This year’s Convention was a Tribute to the Future of The American Legion

Every year we as an organization, come together to celebrate the accomplishments of the preceding year, honor our traditions, and pave the way forward for the coming years. This year’s Convention was a tribute to the future of The American Legion.

Early Monday morning the Annual Wm. C. Kesting Memorial Golf Tournament teed off, and a great time was had by all per Chairman Patrick Guibao. The Golf Tournament benefits the youth camps of Southern MD and Western MD Districts. Even in recreational events, the Legion is working for the benefit of others. Another highlight of this day of gathering and welcome is the Southern Maryland District Annual Fish Fry at the North end of the Convention Center. This event serves as a pre-convention social gathering that supplies fun, music, and food for the whole family. Southern Maryland District is to be commended for the superb atmosphere at this event. Special thanks to Spam Time (Vince Turner and Son) for their entertainment at the Fish Fry and the Opening Ceremony, to the SAL Detachment for candy bar bingo, and every one that contributed to making the event a wonderful start to the week.

Tuesday morning registration rooms for the conventions opened and the delegates started filing into the Convention Center to register, receive their badges, and program books. Legion College then kicked off at 8am in the main hall before we broke for other classes. Most every day, the main portions of the Convention end by noon so members and their families can enjoy the time in O.C. A couple classes were held after lunch, a Chaplains class, a class on media and a class on on-line membership registration in mylegion.org. The Joint Opening reception and Ceremony was held in the beautiful Bayfront Ballroom on Tuesday evening. The reception includes complimentary food and beverages, and the turn out for this social event has been increasing in recent years. The atmosphere is relaxed and the whole family can enjoy the gathering and hear from the leaders of our great organization. Department Adjutant Russell Myers filled in for Convention Corporation President Charles “Chuck” Gannon and Auxiliary Chairperson Sandra “Sandy” Seipp introduced the Guests for this Joint Opening Ceremony. Commander David Johnson and President Linda Sarkisian welcomed the Legion Family to the 101st Department of Maryland Convention and wished all a great week. Leading Candidate for National Commander Bill Oxford from North Carolina was the key note speaker at the evening Ceremony.

Wednesday morning Mayor Ric Meehan of Ocean City, Maryland presented the Key to the City to Commander Johnson, and welcomed all the Legionnaires and their families to the city, wishing them a fabulous time while in O.C. Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, George W. Owings III, presented a Governor’s Citation to Commander Johnson.

During our business session on Wednesday, the awards were given out to all the Members, Posts, and Districts that excelled in membership and Legion Programs.

Post Everlasting was held that evening and to all that took part in the ceremony, Thank You. The occasion is always a touching ceremony as we remember our members, family and friends who are no longer with us.

First up on Thursday was honoring our Youth Champions. Continuing the theme that ended our day on Wednesday, these youth provide examples of why The American Legion Youth Programs are second to none in their diversity and impact. The delegates heard remarks from the Boys State Governor Alexander M. Rawlett and Jr Shooting Sport Chairman Charles Thomas reported on the State Match results and presented a $1000 award to the winner. All veterans can be proud of these young men and women, and the efforts of The American Legion.

Commander’s Message

Philip R. Dorsey Commander, Department of Maryland

Thanks to the members of the Great Department of Maryland for bestowing the honor of serving as your Department Commander for the 2019-20 Legion year. I will serve the Department to the best of my ability to maintain the respect and tradition of this office. While serving as your Department 1st Vice, my primary job was membership. My biggest concern is our membership and leadership within our Department. Our membership is dying and has been since 2003. Our membership in 2002 was at an all-time high of 80,173. We closed this year at 46,165 members. Some of this is due to deceased members. However, letting our members slip out the backdoor and our inability to recruit new younger veterans is a great concern.

We have many Posts in dire need of younger veterans and as we move into the next century, we must continue as a Patriotic Veterans Organization, focusing on serving our veterans, service members, and community. The younger veterans are our leaders of tomorrow and it is imperative that our organization change with the times so that the younger men and women feel welcome and appreciated when joining. Only then will they get involved.

Within the next few years, with all of the new advanced technology and computer skills required in running our day-to-day Post operations, without the knowledge and skills our younger veterans could provide, many of our Posts could cease to exist. We must connect and engage with our new veterans and their families to provide training in educating them.

Convention Greetings

It’s been a memorable year. The 100th for our organization. Our forefathers could never have foreseen the impact that we have had on our beloved country. From the original G.I. Bill to the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, we get the job done for our veterans and our communities.

Being a National Vice Commander gave me the opportunity to visit 13 departments in the Southeast Region. It gave me the insight as to how each department conducts business in different ways. But ultimately they are working toward the same goals, promoting patriotism, taking care of our youth, overseeing national security, and caring for our veterans.

The camaraderie and dedication I found throughout our region has shown me that we are at the threshold of a new beginning. A new beginning for The American Legion. Now it’s up to us to make it happen.

I thank you for allowing me to serve you as a National Vice Commander. Through the years, you, the members of this great department, have been very good friends and supporters. It is hard to express how much I appreciate it.

Wishing you all well as you continue to serve your god and our country.

John F. (Jack) Milburn
National Vice Commander
Southeast Region 2018 - 2019
Reflections of an Adjutant
By Russell W. Myers, Jr.

Summer is ending and the new Legion year is underway. I hope everyone had a great summer season and enjoyed time with family and friends. Thanks for the great attendance of The Legion Family for our 101st Department Convention in July. It was remarkable the number of new faces we are seeing at these events.

The Department Commander has mentioned the LEGION Act passage in his comments, and the opening of eligibility to those that served during previously unrecognized periods of conflict is a welcomed development, and some may say long overdue. I have found in my time as a Veteran that we as a group like to compare our service, and in many respects to belittle those that did not “serve as rough as I did”. This attitude is evident in many things we do, from the parable of walking both ways to school barefoot and uphill, to I served in the Big War, and you didn’t, so you can’t carry my lunch. This attitude is great for banter, and friendly kidding between the services, but it is in many ways indicative of a failed culture within our organization. I wrote last year in the September article about getting back to the basic principles of our organization, and we need to leave all the belittling and exclusion on the trash heap of history. If our organization is truly going to grow the culture needs to shift and shift dramatically in many areas.

Opening up eligibility to Veterans of other conflicts sounds great, and the hope is membership numbers increase because of the change. I encourage Posts to look at SAL and Auxiliary members that were not eligible until recently and get them to join the Post. There are many more eligible Veterans out there now, but are we selling the right message? Our strength is the programs, and the programs are the message. Recruit and retain by engaging members in American Legion programs, and family events. Some Posts have lost touch with our foundational principles, and the ironic part is they are the most inexpensive thing a Post can do in terms of money. The programs, and family events. Some Posts have lost touch with our foundational principles, and the ironic part is they are the most inexpensive thing a Post can do in terms of money. The programs, and family events.

I want to touch on a few things we must keep in mind as our organization moves into its second century of service. Our founding principle of Veteran and Community service is still as critical to the success of the organization as it was in 1919 at our 1st Department Convention. Sometimes in the daily operational chaos of running a Post we forget our guiding mission, and let every other thing become our priority. Let us not forget that service to our brothers and sisters is the paramount purpose for this organization. The following things to consider are not meant to be negative, or items that point at decline. They are areas where we can refocus on what we do already. 114 Posts within our Department reported Charitable giving in excess of $2 million last year, and community service remains one of our strongest elements. The value of our members’ and Posts’ volunteer hours exceeded $9 million last year. I just ask all the Posts to consider a few things:

1. What does the Post do to benefit Veterans in the community? If the answer is you have cheap food and drinks, then there is a huge issue. Does the Post volunteer for visitations; do they provide services and a central place for Veterans to come to meet with benefits specialists? Are there needy Veterans in the community not served by our organization? Does the Post host events for all veterans to come together? Do we engage with ALL the communities of Veterans in our area? The new VSOs that keep popping up are filling a gap that has formed in the VSOs formed a century ago. Direct community service is a critical aspect of the movement, and The American Legion must be involved in showing the community and younger Veterans we are here for the same mission. What are we doing to make that change? By all means make sure everyone knows the good news stories!! Everyone wants to be part of a winning team, and our organization has been winning for Veterans for 100 years.

2. What does the Post do to enroll, engage, and empower new members? Do we attract a diverse group of Veterans, and are ALL Veterans welcome in your Post? Do we engage new members to make sure they know they are more than a number? Does the Post hold an orientation or initiation regularly for new members? Do we empower new members to work on programs they want to lead, and are we serving as a hurdle for those that want to be helpful, by petty infighting or the “negative vibes?” How do we attract all the Veterans,Continued on page 4

1st Vice Commander
By Will Trotter

On Saturday, August 17, your District and County Commanders, both new and incumbent, gathered at Harry White Wilmer Post 82 in LaPlata for the Annual Training Seminar. To help them along were the Department Officers and subject matter experts from within the Department of Maryland. It was an intense session where much information was presented. The purpose being to get these officers ready to fulfill their assigned duties in the coming year to accomplish the mission of The American Legion and the Department of Maryland. Of note, were the Responsibilities of the District and County Commanders.

The District Commanders were admonished to do the following:
- Create an Agenda. This would include membership potential, goals, target dates, establishing and continuing American Legion Programs, visitation and keeping all informed of important happenings. Creating and maintaining a schedule of activities is crucial to success.
- Assemble a Team. Don’t try to do it all alone. Use your Vice Commanders and others who are interested in being a part in organizing projects that benefit the District, its posts, communities and veterans everywhere!
- District Commanders are responsible for ensuring that communication flows through to the public, the posts in their District, the team that has been assembled, and ultimately to the Department and National Headquarters.
- Establish committees to get the job done. Be sure those assigned to a given committee are passionate about the work that committee does.
- When help is needed, ask for it or give it, as appropriate. Have as a personal goal leaving your District in top shape!!

County Commanders:
- County Commanders were taught they are to be more “hands on” in their responsibility as they are the next step in the chain of command after the Post. In order to accomplish this, County Commanders must – MUST – keep the lines of communication open to their posts by email, phone calls, and visitation. Visits can be informal, like attending a dinner or yard sale. Or, they can be formal, as a meeting. The most important activity during the course of the year is the County Commander Inspection Report. A considerable amount of time was devoted to this report and its completion.

- After the date, time, and place of the inspection has been scheduled, there are specific tasks which must be completed before the inspection visit. Many of the items to be reviewed during an inspection can be found on-line and the ways to do this were discussed. The post will be provided with a list of required items to be reviewed during the inspection. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Meeting Minutes (Minimum of last two)
  - Finance Reports (Minimum of last two)
  - Bank Statements (Minimum of last two)
  - Membership Roster
  - Membership Transmittal Reports (Minimum of last two)
  - Articles of Incorporation and Post Charter
  - State and Federal Tax Forms for the past year
  - Other government compliance items
  - Insurance policies, invoices, and assessments
  - Property deeds or leases

It is highly recommended that posts take the time to also review past year’s reports to see if previous write ups have, in fact, been corrected.

Attendees also learned about this year’s Legislative priorities in Annapolis, finances, American Legion Protocol and the proper way to run a meeting, MyLegion.org, and resources that are available for any needed help.

Some time was also devoted to implementing The Legion Act and the new Department wide Post Constitution and By-Laws. This information has also been distributed and your District and County Commanders can help you with any questions that you may have.

The Ad Hoc Committee’s report on the Reorganization of the Department was briefly discussed as this is a work in progress. Please be alert for information on this as it is made available. The basic concept is to create a more workable and responsive chain of command within the Department of Maryland.

Your Department, District and County Officers are here to assist in any way we can. We are a team with the same goal: helping our communities and helping veterans!!

My primary duty this year will be to help, encourage, and promote Membership! We will

Continued on page 2
2nd Vice Commander

By Ronald L. Holcombe

I want to take this opportunity to Thank PDC Leroi Thornton for nominating me for the High Office of Department 2nd Vice-Commander and Past District Commander Marlin Johnson for seconding the nomination, and the Delegates of the 101st Department Convention held in Ocean City, MD July 15-19, 2019 for electing me to serve as Department 2nd Vice-Commander. It’s an honor and privilege to serve the members of The American Legion and the veterans of this Great State of Maryland that are in need of our assistance.

We have accomplished a lot during the previous Legion year as it was evident by all the awards given out at the Department Convention. Congratulations to all that received recognition and awards for their participation and dedication The American Legion Programs.

For the first time in our Department History that I know of, the Department recognized one of the County/Area Commanders for conducting and completing his/her Post Inspections in a manner that met the criteria of The American Legion policies and submitting Outstanding Post Inspection Reports to the Department Headquarters as mandated. I had the honor to congratulate and present the Certificate of Appreciation to NORTHERN CENTRAL DISTRICT BALTIMORE COUNTY Commander John Carpenter for his dedication and advancements to The American Legion.

I’m looking forward to working with Department Commander Philip Dorsey, as I assume my duties as the Department 2nd Vice-Commander as described in the Department Constitution and By-Laws Article 2 Section 5. The 2nd Vice and 3rd Vice Commanders primary mission is the inspection of the subordinate Posts within the Department, assist the Post and District Councils in conducting their business affairs and practices in accordance with the policies of The American Legion and we shall inquire into irregularities reported to the Department and assist the Department Commander whenever called upon and be ready to perform other duties as may be assigned by the Department Executive Committee or the Department Convention.

As you and I know the Department of Maryland has been losing about 2000 members each year since 2013 because of death or members just not renewing their annual dues. Here is some good news that will help us with recruiting new members. I had the privilege to attend the American Legion National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis, Indiana Aug. 8-10, 2019 and one of the hottest topics was The Legion Act that was signed into Law by President Donald Trump on July 30, 2019, this means that The American Legion eligibility criteria immediately changed from seven war eras to two and now we can recruit veterans that have served honorably from December 7, 1941 to the present date. (YAY...It’s been a long time coming) Now is the time for the Membership Committees to roll up their sleeves and develop a plan to invite and recruit those veterans that weren’t eligible because they didn’t serve during the previous war eras to your Post with open arms to fellowship with the membership. The Legion Act also opens the door for eligibility with, The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion membership.

Remember that our greatest success is accomplished when we all work together as One Team and if everyone were to recruit one new member that will help build a foundation for the future and extend the life of The American Legion.

As we begin a new Legion year, I know that with a lot of hard work and dedication we can build upon last year success and turn the new Legion year into even a better one.

Ronald L. Holcombe
Department 2nd Vice Commander

3rd Vice Commander

By Ruth A. Higgins

I look forward to resuming my travels to local posts around our great Department of Maryland. I traveled over 15,000 miles this past year and was overwhelmed by your hospitality.

This year I have the responsibility of maintaining the Department Calendar, so if you have any events/programs you wish to be added, please email me the information. Make sure to include the event name, date, place, time and cost (if any) as well as any other pertinent information.

To all County Commanders, please submit your post inspections to me as promptly as possible, if you have questions, feel free to contact me. It was good seeing so many of you at the Training Seminar in LaPlata!

As always, remember to “Preserve” the memories, “Protect” our benefits and “Promote” The American Legion, our four pillars and our youth.

On a personal note, I’d like to thank you all for your cards, calls and especially your prayers on the recent passing of my mother, they are what carried us.

Respectfully,

Ruth A. Higgins
Department 3rd Vice Commander

NEC Report

Patricia McCoy, National Executive Committeewoman

This is my first article as your National Executive Committee Woman and I want to thank you all for this great opportunity. I am honored to be able to represent all of you on the National level.

We all have been given a great opportunity to work on the membership of our great organization with the passage of the Legion Act which President Trump has signed. I along with many others were hoping that this would get done. I felt all Veterans should be able to join our legion family and now they can.

Our National Commander worked very hard along with others to get this done, now we need to get these fellow Veterans and their families involved. We have a lot of work ahead of us, we can do it together. By the time the Warrior comes out National Convention will be over and we will have a new National Commander and new National Officers but the agenda remains the same to Help our fellow Veterans and their families as we will continue to do for years to come.

Before I close I want to especially thank past NEC Lew Trott for his guidance. Thank you Lew for all you do.

Yours in Legion Service,

Patricia McCoy
National Commander
The American Legion
Department of Maryland
and change any Post that is not welcoming? Get out of the Post and make a difference!!
New members are not INSIDE YOUR POST HOME!!
3. Lastly, examine your Post meetings. Are they full of bickering or petty arguments? Do they
highlight what is being accomplished in the Post, and how someone can become more
involved? Is tradition and strict adherence to rules making meetings target practice on the
newer member, is everyone welcomed, or is the meeting used as a way to mock someone
because their cell phone goes off? Do they incorporate a reason to give up a night with
family, and how about child care for the families with dual Veteran parents? They both can
attend the meeting and have their children safe while having fun. Jr Auxiliary members
certified in child care could volunteer their time for the meeting nights.

We must examine our practices and how we operate as an organization. FIXATE on our
founding principles, and make sure we are celebrating our legacy daily, but also transforming
for the future. Our brothers and sisters deserve nothing less than the continued excellence that
is embodied in our organization.

In closing, I pass along well wishes from myself, and my children, for a happy Thanksgiving.

Below and on page 5 you will see what we do in The American Legion in Maryland and why it
is so important to fill out the CPR’s (Consolidated Post Reports) at the end of the year.

WHAT WE DO:

The American Legion of Maryland (Posts, Squadrons, Auxiliary and Headquarters offices) contributes materially to the economic well-being of the State of Maryland by employing more than 1,300 tax-paying employees living in the state of Maryland. Our employee payroll is estimated to exceed $30,000,000 annually.

During the past year, our Charitable Contributions to needy families, churches, government programs supporting the four pillars, and a host of other State recognized not-for profit charitable organizations exceeded $2 million, and these donations and grants continue year after year. In addition, our members make cash and in-kind donations to and contribute tens of thousands of volunteer man-hours each year to many worthy charitable causes, including Special Olympics, VA Medical Centers and Clinics, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Other Maryland Military Treatment Facilities and Out-Patient Clinics, Fisher Houses, Johns Hopkins Hospital’s Children’s Miracle Network, Maryland State Veterans Cemeteries and the Charlotte Hall Maryland State Veterans Home. In 2018 our members volunteered 360,976 hours to community service at a value of over $9 million… a few examples worthy of your attention follows:

• The American Legion is the largest identifiable Blood Donor organization in America and in Maryland. For 2018, The American Legion Family in Maryland reported 2,805 pints of blood collected by our Legion Family during sponsored blood drives.
• The American Legion, since our founding, has been a strong sponsor and supporter of Boy and Girl Scout Troops in America and in Maryland. Legion Posts sponsor 46 Scout Units and expended over $137,108 in support of these youth.
• In Maryland, The American Legion scholarship donations to deserving college and pre-college level students ranks second to none. Total scholarships given in 2018 exceeded $275,000.
• The Department Service Office annually assists and represents over 1,000 Veterans with VA Benefits paperwork, and is responsible for nearly $18,000,000 in awards for various VA benefits each year. Through the diligence of our Department and Post Service Officers, several veterans received retroactive compensation for disabilities over $250,000 each. The American Legion excels in Veteran Employment assistance in all communities.
• The Maryland American Legion owns two Youth Camps, one on the Frederick-Washington County line operated by the Frederick County YMCA for the benefit of our community, and the other in Prince George’s County which is operated by the Southern Maryland District Council. These camps including all facilities thereat are available for one-day or longer (but not to exceed a period contrary to established rules and regulations of each camp) for use by youth groups, churches, and others on a first come-first served basis, at minimal cost. These youth camps allow over 6,000 Maryland youth and many more Marylanders to enjoy the outdoors and learn values that last a lifetime.
• Many Maryland American Legion Posts are available during emergencies for use as National and Local Civil Defense Shelters, Disaster Relief and Homeland Security Training Facilities

and to temporarily shelter, feed and cloth families during natural and/or man-made disasters and riots. Located in every County and in most communities around the State they are an available resource in time of need.

• Maryland American Legion Youth Programs include: (1) Boys and Girls State Programs which consist of a one-week concentrated study of the U. S. Constitution and an intense interactive learning experience pertaining to the legislative process and operations of local, state and national governmental entities; (2) American Legion Baseball; (3) American Legion Oratorical Contests, (4) Junior Shooting Sports, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Youth recreation leagues, and college scholarship awards. We are leaders in every aspect of community involvement. These programs cost in excess of $750,000 annually, and the money is raised from local Posts and members.
• Under the Legion’s Worldwide Family Support Network we provide both labor (over 13,000 hours) and financial support (over $40,000) to spouses and family members left behind while the military service-member is deployed in harms way. Typical support includes lawn maintenance (shoveling snow, mowing grass, trimming shrubbery), making minor household repairs, providing free transportation and drivers, purchasing needed clothing and food and helping with emergency financial problems.
• The Department of Maryland Heroes to Hometown/Wounded Warrior fund has provided grants totaling over $300,000 for Veterans of the current conflicts struggling with transition or in need in other areas including adaptive technologies. The goal of this fund is to quickly assess the needs and provide assistance, and we have an impact throughout the State. This program is completely funded by donation from the Legion Family and a few supporters.
• Department of MD, Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission annually makes grants over $30,000 to support Veteran needs. The total value of donations and volunteer hours to the VA and Rehabilitation efforts by MD American Legion Family exceeds $500,000 annually. Annual volunteer service to VA includes thousands of hours in facilities around MD.
• Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) for needy children of Veterans, operated by The American Legion, provides aid for areas of basic needs to Veteran families with children in the household. Grants in Maryland vary depending upon the level of need and number received. Grants provided in 2018 exceeded $100,000.

“Get Out The Vote” has been a major program at all levels (National, Department/State and Post/Community) of The American Legion since our very beginning in 1919. By Congressional Charter we are non-partisan, we do not endorse, raise money for or give preference to any person seeking public office; however, we do strongly advocate for a wide range of LEGISLATIVE ISSUES germane to the Aims and Purposes for which The American Legion was founded and work to ensure these issues are before the elected officials, at all levels (city, county, state and national), and we ask for their support and votes.

100 years of Making a Difference

• In 1962 through a grant from The American Legion, Department of Maryland, The Medical Eye Bank of Maryland was established, and its mission was to improve access to corneal transplants to individuals throughout Maryland. The Department operated a Christmas tree sale at Memorial Stadium annually for decades to continue support of the Eye Bank. Through the years this program has grown into an international company, merged several times (the latest being when KeraLink merged with Corneagen in 2018), and now has a worldwide mission to reverse corneal blindness through transplantation. The gift from 1962 has been used to launch a venture affecting at least hundreds of thousands worldwide in the six decades of its existence.
• Since our founding in 1919 The American Legion, Department of Maryland has been in the strongest Veteran Service Organizations and constantly advocates for Veterans, Strong Defense and Emergency Preparedness, Patriotism, and Youth in our communities, and throughout our State. We stand ready to forge the next hundred years of service, and advocacy for future generations of Veterans.

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department Adjutant
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MOUNTAIN DISTRICT
Serving Allegany and Garrett Counties

Greetings from the Mountain District where it remains summer, but it could change at any time!! We are excited about the new guidelines now accepted for membership in The American Legion, including all who have served on active duty from 12/7/41 to the current, providing the member has an honorable d/c and meets the prior criteria. Garrett County Commander Carl Gray, Allegany County Commander Richard Holder, and I are planning our visits to all of our Posts to share Convention news, updates on membership, and to excite our members to share Convention news, updates on membership changes. We must go out and find the veterans in the public at such events as the Thurmont Community Show where Thurmont Post 168 sets up a booth every year, Brunswick Railroad Days, Frederick in the Streets, and recently the Carroll County Fair. If your town/city does not have an event that attracts a crowd, try setting up a booth at a local supermarket, Home Depot or Lowes. I would suggest that instead of calling it a membership drive, tell the store manager you’re providing information to veterans on the veteran benefits and/or rights to education, home loans and other information. In the process, if the veteran sees by your action that we are worth being a part of the effort. We can no longer sit down from last year’s numbers. I have faith in the “Great” Western Maryland District to achieve a new level of membership. Frankly, we have been given a gift this year. In the past we have had to decide if the veteran was qualified to join the American Legion. This roadblock has been removed for us. Now all veterans that have served after December 07, 1941 through today are eligible for membership. Francis Scott Key Post 11 had a Marine Corps Veteran with (7) years of active duty occurring between Vietnam and Beirut Lebanon. He had joined the Son of the American Legion; his wife was able to join the American Legion Auxiliary and they were both also super-active in the Legion Riders. On any day of the week, George and Norma were at the Post doing something. Within two hours of receiving the go ahead on the new membership changes, George was at Post 11 signing up as a new Legionnaire. George plans on being a dual member of the Son’s and Legion and will continue to be active in both organizations. Francis Scott Key Post 11 used this joyous event to contact the Frederick New Post to get the word out regarding the changes in membership. I would venture to say that all Posts have a member like George in it. Using a good news story like George and Norma is better than touting membership numbers. Washington County Commander Vaughn (Kermit) Beard was interviewed by his local paper in Washington County to comment on the new membership.

WESTERN MARYLAND DISTRICT
Serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties

Greetings from the District Commander of the Great Western Maryland District. We had a great year last year and I would like to take this time to thank Department Commander Dave Johnson, District Commander Alex Whitney, County Commander’s Brenda Dugan, Jim Beckman and Dwight Reynolds for their leadership. Last year’s membership drive was above and beyond with District achieving 1st place in the District. We are currently in 2nd place about 300 members down from last years numbers. I have faith in the “Great” Western Maryland District to achieve a new level of membership. Frankly, we have been given a gift this year. In the past we have had to decide if the veteran was qualified to join the American Legion. This roadblock has been removed for us. Now all veterans that have served after December 07, 1941 through today are eligible for membership. Francis Scott Key Post 11 had a Marine Corps Veteran with (7) years of active duty occurring between Vietnam and Beirut Lebanon. He had joined the Son of the American Legion; his wife was able to join the American Legion Auxiliary and they were both also super-active in the Legion Riders. On any day of the week, George and Norma were at the Post doing something. Within two hours of receiving the go ahead on the new membership changes, George was at Post 11 signing up as a new Legionnaire. George plans on being a dual member of the Son’s and Legion and will continue to be active in both organizations. Francis Scott Key Post 11 used this joyous event to contact the Frederick New Post to get the word out regarding the changes in membership. I would venture to say that all Posts have a member like George in it. Using a good news story like George and Norma is better than touting membership numbers. Washington County Commander Vaughn (Kermit) Beard was interviewed by his local paper in Washington County to comment on the new membership.

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

Welcome to the 2019-2020 American Legion Year! It is truly a great day to be a Legionnaire. I hope this message has found you and your family in the best health. As you know, the great Southern Maryland District has a rich tradition of service excellence to our Veterans, and we intend to continue the legacy of serving with honor, speaking with courage, and showing our commitment to those that have served our great nation. To do this effectively, I present my message for the 2019 – 2020 American Legion Year, #1: Improve communication among Leaders across the District, #2: Exceed our membership goals by 20% before May 1, 2020, #3: Visit each County in the District before the end of The American Legion Year, and #4: Provide significant and valuable information from the Department to our Comrades from the moment they become Legionnaires.

The key to our success resides in your Post meetings. The desires of those that come to the meetings, participate in decision-making, and the members that lead from the front are key to our success as a Department and District. Yes, we have a challenge ahead of us, but we were trained to face challenges head-on, and without hesitation. We will implement the use of best practices from last year, and use our lessons-learned to guide us. Our programs, activities, and contributions will speak for themselves in the community. All four pillars must be strong and effective if we intend to maintain the legacy of the past and set our own standards for the future. No Legionnaire has to carry this load alone. We have expertise and experience to make sure we are successful. From the moment we donned the uniform until the day we removed it for the last time, we wore it with pride and honor. As we pick up the baton to move our District to an unprecedented level, we will need every one of our Legionnaires to join us in our quest to accomplish our goals before our watch ends. Let us pack up our gear and go to battle for our members and their families, while improving the communities in which we live. It’s wonderful when the people believe in their leader. It’s more wonderful when the leader believes in the people. I believe in you. So I ask you, what is your attitude toward mistakes? Are you an optimist, a pessimist, or a realist? You must strive to be realistic. As you work this week, ask yourself and your Post Members, what can go wrong if we give it our best? Anything less is not an option! Finally, the ATTITUDE and MOTIVATION we possess will have a lasting impact on the next group of leaders down the road. I look forward to taking care of our members, their families, and members of our armed forces, with you. Are you ready to serve?
For God and Country,

Haywood Moss
District Commander,
Southern Maryland District

Charee Recker
Mountain District Commander
NORTHERN CENTRAL DISTRICT
Serving Baltimore, Harford and Howard Counties

I’d like to start off by thanking everyone for having the confidence to elect our Northern Central District Leadership Team for the year 2019-2020.

Since being elected Northern Central District Commander, I have attended The American Legion State Baseball tournament in Cumberland, Md. I attended the Baltimore County Council meeting at Liberty Post 122. We also held our first Northern Central District meeting at Dundalk Post 38 under our new leadership Team. I’ve also attended the District and County Commanders Conference and also the Dept. Committee Meeting and the Department Executive Committee Meeting which was held in La Plata, Md.

The Northern Central District meetings have been scheduled for the following year. The dates and Locations are as follow: November 10th, 2019 at Post 128, Aberdeen Md. February 9th, 2019, at Southwest Post 332 and May 10th 2019 at Harford Post 39. All meetings will commence at 1 p.m.

Baltimore District
Serving Baltimore City

Greetings Legion family; I hope everyone had a great and excited summer. I would like to thank the Baltimore District for re-electing me to be your District Commander for the upcoming year.

I witnessed some great teamwork and a willingness to help out one another. It is often said that in the toughest of times, people come together and make great things happen. With all that has transpired over the last couple of months, I was reminded of the words once spoken by former President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural speech. Kennedy said “ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” On a smaller scale, this sentiment can be deployed by all members of the Legion. In other words, “What can I do for others around me here in The American Legion?”

Let’s work together to continue to improve membership within the district. Each Post should have a plan to achieve 100% membership. Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

District upcoming events:
Four Frenchmen service – November 2, 2019 (St. Mary’s Cemetery) Veterans Day Program – November 11, 2019 at Northeastern Post 285.

“Lean forward in the Foxhole and expect the unexpected”

Austin L. Ball Sr.
Baltimore District Commander

SOUTH EASTERN SHORE DISTRICT
Serving Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties

Greetings from the SESD, I am excited as we have just completed our 100th Legion Year. The SESD have two Post that are celebrating their 100th anniversary; Stanley Cochran Post 16—24 July 2019 and Worcester Post 64 on September 21, 2019. Congratulations to them and to Synepuxent Post 166, O C Marlins for their outstanding Legion baseball year as they put up a good fight by coming in second place this year for the State of Maryland. I would also like to thank the rest of the SESD teams for their great year too; Worcester Post 64 Blue Sox’s, Dorchester Post 9, and Somerset Post 94. Sorry I did not get out to any of the games but Past SESD Commander William (Sarge) Garlitz and his wife Rosie did, and if you never seen much loyalty you need to see these two in action. To all, thanks again for a great baseball season.

Once again, THANK YOU to all the men and women of the SESD for selecting me as the Commander. It is my goal to bring forth some great ideas that will increase our unity, diversity, and mutual fellowship among the Legionnaires and the entire Legion family. Many members within our ranks are sick at home and in healthcare facilities and I would like to see the SESD Legion family step-up their visitation within and around their respective areas. When we reach out and touch our veterans that have given so much it means a lot to them, especially when we are now saying goodbye to our veterans by the dozen each week. Let us not wait to say our farewells when they cannot hear us, but let us get out and make visitation the norm. National Commander Reistad initiated a weekly buddy check project that encourages everyone to check a buddy with a card, letter, phone call, and if you can, a visit. It really means a lot to someone whose family is not nearby to visit or who have all gone on to Post everlasting.

Mark Phoebus,
Northern Central District Commander

Also, I would like to encourage our Legion family to start focusing on their upcoming Veterans Day programs and the winter season. Plenty of veterans are homeless in our areas, let’s find them and introduce them to the many programs in our neighbors to help keep them safe this winter and hopefully forever. I challenge the SESD Legion family to start collecting winter gear, coats, and blankets to donate to nearby shelters and veterans you meet on the streets.

Finally, membership, it is a new year with new laws in place to help us to recruit veterans who have for so long stood on the sidelines helping the Legion but could not be members—start with your Sons of the American Legion (SAL) members. The recent passing of the Legion Act now gives us access to these SAL members and veterans, let’s encourage these veterans that what we do in The American Legion for veterans and their families is important and it feels great being a part of “Service to others” and getting things done.

In summary, let us begin the 101st Legion year with unity, respect, and thankfulness for the service each and every veteran has given. Besides challenging the SESD in checking on our buddies, I challenge you all to make this the best year of mutual helpfulness we can for our fellow veterans and their families by returning to our roots of “service to others and for God and country.”

Sharon Egerson
SESD Commander

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

Greetings Legion Family; Thank you for the opportunity to LEAD you all forward. I hope we can accomplish a lot together in the coming year. As we move forward you know our first goal is to work on our membership, to our Post that have finished well, my congrats, to the rest of us we have work to do. The one thing I have seen as a problem with everyone is communication. If we can’t communicate with each other, how can we work on what needs to be done. There will be times I do things that may not be to the liking of some individuals and if so let me know, I’m human, I’ll make mistakes but I’ll also listen if I’m doing it wrong. Let’s all work together and make everyone proud to be in the NESD, we can’t do it alone.

So as I close, I hope to see you all at our next meeting, ready to move and improve our unit. Remember for God and County. Semper Fidelis

Emidio “Buzz” Taylor
North Eastern Shore District Commander
More than 150 members and friends of the Damascus American Legion Family enjoyed a special dinner at the Post Home on June 1st, where 15 members of the Greatest Generation were honored. The occasion was in celebration of the Normandy Invasion by United States and Allied Forces on June 6, 1944, leading to victory over the Nazis in World War II. Post 171 Commander David Clemmer served as master of ceremonies. Following opening ceremonies, Past Post Commander George Bolling paid tributes to American comrades-in-arms who are Prisoners of War and Missing in Action and notable WWII Post members who have passed away.

Commander Clemmer introduced Brigadier General Warner Sumpter, U.S. Army (Retired), Chairman, Maryland Veterans Home Commission, who presented the Post a Proclamation with Rodney Azama from Governor Larry Hogan commemorating the event. Mr. Scott Williams, son of Post member Edward Williams, and National Assistant Adjutant for the Sons of the American Legion, presented the Post a letter from the National SAL Commander commending the Post for honoring the WWII veterans on this occasion.

Past Damascus American Legion Auxiliary Unit President Sandy Seipp presents the American Legion Commemorative Medallion to William “Dick” Bennett, 97, the sole surviving charter member of Damascus American Legion Post 171, which was founded in 1946. Dick was an Army Air Forces crew member on a B-24 aircraft in the European Theater during World War II.

Delmas Wood, Junior, an accomplished impersonator of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the pomp and circumstance that accompanies a President’s appearance, Delmas recited FDR’s famous Declaration of War speech to Congress on December 8th, 1941, the day after Japanese air forces bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, triggering our nation’s entry into WWII. Mr. Wood then explained the responding actions the United States took to defeat Japanese forces in the Pacific, and he paid tribute to the WWII veterans for their service and sacrifices.

Charles McGee, 99, a veteran of three wars and a retired United States Air Force Colonel, began his distinguished career with the Tuskegee Airmen, flying one of the Red Tails’ P-51 Mustangs during World War II. He transitioned into jet fighters during the Korean War, and then flew F-4 Phantom reconnaissance jets in the Vietnam War.

Then, Post Member Dean Elliott presented each of the WWII veterans a vial of sand from Omaha and Utah Beaches, where American forces landed on D-Day. Chairman of the D-Day Dinner Steve Monteiro read the names of the 27 soldiers in the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, who perished on D-Day and are buried in the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France. Then, Post Member Mark Elrod played Taps and the colors were retired to close the service.

Story by: Post Past Commander George Bolling
Photos courtesy of: Legionnaire Meg Clemmer and Ross Simpson
The Story Behind the Celebration Story

Story by: Steve Monteiro

In November 2018, I had the opportunity to visit Normandy (the American Cemetery, the beaches of Omaha and Utah, Pointe du Hoc, and Ste, Mere Eglise). What made the trip more special was sharing the experience with about 70 of my West Point classmates and our wives. Standing on that hallowed ground on the bluff overlooking Omaha Beach, I was humbled by the sacrifices of those brave patriots. The cemetery contains the graves of 9,380 of our military dead. On the Walls of Missing garden on the east side of the memorial are inscribed 1,557 names.

The Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France

At the next Legion members meeting I reflected on the section of the Preamble that states “…To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars…” With the 75th anniversary of the D-Day approaching, the challenge became how best to honor these fallen comrades who sacrificed all their tomorrows so we might enjoy the freedoms of today. The concept was formulated, and an action plan developed which was approved by the general membership.

The next crucial step was the implementation of the plan. The success of the Remembrance Dinner was entirely through the efforts of ‘The Team’. I want to thank and acknowledge their contributions:

- Dave Clemmer – Invitations, overall support and letting me be me!
- Tony DeShiro – Menu selection, caterer liaison, and financial oversight
- Sam Baughman – Post 171 ‘sage’ and overall support
- Bernie Moxley – Company sponsors and advice
- George Bolling – POW/MIA ceremony, planning, communications and advice
- Larry Matthews – Planning and liaison with Ross Simpson (Anchor/Reporter WDVM)
- Buzz Burroughs – Introduction to Guest Speaker Delmas Wood
- Keith Midberry – WW2 German and Japanese surrender documents and mannequin
- Dean Elliot- Normandy artifacts and vials of beach sand (Omaha and Utah)
- Bill Raab – Scrapbook of war correspondent Ernie Pyle
- Bill Green – Color Guard
- Sandy Seipp – Presentation of Legion awards
- Charley Appleby – Construction of static display table backstops and handicap ramp.
- Mark Elrod – Bugler
- Patricia Busche – Auxiliary (Marianne, Trish, Jane, Joanne & Kelli) for decorations
- Todd Stockslager – SAL for setup

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](http://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.

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<td>Stewart L. Jennings</td>
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Commander’s Message
Continued on from page 1

Great News: The American Legion Act was introduced
by Congress and passed on July 30, 2019 by both Houses
unanimously. With President Trump’s signature on
the Legion Act, the extension of the ongoing declared
period of war extended back to December 7, 1941. The
congressionally approved Act is a way to honor thousands
of veterans who were killed or wounded on duty during
periods not previously considered a time of war. Finally,
Congress has acknowledged the service and sacrifice of
at least 1,600 veterans who died or were wounded in previously
undeclared periods of war. This new law honors the
memories of those veterans while allowing other veterans
to be considered if previously undeclared eras to receive all The
American Legion benefits they have earned through their
service. The Legion Act also redefines The American Legion
membership eligibility dates. The eligibility now spans from
December 7, 1941 until a time when the U.S. no longer is
at war, as determined by Congress. How does this change
the eligibility requirements for The American Legion? The only change is that Congress has reduced the number of
eligibility periods from seven to two. These eligible dates
are April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918 and December 7, 1941 and continuing. No other restrictions are changed.
Until we receive new membership applications, use the old
one and add other. I encourage all Posts to start recruiting
these eligible members. Not only is this a great source for
The American Legion, but also the S.A.L. and Auxiliary.

Since taking office at the Department Convention, I have
been on the road with Post Installations and attended Boys
Nation at Greenbelt Post 136. It was a pleasure to meet and
greet all 98 Senators from each Department. They were a
very impressive group of young men who assume the role of
a United States Senator, representing their respective State.
We just returned from Indianapolis for the National
Workshop for Dept. Commanders and Dept. Membership
Chairmen. Attending with me were 1st Vice Will Trotter and
2nd Vice Ron Holcombe. We gained a lot of knowledge for
this year’s membership retention and recruitment.

This year’s Commander’s Project will be Veterans
Assistance Program so that we can continue to assist our
needy veterans and families and hopefully expand on the
program to include Vietnam era veterans.
I am excited to be working with our Detachment of
Maryland Commander Bob Manzo and our Department
President Linda Green. I know we will have a successful
year.

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

Philip R. Dorsey
Department Commander

101st Convention
Continued on from page 1

to provide solid values and education for the
youth of our State and Nation.

Later on Thursday we honored the First
Responders: Career Firefighter of the Year,
Volunteer Firefighter of the Year, Career EMS
of the Year, Volunteer EMS of the Year and
Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Their
supervisors and families were there as we
thanked them all for what they do for us. They
deserve our most gracious appreciation. Every
day they sacrifice time, energy, and many times
their health or lives to keep us safe in our
communities. Often going as unsung heroes,
the Department of Maryland feels it is critical
to highlight the great deeds of these brave
comrades.

Commander Johnson introduced the
Executive Director of the Maryland Center for
Veterans Training and Education (MCVET), Jeffrey L. Kendrick. Mr. Kendrick thanked The
American Legion for all of their support and
introduced members of MCVET who spoke about how MCVET has helped them and the
good work they do.

Reginal Jordan, Chairman of the Veterans
Affairs Commission got to introduce all the
VA Health Care Groups that we help
support: Dr. Adam M. Robinson, Acting
Director VA Medical Center Washington,
D.C., Director Maryland Health Care System,
Timothy J. Cooke, Director VA Medical Center
Martinsburg, West Virginia, Antwan Waller,
Director of VBA Baltimore regional Office
and Michael Brophy Director of Baltimore
National Cemetery Complex. They thanked
The American Legion for all the volunteer
hours and donations that were made through out
the year to all their facilities.

Friday we thanked and congratulated the
2018-2019 Officers one last time on a job well
done and elected and welcomed the 2019-2020
Officers into office. The first DEC meeting was
then held and all Department officers were
sworn in by Department Commander Philip R.
Dorsey.

Our 102nd Department Convention shall be
held on July 14-17, 2020 at the Roland Powell
Convention Center, Ocean City, Maryland. We
are planning an improved vendor area to give
delegates, family, and friends more options
to shop at the Convention Center. The week
is full of events, and many hotelies suites
are open in various locations in town. The
discounts from merchants have increased every
year, and of course Jolly Rogers gives a huge
break on the Waterpark and Amusement rides.
Start your planning today, make this the family
vacation week, and book early to secure the
best hotel deals.

Scouting for Maryland
by Jack McLaughlin

A t the 1919 Minneapolis convention of The
American Legion, the first convention of the
fledgling veterans organization, a resolution to affiliate with the Boy Scouts of America to make this ten year old organization
a vital part of the Legion’s youth program. In
the resolution it stated that The American Legion
commended the achievements of the Boy Scouts and recommended to each
Post to assist in the formation of troops in the communities and be leaders in said
organization.

Currently, only about a third of the
Posts in Maryland sponsor any form of Scouting program. While they may consider
contributions made when requested enough
support, the fact is that we are not serving the
youth to the articles and tenets of our Charters.

If your Post does not offer these opportunities
to make a difference, then you must ask why
your Post exists. We are a service organization,
service to our fellow Veterans, and service to
our community. It is through our service that
we build a better nation. You need only ask
your local Scouting representative how your
Post can start a unit to benefit youth and your
Post, and the community.

The Department of Maryland covers six
Scouting Councils and while our exposure is
deep in many areas, there are other areas in
the state that the Scouting program is thin. There
are youth in these areas that will benefit in
our involvement. In our next hundred years
we should be living the principles of The
American Legion of service to our community,
state, and Nation.

This year is the hundredth year of our
involvement with Scouting. While there have
been many changes in both organizations,
the core principles of both have remained.
Americanism being needed today more than
ever with the onslaught of ideologies foreign
to our way of life, a youth program that teaches
our ideals deserves our support.

Since your Scouting Committee can not
do it all it is up to all our Posts to reach out,
to find the Eagle Scouts to honor, to find the
Legionnaires that do more to support youth
and support our communities in all youth
programs.

Applications for the Eagle Scout of the Year
and the Scout Knot for leaders are on line at
Legion.org/Scouting. Let us go forth together
for the next hundred year.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It was truly an honor to be installed as Department President for our 100th Anniversary year. I look forward to this awesome journey with Department Commander Phil and Detachment Commander Bob, and will strive to do my very best to make The American Legion Auxiliary and the Legion Family proud. Those of us at the top can only be successful with the help and support of each and every member so let’s all join together in unity, faith and love. My theme this year is “Holiday/Christmas Cheer Throughout the Year in 2019-2020 for a year filled with happiness, kindness, fun, and Volunteering Through Teamwork in Service – Not Self.” I hope we can all spread the holiday cheer through the Department of Maryland.

My project this year is The Johns Hopkins University Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Clinic. The clinic provides superior medical care and offers the latest in clinical therapies and trials to ALS patients. These physicians are specially trained in neuromuscular diseases and the multiple disorders closely related to ALS or Lou Gehrig disease (1903-1941). This is a very debilitating disease which can strike any one of any age. All donations to the ALS Clinic will be applied to the clinical care of all of the ALS patients. Please send your donations to our Department Office, check payable to “AL Department of Maryland earmarked President’s Project.”

My goal is $5,000, and I sincerely hope we can accomplish this and more. This project is very dear to me as I lost my brother of 69 years of age to ALS about 4 years ago, and believe me, to watch a loved one suffer with ALS is debilitating in itself. He lived with ALS for about 8 or 9 years prior to being diagnosed and The Johns Hopkins Clinic doctors diagnosed him. My brother was a Sons of the American Legion member at Disney-Bell Squadron #66 in Bowie. About a year ago, we lost a devoted Auxiliary member as well to ALS who was President of Unit #85 in Calvert County. May they rest in peace!

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: cjslg@aol.com

American Legion Auxiliary

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

By Steven Blank

A new legion year is upon us for the year 2019-20. Being appointed Assistant Sergeant At Arms for the Convention this past July, 2019. I want to personally thank the other assistant Sergeant At Arms. They were Kraig Dean, Jack Smith, William Ganz, Kelvin Jordan, and Frank Price. Without their assistance I wouldn’t have been able to do the job. It was a great team effort. A special thanks to Ron Holcombe leading the way.

I personally want to thank the Department Commander Phillip Dorsey, putting his trust in me, by appointing me the Sergeant at Arms for year 2019-2020, the first appointed Sergeant at Arms in many years. I feel privileged to hold this position, will support the Dept. Commander Phillip Dorsey, and Dept. of Md., the best I can, I hope the year 2019-20 will be a great year for all of legion family. God bless this great nation.

Dept. Sergeant at Arms
Steven Blank

S.A.L. Commander

Greetings. Well the year is off to a start, I have been busy since convention in June and look forward to a fun filled and rewarding year as Detachment Commander. So far this year I have had the privilege of installing Francis Scott Key Squadron 11 and Susquehanna Squadron 135 as well as attending Installations of Caroline Squadron 29 and Talbot Squadron 70. I was also proud to be able to participate along with 1st Vice Commander Fayer and members of Laurel Squadron and Post 60 in cleaning the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, it is an experience I will never forget. In July, I attended the Department Convention in Ocean City and was able to address both the Legion and Auxiliary Delegations. Our State Leaders Reception was held on July 28 at Gold Star Post 191 and I enjoyed meeting the great members of our Legion Family. As I am typing this article we are preparing for National Convention in Indianapolis, and I am looking forward to seeing friends from around this great nation as we conduct the business of the Sons of The American Legion.

My theme this year is “Generations of Service to Our Veterans” and I think it is appropriate that my project is to assist veterans from all generations of service. My primary fundraising is for the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in Charlotte Hall Maryland. They have some real needs that I hope to be able to fill, primarily the purchase and installation of a retractable awning for the Memory Care Wing. This will allow more veterans to enjoy the outdoors on a hot or in inclement weather. 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. During the partial government shutdown, they provided over one million dollars in grants to Coast Guardsmen with children to help them bridge the gap while they were not being paid. 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.

I look forward to meeting you in my travels across this great State of Maryland and as always am available to visit and participate in your events.

This years DEC meetings are as follows: September 14, 1 PM Post 282 in Woodsboro November 16, 1 PM Post 29 in Denton January 26, 12 PM Post 166 in Ocean City April 5, 1 PM Post 66 in Bowie

I hope to see you there.

Bob Manzo
Detachment Commander
Fall 2019

From Chaplains Desk

“Never walk away from someone who deserves help; your hand is God’s hand for that person. Never tell your neighbors to wait until tomorrow if you can help them now” (Proverbs 3:27-28 The Message/GNT).

I would like to take this time to thank our Department Commander Phil Dorsey for trusting me with the position of The Department Chaplain for this year. I would also like to thank our Past Department Commander Dave Johnson and all the other Department officers for a great year of leadership and teamwork. I solicit all your prayers as we move forward in our mission: to help Legionnaires and others grow in their relationship with God and one another, and minister to people wherever there is a need so that NO ONE EVER FEELS ALONE.

This year I will be conducting at least 2 Chaplain Seminars throughout the Districts. Our first one will be conducted at Guy C. Parlett Post 7 on October 5th starting at 9:30. If you are interested in attending please register by September 27th by contacting Chaplain Tom McAndrews at (443)994-1831 or me Chaplain Jones at (240) 383-6920. We will be hosting our 2nd training on March 7th at Bernard Tobi Post 128 at starting at 10am. Please contact Chaplain Geigan at 443-829-6972 or the office to register by February 28th. If you’re interested in hosting a seminar in the future, please contact me to coordinate the date, time and location. The Training is primarily for All American Legion Chaplains, Sal and Auxiliary Chaplains but anyone interested in becoming familiar with the work of a chaplain is also invited to attend. These are some of the items that will be covered at the seminar:

- The American Legion Chaplain
- Who can serve as Chaplain
- What does a Chaplain Do?
- Prayers: Prayer Book and Personal Chaplain’s Handbook
- Chaplain’s Resources that are Available
- Chaplain’s Calendar
- Personal Spiritual Growth
- The Post Everlasting Service
- Counseling, Visitation and Conflict resolution
- Fellowship and Sharing with one another.
- Please bring your copy of The American Legion Chaplain’s Handbook, and the Prayer Book to the seminar.

Peter: 4:10-- “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Each person has something unique and special to offer as a human being, so we must recognize the many gifts that have been created through God’s love and share them with each other.

Now in closing, I just want to remind you that I am readily available and accessible to ANY veteran who is in need of someone to talk to, pray with or just needs to be connected to the American Legion or his/her veteran family. I can be reached at (240)383-6920 or you can contact me at curtisleejones@hotmail.com. Thanks to all parties involved who are entrusting me with the honor and privilege to serve all our Legionnaires, their families, friends and my city, state and this great nation.

Curtis Lee Jones
Department of Maryland Chaplain

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest 2020

With the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year in Maryland, oratorical season has also begun. It is time to get the word out in your area about the American Legion High School Oratorical Contest.

It starts by contacting interested faculty members and counselors in your area High Schools. You can find the names usually at the schools’ web-site. Look for history teachers, speech teachers, and debate coaches. Does the school have a speech and debate club? Are teachers a member of your post, squadron or unit? Find out who the PTA President is and ask to attend a meeting. You might also be able to find a Home School Association in your area.

In recent years, non-school organizations with an emphasis on public speaking have become available. The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association and the National Speech and Debate Association offer programs to young people interested in this sort of activity. They are awarded points for participation in contests such as ours. Information on these is available on-line.

Don’t forget the individual contacts as well. We would like to encourage posts that have not tried the contest to do so. Ask the post members to think of and invite their teenage children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, neighbors, and acquaintances. Those teens probably already know and respect your post member – they may have interest in hearing about the contest and how to earn scholarship money. The personal touch, invitation, and support is often the key to finding the best candidates.

If your Candidates ask “what is it?” Here’s a summary: They are required to research and prepare five speeches. The first speech is referred to as the “Prepared Oration.” This is the student’s primary speech covering some aspect of the US Constitution. It must be between 8 and 10 minutes in length, delivered from memory without notes or props. Participants must also prepare four shorter speeches on specific portions of the Constitution. These are referred to as the 3-5 minute “Assigned Topics.” What makes it interesting is even though they must be prepared for all four, only one will be given. During the contest one of the four is drawn at random and then each candidate will speak on the same topic. The choices for the 2019 contest are Amendments 12, 20, 24, and 27.

There are tutorials at the National American Legion web-site on how to prepare for and run a contest, as well as all of the rules. Your students should be recruited by the Thanksgiving Break, but the earlier the better to give them the time to research, prepare and fine tune their speeches. Then they can use Winter Break for speech memorization and practice. Post Contests should be scheduled for mid-January. County Contests will be held in late January or early February, with District Contests in mid to late February. Our Department Contest is now tentatively planned for March 8, 2020. Our State winner will represent Maryland at the National Contest in Indianapolis April 17-19. Substantial scholarship awards are available in the latter stages of the contest. Therefore, posts, counties and districts should budget accordingly to make it attractive. We would be glad to help you get started!

The National Oratorical Contest began in 1938 with 11 mid-western states participating. Maryland first participated in the early 1950’s and in these 60+ years has had 6 National first place winners, second only to California’s eight. Our most recent National Winner was second place in 2017! Let’s keep up the good work! Please visit our website for more information: mdlegion-oratorical.org and contact your District’s representative on our Oratorical Committee.

Anita Trotter, Committee Chairperson and Facilitator

Baseball

Our 2019 season is now over after a very close and well played tournament. Congratulations to Funkstown, Garrett County. LaPlata, Laurel, Ocean City, Severna Park, Talbot and host Cumberland, for making the tournament a great success. Having survived all the rain and 15 well played games, Funkstown emerged as the winner and represented Maryland in the Regional 2 playoffs. However, having lost 2 games they were eliminated.

The 2019 season had a lot of ups and downs and protests, which I hope to avoid next season. These issues will be addressed at the baseball meetings this winter. Our 1st meeting will be Sunday October 13th, 2019 at Laurel Post 60 at noon. This is a time change from previous years.

One of the major issues to address is the updating of the tournament bid process as it has not been updated in 15 years. Tournament bids will be reviewed at our January 2020 meeting. Our meetings are open to all who wish to attend. A full list of meeting dates will be published in the Warrior when they are all confirmed.

It is with great sadness that I must pass along that baseball in Maryland has lost a supporter and committee member, Jim Palace, who passed away on August 3rd, 2019. Please remember him in your prayers.

Mike Riston, Baseball Chairman
Greetings Legionnaires, I hope you are enjoying your Summer. I want to thank all the posts that sent their Service Officers to the training session in Ocean City. The training materials are available on our Department Website under “MD Legion College 2019 Files”. Me and Doug attended the Department Service Officer Training in Indianapolis from 7-9 August 2019. The new law firm, Bergmann & Moore, did a phenomenal job revamping the training curriculum. They handle about 30% of the appeals at the Board of Veterans Appeals and their overall success rate is 95%. Bergmann & Moore is one of the largest law firms in the country focusing solely on Veterans’ disability benefit claim process. Please visit their website: vetlawyers.com

Updates for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

Claims under the Appeals Modernization Act are starting to pick up. Our office has seen Supplemental Claims and Higher-Level Reviews completed in under 45 days; 125 days is the maximum for these decision review requests.

Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure. This extension of the presumption is a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law takes effect January 1, 2020. Veterans who previously were denied for an Agent Orange related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the Veterans’ service. They may qualify for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) if the Veteran’s death was caused by one or more of the presumptive conditions; the death certificate needs to list these conditions. The new law affects Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, as defined in Public Law 116-23. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

As of August 11, 2019 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated portions of the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities that evaluate infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies. Claims pending prior to August 11, 2019 will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to a Veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after August 11, 2019 will be rated under the new rating schedule. Updating the rating schedule for conditions related to infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies, enables VA claims processors to make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure Veterans understand these decisions.

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


Below, Maryland Delegation preparing to march in the National Convention parade

Above, Maryland Legion Family Leaders have their homecoming. Pictured left to right SAL Commander Bob Manzo, Auxiliary Junior President Rylie Lach, Auxiliary President Linda Green and Legion Commander Philip Dorsey.