering from lung and respiratory diseases who will be in and out of hospitals and clinics over the next few months when the weather is bad and breathing is difficult. It is not only in spring, when allergies kick in, that life becomes difficult for our special children. If at all possible, let us do what we can to cheer up these young folk.

Our Departemental Chapeau, Doreen Smith, has called our next Departemental Pouvoir (meeting) for January 11 at the Bistro Restaurant in Beltsville at 11:00 am. It will be a combined meeting and holiday party. Come join us and have a good time in a great restaurant that is owned and operated by veterans. Marines, no less. Our Departemental Secretaire/Cassiere, Marian James, likes that. She proudly served in the Marines.

We are actively seeking new Partners to join us in Departmental de Maryland Salon # 39. Dues are a mere $25 a year and we do so much good for the Eight & Forty in supporting our special children.

Our National Chapeau, Diane Spencer, from Kentucky is very optimistic for her year of service. She is already making plans for Chapeau Days in Denver in the Spring. Perhaps we can have representation from Maryland again this year.

Enjoy the Holiday Season and may your new year dawn bright and bring peace and prosperity to all.

Ivy Christoffers, CNP CDP
La Avocate, Departmental
ivywc1935@gmail.com

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.

Thank you!
Greetings Legionnaires,

It’s hard to believe that 2019 is almost gone and the holiday season is knocking at our doors. Doug and I wish you and your loved ones a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Our office has been taking in more and more Veterans and eligible dependents seeking benefits. With this increase comes more hard work. From July 22, 2019 to November 15, 2019 our office has been directly responsible for over $2.3 million in disability compensation, pension, survivor benefits and education benefits. This wouldn’t be possible without the outstanding support of the VBA staff at the Baltimore Regional Office and many others located across the country. We continue to serve our Veterans and their families; for us there’s no greater mission.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION BLUE WATER NAVY (UPDATED OCTOBER 2019): The new law (Public Law 116-231, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019) extends presumption of herbicide exposure to service within the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam and provides a potential earlier effective date for conditions that were previously denied service connection.

Blue Water Navy Veterans that were previously denied service-connected benefits for an herbicide-related disability, may now be eligible. These Veterans may also be eligible for a potential retroactive effective date if VA grants service-connected benefits under the new law for an herbicide-related disability previously claimed on or after September 25, 1985, and before January 1, 2020, that was subsequently denied.

Survivor claimants that were previously denied Dependency and Indemnity (DIC) benefits that were related to the Veteran’s exposure to herbicides may now be eligible. These claimants may also be eligible for a potential retroactive effective date. The Veterans Administration is currently processing claims and will decide these claims based on the date of the new law. This means eligible Veterans will be awarded benefits as early as January 1, 2020. For more information visit https://www.va.gov/Blue_Water_Navy_FAQs.pdf

ACCESS TO COMMISSARY, MILITARY EXCHANGE AND MORALE, WELFARE, AND RECREATION (MWR) RETAIL SERVICES: According to the Department of Defense, starting Jan. 1, 2020, all service-connected Veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war (POW), and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) can use commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online. For more information visit http://www.militaryonesource.mil/expanding-access

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE: During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest medical facility. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency department. During a medical emergency, VA encourages all Veterans to seek immediate medical attention without delay. A claim for emergency care will never be denied based solely on VA not receiving notification prior to seeking care.

It is, however, important to promptly notify VA after receiving emergency care at a community emergency department. Notification should be made within 72 hours of admission to a community medical facility. This allows VA to assist the Veteran in coordinating necessary care or transfer and helps to ensure that the administrative and clinical requirements for VA to pay for the care are met.

Service-Connected Emergency Care - In accordance with the following situations and requirements, VA can pay emergency care costs for:
1. A Veteran who receives emergency treatment of a service-connected, or adjunct condition* in a community emergency department; OR
2. A Veteran who is Permanently and Totally disabled (P&T) as the result of a service-connected condition is eligible for emergency treatment of ANY condition; OR
3. A Veteran who is participating in a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and who requires emergency treatment to expedite their return to the program, is eligible for emergency treatment for any condition; AND (scenarios 1-3 must all meet #4)
4. The emergency was of such a nature that the Veteran (or other prudent layperson without medical training) would reasonably believe that any delay in seeking immediate medical attention would cause their life or health to be placed in jeopardy; AND
5. A VA medical facility or another Federal facility was not reasonably available to provide the care; AND
6. The Veteran is enrolled and has received care within a VA facility during the 24 months before the emergency care; AND
7. The Veteran is financially liable to the provider of emergency treatment.

There are limitations on VA’s ability to provide coverage when a Veteran has other health insurance (OHI). If OHI does not fully cover the costs of treatment, VA can pay certain costs for which the Veteran is personally liable. By law, VA cannot pay copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or similar payments a Veteran may owe to the provider as required by their OHI.

VA is also legally prohibited from providing coverage for individuals covered under a health plan contract because of a failure by the Veteran or the provider to comply with the provisions of that health plan contract, e.g., failure to submit a bill or medical records within specified time limits, or failure to exhaust appeals of the denial of payment.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced actions to strengthen the Caregiver Support Program and establish a timeline for expanding the Program of Compensative Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) in accordance with section 161 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (MISSION Act).

Under the MISSION Act, VA will expand the PCAFC to eligible Veterans from ALL ERAS using a phased approach. Currently, the program is only available to eligible Veterans seriously injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. Prior to expanding, VA must upgrade its information technology (IT) system and implement other improvements to strengthen the program. The expansion will occur in two phases, beginning in the summer of 2020 or once the Secretary has certified that the new IT system is fully implemented. In the first phase, PCAFC will be expanded to eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. The final phase of the expansion will begin two years later. It will expand PCAFC to eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty after May 7, 1975 through September 10, 2001. For more information visit https://www.caregiver.va.gov/

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

The War Memorial
101 N. Gay Street, Rm. E
Baltimore, MD 21202

Thank you.

Adrian G. Gamboa
Department Service Officer

Adrian G. Gamboa