As of this writing, our holiday season is over and by the time you receive this article, we will be into spring. For those who did not attend the Department Christmas Party held at Sykesville Memorial Post 223, we had an excellent turnout and it was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Ron Holcombe and Sykesville Post 223 for an outstanding job. I can’t believe we will be attending our District Receptions in just a couple of weeks. Time is moving so fast, and we still have a lot to do in membership and Post Consolidated Reports. I designated the month of February BUDDY CHECK month and requested all Posts to contact their members to find out how they are doing and if there is anything we can do for them. Thank them for their service to our County and for being a continuous member in their Post. Our members are a valuable asset. We want all members to know they are appreciated, wanted, and are our family. They play a very important part in our Post, Department, and National programs.

The Department of Maryland is currently 87.13% and 6,194 members away from making 100%. Hopefully, our upcoming District Membership Rallies will likely be very successful and put us much closer to our 100%.

Our National Commander, James W. “Bill” Oxford will be coming to visit the Department of Maryland March 27-29. On Saturday morning, we will visit Antietam National Battle Field followed by lunch at Boonsboro Post 10. Saturday evening, we will host our National Commander’s Banquet at Francis Scott Key Post 11. We want to give our Commander a very warm Maryland welcome, so we encourage you to come out for an enjoyable program and have the opportunity to meet Commander Oxford.

Another reminder as was announced in my last article, my Special Project for this year was changed from Heroes to Hometown/Wounded Warriors (H2H) to Veterans Assistance Program (V.A.P). This change was made so that we could accommodate earlier veterans such as the Vietnam Veterans who have the high suicide rate and who need and deserve our assistance. The H2H program only covered veterans from 2001 to present. You may send your donations to this special fund, regardless of the amount, to Department Headquarters earmarked V.A.P. All contributions will be greatly appreciated and will go to a very worthy cause.

With spring coming on and the many yard chores to be done, give yourself a break and plan on attending one of your Post meetings and visiting with other veterans. Remember, we are family and your Post is there for you.

Please keep our men and women serving in harm’s way in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you for your support. God Bless America and our Troops.

Philip R. Dorsey
Department Commander
Reflections of an Adjutant

By Russell W. Myers, Jr.

Usually this article starts with a reference to winter. However, I do believe old man winter passed us by this year, well I sure hope I didn’t jinx us all now! Well soon summer will be upon us, and our Department Convention July 14-17, 2020 will be here. The Convention attendance has been increasing the last several years and we hope to make this year’s event worth the week of vacation for the family. If you have not attended the convention, it is a great experience, and highlights the great works of our Posts and Programs. This year Legion College will be very similar to last year’s courses and this educational opportunity is a must for all Legionnaires. The online Legion College registration is open now, so check on the Department Website to access that link to the Eventbrite site.

Make your travel plans now and save if you book your room by March 31st. Several hotels have provided discount rates for American Legion members, so make sure you check out the website at www.mdlegion.org for all the latest news. Look at the left hand column of the main page. The convention and the things to do outside the convention floor have been increasing in recent years. The Fish Fry and Opening Reception have grown, and offer great social events for the family to share on Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening respectfully. Through more participation and activities it can do nothing but continue to grow. The Department Convention Corporation is always looking for ways to make the Convention a better experience for the whole family. Bring your family to the many events and share some good times with all the attendees. We are also working on additional sessions for convention attendees to get valuable information to use, and we are trying to schedule a speaker to discuss our National Security issues as well.

On Monday afternoon July 13th at 4:00pm the Southern MD District Fish Fry is held at the Convention Center. Come over and grab a bite to eat, enjoy the music by the DJ, and share good times with everyone. The large hall we used last year to get people out of the afternoon sun will be available again, and I suspect there will be more to do for everyone. We are working on more activities for the kids to share in the experience. This event is a highlight every year, and the Southern MD District asks for donations to help support this event. There is now an online donation option for the Fish Fry at mdlegionconvention.org so please support them in the effort.

The Joint Opening Ceremony and Reception (See Schedule of times in this edition) are being sponsored by Diamond Games, and the evening is a great way to kick off the Convention and everyone is invited. There is light fare and drinks provided. The leading candidate for National Commander Mr. Paul Dillard from Texas will be the keynote speaker at this event.

A somber and moving tribute to those members that have answered the Last Roll Call is held during our Post Everlasting Ceremony on Wednesday evening at 7:00pm. NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE IN TIME FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. This program takes hard work from a dedicated group of members, and if you have not ever visited this service make this the year to help fill the hall. It is a fitting tribute to our departed, and everyone should plan to attend.

There are so many things to see and do during our week in Ocean City, invite a fellow Veteran and family to come join us.

Some of the other things going on that week are (check out ococean.com/events):
- Sundaes in the Park – 7-9pm Sunday July 12th at Northside Park
- Create your own sundae for a nominal fee, sit back, listen to music and watch the sun set over the beautiful Assawoman Bay. Additional ice cream novelty and beverage options are available for purchase. Bring your picnic blanket and beach chairs.
- Movies on the Beach – 8:30pm Monday July 13th at 27th St Beach (big games too)
- Family Beach Games – 6:30pm Tuesday July 14th at 27th St Beach
- Movies on the Beach – 8:30pm Wednesday July 15th at 118th St Carousel Beach
- Family Beach Games – 6:30pm Thursday July 16th at 118th St Carousel Beach
- Sunset Park Party Nights – 7-9pm Thursday July 16th S. Division Street on the Bay (admission to the park is free, while beverages, including beer, are available for purchase.)
- OC Beach Dance Party – 8:30-10:30pm Thursday July 16th DJ hits the Caroline Street Stage
- Talbot St Beach Fireworks - 10:30pm Thursday July 16th at Talbot & Boardwalk
- Movies on the Beach – 8:30pm Friday July 17th at 27th St Beach (big games too)

MEMBERSHIP!

Membership! Membership! Membership!

We have now reached that time of year when it gets really tough! Those that renew their membership quickly have already done so and now its time to go after the stragglers. To be fair, those that have not renewed may be dealing with personal hardships. We must reach out to these comrades in a caring manner and ascertain how we may help. Financial hardship can be taken care of by either post credits, post funds or willing post members. Those that have not renewed because something – or someone – has upset them must be handled on a case by case basis. What needs to be done? It certainly helps to be proactive early on and not allow things to get worse. Get your Membership Committee together and use the “Buddy Check” protocols to find out what’s going on with your unpaid members.

Then, of course, new members. All of us, no doubt, encounter veterans in our daily lives. With the Legion Act, specific war eras are no longer required, so its wide open. The Commander’s Challenge Coin is given to all who recruit 3 new members. Then it is imperative to get the new member involved in the life of the post. Find out what interests them or how their personal experiences or professional life can be of service.

I am happy to report that so far we have met every Membership Milestone this year, the most recent being 85% on February 7. As you read this, we have probably passed the 90% marker (4 districts are already there). Mountain District has held on to Number One most of the year! As of this writing we have 9 posts that are 100% or better! Post 55 in Bel Air was the first. The Southern Maryland District has more posts eligible for the Oyster Bowl than I can remember at this point in time!

But – BUT! – it is not time to sit back and relax. Thirty One Posts did not make the 85% goal on February 7. Seven just did make it. Again, as of this writing, we will need 1,378 for the March 6 goal of 90%. I trust as you read this, we are there!!

Now is the time to be recruiting and considering leadership positions for next year. Planning the make-up of next year’s various committees is currently underway. With the Department Reorganization, 2020 – 2021 will be the last year for County Commanders and the current seven district structure. Much effort will be required in order to transition. It will prove to be an exciting time!

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department Adjutant
Greetings: I want to take this opportunity to thank the Post, County and District Commanders that have invited me to their meetings and events. I have learned a wealth of historical information about the American Legion from the grassroots members and I had the honor to meet and speak with a few World War II veterans and I enjoyed listening to them talk about their journey and experience during their time of service in the military.

I enjoyed attending the SAL & AUX Department meetings and events.

I have enjoyed travel over this Great State of Maryland 2,860 miles for the period of November 2019 through January 2020.

Membership Incentive Programs: I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Post that’s maintaining their membership retention and reaching their percentage target dates. Remember we still have a few more months to go with working on the membership and don’t slow down or stop working on the membership retention and recruitment because you feel like you have done all you can do. During my travel I have noticed that some of our Post, County and District Commanders haven’t taken advantage of the Membership Incentives Programs. A lot of time and effort goes into planning and processing the Membership Incentives Programs so that members can receive the following awards: Cash Bonus, Commanders Jacket, Outstanding Post Commanders Cap, Post Plaques and the Department Commanders Membership Challenge Coin. These awards will be presented to the Post that obtains 100% or Higher with their membership percentage and maintaining the membership target dates. You can contact your Post Adjutant for a copy of Membership Incentive Programs or you can go online mdlegation.org click on Membership Incentives to read and print a copy. I’m encouraging all of our members to take advantage of the Membership Incentives Programs.

Consolidated Post Report: I want to take this opportunity to speak about the importance of submitting the Consolidated Post Report. The Consolidated Post Report was established in 1975 in order to assist the Departments in documenting of the various activities the Post has done during the twelve-month report period from June 1 through May 31st. The Consolidated Post Report may be the most beneficial document the Post will complete. The Post information is used when the National Commander and others testify on Capitol Hill on behalf of all veterans, each Post has a story to tell and when all the Departments speak collectively our strength is magnified as a Veterans Organization. It’s mandatory that the Posts submit the Consolidated Post Report Annually.

You have two options of submitting the Consolidated Post Report:

A You can go online mylegation.org look for Consolidated Post Report under Post and Department and print a blank copy to be used as a sample and start filling it out until you receive the Department End of the Post Report Packet. It should arrive by way of the US Postal Service sometime in the first week of April and enclosed you will find the Consolidated Post Report Form and Narrative Forms. Transfer the information from the sample form to the Consolidated Post Report Form that was mailed from the Headquarters and once it’s complete submit it to Headquarters.

B You can go online mylegation.org and complete the Form and submit it to National Headquarters and a copy will automatically be sent to the Department Headquarters.

Once the Department Headquarters has receive the Consolidated Post Report and Narrative Forms from the Posts either electronically or by way of US Postal Service on or prior to May 31st before the close of the business day the Form will be stamped received and then distributed out to the Department Committees Chairpersons for the purpose of judging along with the Narrative Forms. Awards will be presented to the winning Posts that have documented their participation and dedicated to the enhancement of the American Legion Programs at the Annual Department Convention, Ocean City, MD July 15-17, 2020. In the past few years our Department hasn’t been able to reach 100% in submitting the Consolidated Post Reports timely manner because I believe the problem is as follow:

- The Post has not participated in any of the American Legion Programs.
- The Post has not donated funds or raised funds for the Legion Programs.
- The Post has no record of Volunteer hours or Community Service hours.
- The Post has not formed committees to work the Legion Programs.
- The Post has forgot to fill out the Consolidated

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THE FREE STATE WARRIOR Subscription: $3.00 per year to non-members of The American Legion. Members of the Department of Maryland, a $1.50 of the yearly dues pay for publication. You are eligible to belong to The American Legion if you served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States during these periods: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941 to the cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. Congress.

Yours in Legion Service,

Patricia McCoy
National Executive Committewoman

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Phyllis A. Tatro

Mobilization Director:
William E. Mather

Publications Office:
Steve M. Tatro

Sgt. at Arms:
Marline A. Metcalfe

Editor:
Robert Berlett (NCD)

Publication Committee:

Publication Staff:

Alt. N.E.C. . ...........................................David Johnson

National Exec. Comm. ..................Patricia McCoy

Adjutant .................................................................Russell W. Myers, Jr.

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3rd Vice Commander ... Ruth A. Higgins

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Service Office ..........................Adrian Gamboa

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Yours in Legion Service,
The One-Hundred-Second Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Maryland, Inc., is hereby called, and in conformity with the action of the One-Hundredth-First Annual Convention and the Department Executive Committee, will be held in Ocean City, Maryland, Tuesday, July 14 through Friday, July 17, 2020.

PURPOSE

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, hearing and considering resolutions, and for the transaction of such other business as may be deemed necessary to come before the Convention.

REPRESENTATION

The Department Convention shall be comprised of representatives from each Post who shall be members in good standing of the Post by which they are elected, and all Past Department Commanders while in good standing in their respective Posts. Each Post having 15 members in good standing shall be entitled to two Delegates. Each Post having 26 members in good standing shall be entitled to three Delegates and to an additional Delegate for each additional fifty members after the first twenty-six. Each Post shall be entitled to an Alternate for each Delegate. Membership strength of the Post, for determining Delegate strength, shall be computed as of paid-up membership in Department Headquarters at the close of business on June 9th. All District Commanders, all Department and all National Officers listed in ARTICLE VI, Section I of the Department Constitution in the year in which they serve (excluding the Department Adjutant if serving as an employee of the Department), and all Past Department Commanders, shall be Delegates-at-large to Department Convention, with right to vote thereat, to be exercised by them with their respective Posts. Every Post shall file the name and number of the Delegates and Alternates to the Department Convention at least twenty days prior to the convening of the Convention, (no later than June 24th this year), and at the same time pay the registration fee of $15.00* per delegate. Each Post having more than 200 members shall have at least one member of their Delegation on the Convention floor at all times. *Cost of Delegates will be $20.00 or on after June 25th. As ratified by the DE Committee on 16 Feb. 2020.

VOTING

ARTICLE V, Section 3 (a) On all matters of business except the election of Department Officers, members of the Department Executive Committee and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention, and except amendments to this Constitution or the By-Laws, voting shall be by voice, and the decision of the chair thereon shall be final unless a vote by roll call be demanded; and upon demand of any person having proper voice such other manner of voting shall be employed.

(b) The election of all Department Officers, and National Officers, shall be by roll call except where, in the case of individual offices, the necessity of a roll call is dispensed with by unanimous consent.

(c) The election of members of the Department Executive Committee and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention shall be in accordance with such rule as adopted by the Caucus in and for the District from which such members, delegates and alternates are elected, but in no case shall any such rule prevent the nomination of any member from the floor of such Caucus by any person having proper voice thereat. Voting at Caucuses shall conform to the provisions of Subsection (d) hereof.

(d) In all voting, the vote of each Post shall be equal to the total number of Delegates to which such Post may be entitled. Each Delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The vote of any delegate who may be absent shall be cast by the delegate’s alternate and the vote of any delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the present delegates from the member’s Post. An alternate whose delegate is present may nevertheless move into the place of an absent delegate whose alternate is not present and thereby acquire the right to vote provided he/she is the senior alternate present at the time. Alternates shall have all of the privileges of delegates, but may only vote as herein set forth; provided the alternate’s registration fee is paid. At the conclusion of all roll call voting, for each individual election required to be conducted by the Department Convention, the Department Officer conducting such elections shall ask if any Post desires to amend or change its vote; or ask does any Post, which has not cast its vote during the roll call vote, now wish to cast its vote. No Post shall be allowed to pass more than one time. After the Department Officer conducting the election has made the aforesaid announcement and taken due note of all change in voting and has recorded the vote of any Post which originally passed, then the conducting officer shall announce that the vote is closed and direct that the tally be taken, and the results announced.

(e) All Past Department Commanders, while in good standing in their respective Posts, shall be delegates for life to all Department Conventions with voice and vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Posts and to all District Caucuses at which any election provided for in this Constitution shall be held, and at which their respective Posts may be entitled to vote. The failure of such Post to properly register its delegation shall not deprive such Post Department Commander of their right to vote, provided the Past Department Commander is properly registered as a delegate.

(f) All Department Officers as set forth in Article VI of this Constitution and National Officers of this Department shall be Delegates-at-large to Department Conventions, with the right to vote thereat, in the year in which they serve, to be exercised by them with their respective Posts; provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall give to any of such persons the right to more than one vote.

ELECTION

The following Officers are to be elected. A majority of the authorized vote of the Convention shall elect: Per ARTICLE V, Department Convention

Section 4 (a) The Department Convention shall elect a Department Commander, a Department First Vice-Commander, a Department Second-Vice Commander, a Department Third Vice-Commander, a Department Judge Advocate, and a Department Treasurer, for the term of one year. A National Executive Committee and an Alternate National Executive Committee shall consist of two years and such other officers as may be authorized by the Department Convention for such terms appointed by the Department Convention.

Section 4 (b) The Officers listed in Section 4 (a) to be elected by the Department Convention shall be nominated and elected for office in the following order and sequence and for the term of office described in Section 4 (a):

1. An Alternate National Executive Committee – 2 Years.
2. A National Executive Committeeman – 2 Years.
3. A Department Treasurer – 1 Year.
4. A Department Judge Advocate - 1 Year.
5. A Department Third Vice-Commander – 1 Year.
6. A Department Second Vice-Commander – 1 Year.
7. A Department First Vice-Commander – 1 Year.
8. A Department Commander – 1 Year

DISTRICT CAUCUSES

(Article V, Sections 7-8-9-10)

A caucus shall be held by each District during, or not more than twenty days prior to, the convening of each Department Convention, at which caucus the election of the District Commander, District Vice Commanders, County/Area Commanders, such Department Executive Committee members, and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention of The American Legion to which such District may be entitled by this Constitution shall be held. It shall be the responsibility of the District Commander in and for each District to see that at least fifteen days prior notice of any District Caucus convened for the above purposes shall be given by mail to the Commander of each Post in the District, and no such Caucus shall be deemed legally convened in the absence of such notice; provided, however, that any District may caucus at any Department Convention upon three hours notice by announcement from the Rostrum, and all the purposes of this section may thereafter be fulfilled just as though prior written notice had been given. The action of such District Caucus as to the election of any of the officials named in this section shall not be final until ratified by the Department Convention.

Section 8. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention or at a District Caucus when one third of the Posts in the Department or District, as the case may be, are represented by duly elected Delegates or Alternates.

Section 9. Each District in Caucus not more than twenty days prior to the convening of the Department Convention shall elect one delegate and one alternate delegate to the National Convention, this delegate and alternate delegate is to represent the first thousand members of their respective District; there shall also be elected a delegate and alternate delegate for each succeeding thousand members. The five Department Delegates shall consist of the Department Commander, the Department Commanders for the immediate prior year, the Department Adjutant, the Alternate National Executive Committee and the Department First Vice-Commander who hold office at the convening of the next succeeding National Convention. The alternates for these delegates shall be appointed by the Department Commander. Any additional delegates and alternate delegates are to be elected by the District with the highest percentage of their previous year’s membership as of the day that determines the Department Convention membership strength for the District.

Section 10. Each District in Caucus not more than twenty days prior to the convening of the Department Convention shall elect one representative to the Department Executive Committee for each unit of 300 members or major fraction thereof in the said District. The membership strength of said District for this purpose shall be computed as paid up membership in the Department Headquarters at
AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND, INC.

the close of business on the 35th day prior to the convening of the Department Convention or as of July 1st, in each year, which ever date shall first occur. In the event any District shall have less than its first and only unit of 500 members, it shall nevertheless be entitled to elect one representative to the Department Executive Committee. In the event that there are an equal number or more members representing the District than there are counties or areas within that District, then there must be at least one representative from each County or Area elected to the Department Executive Committee, if the County or Area requests such representative.

The District shall submit the names of all elected as above for ratification to the Department Convention such ratification constituting election. At such Caucus each Post shall be entitled to the same number of votes as for the Department Convention. No District Caucus for the purpose of such election shall be convened sooner than June 24th, 2020.

MEETINGS

The opening Joint Session will begin at 8:00 PM, Tuesday night, July 14th. All business sessions of The American Legion, Department of Maryland, will be held in the Convention Hall (Bayfront Ballroom) and will start promptly at 8:00 AM on Wednesday, July 15th, Thursday, July 16th and Friday, July 17th, unless changed by the Convention.

Business sessions of The American Legion Auxiliary will also be held at the Performing Arts Center (First Floor of Convention Center), Ocean City, Md. A quorum shall exist at the Department Convention when one-third of the Posts in the Department are represented by a duly elected Delegate or Alternate.

CREDENTIALS CERTIFICATES

For Credentials Certificates for Delegates and Alternates. A check made out to The American Legion, Department of Maryland, at $15.00 per Delegate, and MUST accompany the Credentials Certificate. All Constitutional Delegates (ART. VI) and Past Department Commanders must also pay the $15.00 Delegate Fee or they can not vote. It is extremely important that the certificates be forwarded to Department Headquarters immediately after Post elections. County Commanders should personally check each Post under their supervision to see that the above is complied with. All Post Adjutants are charged with the responsibility of returning the Credentials Certificates to us at the earliest possible moment. *$20.00 on or after June 25th. (As ratified by the DEC on 16 FEB, 2020).

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Department Constitution and By Laws must be submitted in typewritten form to Department Headquarters by June 5th, 2020 in time for the Department Adjutant to forward copies to each Post in the Department at least 30 days prior to the convening of the Convention. These amendments require a two-thirds majority of votes of the representation at the Convention. However, the Constitution may be amended without notice by unanimous vote at any Department Convention. (ARTICLE XIII, Section 1).

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions shall be submitted typewritten, in triplicate, to the Resolutions Committee at the Convention, or prior to June 5th to Department Headquarters. By order of the Department Executive Committee, each resolution MUST have supporting documents and authority attached to each copy. Resolutions submitted to Department Headquarters prior to June 5th will receive preferred attention. Those submitted after that date will be considered only if the Convention Resolution Committee considers them to be of paramount importance to the Legion.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The thirty-fourth Annual Department Convention, 1952, unanimously resolved no one should be allowed to occupy the main portion of the Convention floor on election day except Officers, Delegates, Alternates and working press. (Ref: Resolution #13)

POST OFFICERS

ARTICLE VIII, Sec. 6 of the Department Constitution states, “All Post Officers for the ensuing year shall be elected at least twenty days prior to the opening of the Department Convention and they shall assume their duties as such within twenty days after the closing date of the Department Convention.” YOU MAY HOLD YOUR INSTALLATION PARTY ANY TIME YOU WISH; YOUR POST OFFICERS MUST TAKE OFFICE DURING THE TIME ABOVE STATED. THE DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS REQUESTED THAT EACH POST FILE A COPY OF MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTS FOR EACH POST COMMANDER AND ADJUTANT WITH DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS. THE DOCUMENTS WILL NOT BE RETURNED BUT RETAINED IN DEPARTMENT FILES.

REPORTS

1. You are urged to promptly file your Certificate of Elections of Post Officers which MUST be signed by both the Post Commander and Adjutant. The Certificate on the bottom of this form means exactly what it says. You MUST EXAMINE the service record of each of your Post Officers to certify their eligibility.

2. Consolidated Post Report Form should be filed promptly.

3. All other Report Forms. If you have lost or misplaced any of these report forms, send an e-mail or call Department Headquarters and ask for a duplicate.

REGISTRATION

For Tuesday the Registration Desk will be open at the Convention Hall beginning at 7:30 AM, July 14th. DO NOT SHOW UP BEFORE THEN AND EXPECT US TO ACCOMMODATE YOU. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO OPEN EARLIER THAN 7:30 AM ON TUESDAY.

NO CREDENTIALS ARE REQUIRED FOR ATTENDANCE AT DEPARTMENT LEGION COLLEGE. EVERYONE WILL BE GRANTED ACCESS TO THESE COURSES WITHOUT CREDENTIALS.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday we will open at 7:30 AM. You are urged to pick up your Delegate’s Credentials and badges as soon as possible in order to facilitate the business of the Convention. ARTICLE IX, Section 2 of the Department Constitution provides that the amount of annual Department dues shall be determined by the Department Convention. Consequently, we hereby notify you that dues will be set and voted upon as usual by the Department Convention.

NOTE: DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND DISTRICT COMMANDERS MUST HAVE THEIR WRITTEN REPORTS IN DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ON OR BEFORE MONDAY, JUNE 1ST OR THEY WILL NOT BE Duplicated FOR THE CONVENTION. REPORTS SHOULD BE TYPED AND DOUBLE SPACED. BE SURE TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF YOUR POST DELEGATION ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR AT ALL TIMES. PLEASE WEAR YOUR LEGION CAP AT ALL TIMES IN OCEAN CITY SO EVERYONE KNOWS WE ARE THERE. REMEMBER TO TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WANT TO BE TREATED YOURSELF. WE WANT TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION ON THE PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND THE THOUSANDS OF VISITORS. EACH POST DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SHOULD LIST HIS OCEAN CITY ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER AT THE DEPARTMENT REGISTRATION DESK IN THE OCEAN CITY CONVENTION HALL. PLEASE DO THIS AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE IN OCEAN CITY, BUT NOT BEFORE 7:30 AM ON TUESDAY, JULY 14TH. A POST COMMANDER OR ADJUTANT MAY PICK UP THEIR POST DELEGATION REGISTRATION PACKET. ANY OTHER DELEGATE PICKING UP THE POST DELEGATION PACKET MUST PRESENT A WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE POST COMMANDER OR ADJUTANT LISTING THEM AS THE AUTHORIZED DELEGATE TO SIGN FOR THE PACKET. ALL DELEGATES MUST BE PAID.

THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE 2020- 2021 DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THIS IS TO BE HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION.

THERE WILL BE NO FEE FOR LEGION COLLEGE THIS YEAR (But note there will be no pins or Certificates given out this year.) Go to the Department Website under the “Web letter/Mailings” left column header and register online for the courses each Legionnaire wishes to attend.

DISTRICT RECEPTIONS

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<th>DISTRICT</th>
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LIT Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019
Veterans share 6 top insights for financial preparedness

1,507 U.S. military veterans recently offered their best advice for active-duty servicemembers and veteran families regarding personal financial decisions. The survey was conducted for the newly released Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019, prepared by the Legionnaire Insurance Trust for the departments of The American Legion in celebration of the Legion’s 100th anniversary.

A mantra of saving
The overwhelmingly most common advice veterans shared was, “Save, save, save!” The importance of saving to financial health and preparedness can’t be underscored enough, but what does this mean in the context of veterans’ daily lives? Many veterans gave insights in their top advice.

Start saving from Day One, paying yourself first.
Veterans who start saving early are more likely to be in a strong financial position, according to the Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019. In fact, the report found that 60% of veterans who say they are ahead in their financial plans for retirement started saving immediately after high school or within the first 2 years of joining the military.

In their advice, these veterans comment that it’s not always easy to save, but it is well worth it in the long run:
“Start when it’s still uncomfortable—you won’t regret it later.”
“If you wait, chances are you’ll wait too long.”
“Even $10 [could] be worth hundreds by the time you retire because of compounding.”
“You will always feel you are not making enough. Do not let that keep you from saving.”
“Pay yourself first.”
“Focus on saving as much as possible with each check—almost like it’s a car payment or a requirement.”

Save as much as possible.
The more you can save, especially early on, the better financially prepared you will be. That can mean making sacrifices to ensure you’re saving enough.

Looking ahead and working from a concrete financial plan unique to your circumstances and

Continued from page 16
Post 109 Honors WWII Veterans

The Post 109 family, together with the Historic Elkridge Young Marines, joined together to honor Dewey Lowman’s World War II veterans at a luncheon on Sunday, January 26th.

Following a brief welcome, posting of the colors of our armed forces, and a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance our oldest veterans and their guest were served lunch by the Young Marines. These veterans enjoyed their meal seated with Legion, Sons, and Auxiliary members as well as members of their own families and friends.

Frank Bressler, a decorated WWII U.S. Army Combat Medic and Past Post Commander of the Jewish War Veterans, shared his wartime experiences, including his unit’s part in the capture of the Bridge at Remagen, which helped shorten the war in Europe and surely saved thousands of lives.

I couldn’t be prouder of the unity of spirit among the Post 109 family while planning and coordinating this celebration of our members from this country’s greatest generation.

A special thanks goes out to Mission BBQ for serving a delicious meal. Another special thank you to the Historic Elkridge Young Marines for their participation, helping to make this day a memory we will long keep in our hearts.

Clyde Thomas
Commander, Dewey Lowman Post 109

Legislative Commission Sets 2020 Priorities

The Department Executive Committee’s Legislative Commission has established priorities for the 2020 including establishing a State Income Tax checkoff for the Maryland Veteran’s Trust Fund.

Managed by the Maryland Department of Veteran’s Affairs, the Fund assists veterans and their families who are in dire financial need. By law it is now funded by contributions from public donations at the various state casinos. Other veteran charitable organizations such as therapy services for wounded and disabled veterans may also be considered.

Other measures include:
Follow up on Senate Bill 816 which allow widows of service retired veterans to receive a property tax relief of up to 20 percent over a five-year period. This bill, authored by Senator William C. Smith, District 20, was signed into law by Governor Hogan but requires county approval.

Establish a second veteran’s home. With Charlotte Hall at near resident capacity, there is a need for an addition residence and care area. The measure does not require state support yet. Working with county and Federal officials will be the key to success for this proposal.

Establishing a Korean War Recognition Day. In the 2019 session this bill was unanimously passed by the House of Delegates and assigned to the Senate’s Education, Health and Environment Matters Committee but did not receive passage.

Other concerns the Commission agreed to review include support for an enhanced Women’s Veteran Memorial, an increase in the set aside percentage for veteran owned businesses in state contract awards, and expense free burial for widows being interred at a state-owned cemetery.

Perry Point
“After” Christmas Party 2020

On Saturday, January 11th a group of dedicated volunteers from “The Great Northern Central District” descended on the grounds of the VA Hospital in Perry Point, MD. When we arrived, we met with members of the Legion, Auxiliary and S.O.N.S. from the following Posts: 17, 38, 47, 109, 116, 122, 180, 182 & 183. We set up tables and chairs, the food line and Santa’s Workshop. The ladies set their “wares” on the tables around the gym. When the patients started coming in the gym they immediately went to the “goody” tables. They were very respectful and couldn’t thank the volunteers enough for their generosity. Some of the ladies handed out “Thank You” cards and letters written by school children and area Church’s thanking the patients for their service. From there they proceeded to the food line where they were served potato & macaroni salad, fried chicken, chips, desert and soda. We served 67 veterans and had 55 volunteers. Traditional Christmas Carols and seasonal music was played throughout the day for the patients. Everyone enjoyed themselves and hopefully this Baltimore County event will continue for years to come. Thanks to all the volunteers that made this event possible.
**NORTH EASTERN SHORE DISTRICT**

**Serving Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties**

Greetings Legiionnaires, Hope everyone enjoyed the holidays that we’ve had. I do have to apologize for being slow in getting out to some of the Post as it’s been trying for me dealing with health issues of both myself and my wife. Now that I hopefully have a handle on all of that I’ll be able to get around a lot more. I want to Thank everyone on the job that you all are doing with membership and for the NESD being the District that is holding down first place right now, I know it’s been a struggle but keep doing what you are doing as we are getting closer to the end. We are now getting ready to move on to elections that are upon us and I hope that all goes well with that as it can be trying to vote individuals into positions that require the work that needs to be done.

You should be getting info on our reception that will be at Post 18 in April shortly if you haven’t already been informed of it. The DEPARTMENT is in need of more help with Boys State so if you can spare any time to help out it will be appreciated and I’m sure you will find that it is a rewarding experience for all involved, to see what these young men can do in one week is unbelievable.

Emidio “Buzz” Taylor
North Eastern Shore District Commander

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**Baltimore District**

**Serving Baltimore City**

Greetings Legion family, Time sure does fly when you are having fun. It’s been fun working with the Baltimore District and the community these few months. Membership is always a big concern and I know each post is working hard on retaining their members, but some are coming up a little short in reaching their goals. Congratulations to Chesapeake (McVet) Post 127 Commander Brown for leading the way throughout the Department by preparing to celebrate the birthday and the charity work that the American Legion can assist them in.

As we look into the future, we will begin by preparing to celebrate the birthday and the charity work that the American Legion can assist them in.

R e m e m b e r a l l Consolidated Post Reports are due on or before June 1, 2020. Post adjutants will receive a packet in the mail or you can go online Mdlegion.org and download the packet if you want to start on your report before receiving your mail copy. Please reach out to the Department 2nd vice commander Ronald Holcombe for questions or assistance on consolidate report.

District upcoming events: District Banquet – March 15, 2020 at Northeastern Post 285, Baltimore, MD; Memorial Day Service – May 30, 2020 at National Cemetery, Catonsville, MD

“Lean forward in the Foxhole and expect the unexpected”

Your commander,

Austin L. Ball Sr.
Baltimore District Commander

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**Mountain District**

**Serving Allegany and Garrett Counties**

Greetings from the snowy (almost) Mountain District!! While the weather is more wet than our usual snowy season, the Posts have been very active increasing memberships, doing Buddy Calls, and being seen in our communities. As we remain the #1 District in the Department of Maryland, we know that the other districts are striving to unseat us, and that’s ok, because the ultimate goal for all of us is reaching out to Veterans, all veterans, in the great state of Maryland.

While we know that you’ve seen us at the National Security briefing and dinner in December and the Kent Island DEC meeting, we also met for our district meeting February 23. Plans are now finalized for the Mountain District Reception Saturday, April 18, 2020 at Proctor Kildow Post 71 with fellowship beginning at 1pm and lunch at 2pm. Cost is $25. Because this is not a DEC site this year, we also met for our district meeting February 23.

Greetings Comrades, At the beginning of the year, I assured you we would accomplish a lot. The success of our organization is determined by two key factors, our members and our programs. Day after day, Comrades in the Southern Maryland District are active in the community, and our programs have reached children and youth, but we must also remember the Veteran. Our number one priority is the life of the service member and their families. Every Executive Board Meeting or Post Meeting is conducted with the life of the Veteran at its core. Over the last four months, we have developed our constitutions to help us provide a unified and standard framework for success, held Post Inspections to remind us to stay on course, and discussed our post operations to help us be more efficient in our spending and the upkeep of our facilities, this the life of our committed Comrades.

As we look into the future, we will begin by preparing to celebrate the birthday and the history of our awesome organization (March 15), celebrating our membership efforts at our annual Oyster Bowl in Post 82 (March 21), honoring the academic achievements of Children and Youth throughout the District (April), and finally preparing to close out another year of success with complete and on time submission of our Post Elections (May), and finally our Consolidated Post Report (June). Every month since we started last July, we have

Continued on page 13
Greetings from the SESD, Happy New Year!! To everyone especially the SESD members. What a great turnout to include 2nd Vice Commander Ron Holcombe at the SESD Christmas party. Several Posts within the District came together to celebrate the holiday by doing what we do best—giving to others. Blankets, toys, coats, clothes, and toiletries were collected and handed out to shelters, the Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, and churches. Wreaths Across America on the Shore was extremely successful, every service member and their spouse at the Veterans Cemetery received a wreath with some left to spare and money to start next year’s campaign. Truly amazing is when local members took it to the next level and put 800 wreaths on their local cemeteries for the veterans in Wicomico County. Outgoing Wicomico County Commander Clarence “Eddie” Myers was presented an appreciation plaque to let him know how much we appreciate his dedication to the Legion, State, and Nation, we will continue to keep him in our prayers and know without a doubt that when he can he will make it to the meetings for the District and his Post. Thank you to Past County Commander Elwood Wyatt for stepping in without skipping a beat to keep Wicomico County contacted with the District and the State. Thanks also go out to Gordan Murray of Snow Hill Post 67 for taking over the SESD baseball commission—“Let’s Play Ball”. Good Luck to all the teams but especially to our returning champions from the SESD.

On the shore, we started the year with Synepuxent Post 166 hosting the Detachment of Maryland, Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Winter DEC and Drawdown. Corporal Herman Hughes Post 87 hosted a Veterans Appreciation Seafood Dinner where 45 veterans enjoyed a free meal and more than a hundred guests of the Legion supported the Post building fundraiser. Duncan Showell Post 231 hosted their annual Martin Luther King Jr. dinner that was a great success and Past District Chaplain Russell Franklin and Synepuxent Post 166 both hosted a Four Chaplain program to honor their sacrifice and bravery great participation.

The next few months will fly by as we celebrate the Legion Birthday, honor our National Commander, then our State officers at seven district receptions. The SESD will be honoring our state officers on April 25, 2020 beginning at 4 pm at Synepuxent Post 166, the cost is $20. Please contact Adjutant Ralph Cordrey at 443-614-1527, DEC Kenny Carter at 410-742-5798 and myself at 410-725-1731. We are recruiting for Boys and Girls State training, which is a resume-worthy achievement for all young men and women going into the 12th grade. Finally, we will end the year with Memorial Day honoring our heroes that have given their all.

I know each and every Post in the State of Maryland is working hard on membership and the SESD is no different. Thank you to everyone for working so hard in obtaining each milestone set and congratulations go out to Howard J. Purnell Memorial Post 145 and Spring Hill Post 237 for being over 100 percent. Now is the time to start filling in those consolidated reports, so when those narrative packages arrive you will be able to transcribe information from your sample consolidated report to either online at mylegion.com or the paper copy you will receive. It’s not hard and it is necessary to let the Nation know as a whole what the American Legion is doing for God and Country, but more importantly for every veteran past, present, and in the future—you report does count.

Sharon Egerson
SESD Commander

WESTERN MARYLAND DISTRICT
Serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties

Greetings to all veterans and members of The Great State of Maryland, American Legion from the Great Northern Central District of Maryland.

We pray everyone is having a prosperous and safe New year.

As Northern Central District Commander, I am very proud to announce that Harford County Post 55 is the first Post to reach 100% enrollment prior to January 1st of any year in our states History. Our District has been busy by talking with a few restaurants and stores in our area to see if they would allow us to place a sign in their window or by their Cash register announcing how to join The American Legion Post in their community. Also, I’ve been talking with other Veteran Organizations to try and hold a group breakfast during the month at various locations to promote our Veterans. If anyone is interested in obtaining a sign, please contact me the signs for store windows are approximately $25 each. The retractable one with stand (about 6ft tall) is $120.00. These tall signs are great for Fairs, membership rally’s and more.

In the past few months, I have attended the American Legion State Baseball Meetings in Laurel Md. I have also attended the Baltimore County Council meeting at Jackson & Johnson 263 and the Howard County Council meeting. I attended meetings at Rosedale Post 180 and Essex Post 148; as well I’ve participated in Parades in Dundalk and Columbia.

In closing, I’d like to emphasize the success of this District depends on each and every member working together to build the strongest District in the Dept. of Maryland.

Yours in service for God and Country

Mark Phoebus,
Northern Central District Commander

SOUTHEASTERN SHORE DISTRICT
Serving Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties

Greetings from all veterans and members of the SESD. It is the beginning of a new year and a new decade. It is the time for us to re-evaluate our goals and the work we want to do together to make this an even better year than the last.

The SESD is working on membership and we are looking for members to join our ranks. If you know of someone who you think would be interested in joining, please encourage them to come to one of our meetings or to contact me directly.

The SESD is also looking for volunteers to help us with our upcoming projects and events. If you have any skills or talents that you would like to contribute, please let us know.

We are planning a number of events throughout the year, including a VA Health Identification Card (VHIC) distribution event, a Veterans Appreciation Breakfast, and a number of other events to honor our veterans.

Please keep an eye on our website and social media for updates on these events and how you can get involved.

Thank you for your support and for helping us make this year even better than the last.

SESD Commander
CONVENTION PROGRAM
THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND, INC.
JULY 14, 15, 16, 17, 2020
CONVENTION HALL, OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND
PRESIDING OFFICER, PHILIP R. DORSEY, DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

MONDAY JULY 13, 2020
7:30AM  Convention Center Set up; Volunteers always accepted
4:00 PM Southern Maryland District Fish Fry (North Parking Lot of Convention Center) (All welcome; donations appreciated)

TUESDAY, JULY 14
7:30 AM  Registration - Convention Hall – Room 210, 2nd Floor
**8:00 AM Legion College – Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
9:00 AM  Legion College – Classes Located as Posted
1:00 PM  Chaplain Course – Room 217, 2nd Floor
MyLegion.org Course Room 205, 2nd Floor
Other classes to be announced in May Free State Warrior
**6:30 PM Joint Reception for Opening Session (Light fare; All are invited) (Sponsored by Diamond Games)
8:00 PM Pre-Convention Joint Session by the Convention Corporation, The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, Eight & Forty, Sons of The American Legion – Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Call to Order, Colors, Invocation
Introduction of Distinguished Guests
Principal Address
Benediction - Colors

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15
7:30 AM  Registration - Convention Hall – Room 210, 2nd Floor
8:00 AM  Business Session, Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Call to Order, Invocation, Advancement of Colors, Roll Call
Membership Awards
National Staff Introductions
Veteran Employment
Community Services Programs
Rules Committee Report
Expression of Appreciation
Major Richard W. Meehan
Secretary, Maryland Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Historian Report
SAL report
ALR report
VSO reports
After Session  Past Department Commander’s Luncheon (Invited Guests)

**7:00 PM  Post Everlasting Ceremony – Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor

THURSDAY, JULY 16
7:30 AM  Registration - Convention Hall – Room 210, 2nd Floor
8:00 AM  Business Session, Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Call to Order, Invocation, Advancement of Colors, Roll Call
Time and Place Report
Resolutions
Children and Youth Report
Americanism Report
Officers Reports
NAT’L SEC Report
VA & R Presentation
Rehabilitation Foundation
After Session  Rehabilitation Luncheon (Invited Guests)

FRIDAY, JULY 17
7:30 AM  Registration - Convention Hall – Room 210, 2nd Floor
8:00 AM  Business Session, Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
Call to Order, Invocation, Advancement of Colors, Roll Call
Session, Call to Order, Invocation, Colors
Introduction of newly elected Officers of The American Legion Auxiliary
Election of Officers
Installment of newly elected Officers
After Session  First meeting of new Department Executive Committee

TREASURERS REPORT
From Gary Gifford

Posts are adopting new Constitution & Bylaws this year. Since I tend to focus on the financial elements of Post management, I noted the guidance found in ARTICLE V - POST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and ARTICLE VI- FINANCE of the CBL.

In these two Articles are references to “non-budgeted” expenditures, which implies there would be a budget for most expenditures.

I admit that I was very surprised to learn during the CBL considerations that many Posts do not have a Budget. Apparently, not everyone agrees that a budget is a worthwhile endeavor. Some say budgets are too restrictive; that a Post needs flexibility in financial decisions that a budget does not permit.

Even the Federal government adopts a budget as a road map for the appropriation process. The Executive branch proposes a budget to fund the cost of government. The Legislative branch uses it to appropriate funds for the agency to pay its costs without going back to Congress for approval. For other costs subsequently planned but unauthorized, the agency must return to Congress for a new appropriation.

This model was used in the new Post CBL. The Executive Committee can be deemed the Executive branch, and the Post members the legislature. In the Post’s case, the budget is proposed by the EC, then approved by the membership. The Post’s standing rules can be used to establish procedures for expenditure authorizations in compliance with Articles V and VI.

The important thing about budgets is the planning required to create it, and the benefits of using it to measure Post success. Your Post will benefit from having that budget. You can’t know whether you are achieving your business goals if you don’t know what they are.
On Friday January 24, 2020 members of The American Legion Family, Department of Maryland braved the chilly waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The event was the 24th Annual Polar Bear Plunge to benefit Special Olympics of Maryland. Detachment Commander Bob Manzo presented a check in the amount of $15,000.00 to Jim Schmutz (CEO of SOMD) for the Championship Bowling Tournament held in Gaithersburg. With donations still coming in The American Legion Family Plunge Team has raised over $14,000.00 to help these Special Athletes of Maryland. With our donations we helped over 8,000 Special Olympic athletes participate in 27 sports year-round in MD. These competitions bring athletes and their families together through sport, helping to create a world where opportunity is not limited to disability. Again, thanks to each and every one of our Plunge Team, Legion, Auxiliary, SONS and National SONS Commander, Clint Bolt for their dedication in this event.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It is hard to believe that we are 8 months into the 100th Anniversary year – 2019-2020, and Spring is on the horizon! A Viral Infection kept me down during the holidays, but despite it I managed to visit Perry Point VA Medical Center and the dedication of benches honoring Past Department President Becky Dunn, McVets Official Visit, Washington DC VA Medical Center Christmas Luncheon, some Gift Shops and Christmas parties, Department Christmas Party at Sykesville, and funerals for our Department Chaplain, Jane Nolan and Past Southern Maryland District Commander, Bill Milligan. Our Department Office surprised me with holiday cheer at the office, and we welcomed our newest part-time employee, Karen Swank. Our two Cash Blast fundraisers were awesome and very successful. Thanks to all who bought, sold, and helped at the functions. In addition, I have spent many hours with the administrative duties of the job, and traveled to the Department Office and Greenbelt American Legion for various meetings. Although our February Department Executive Meeting was lengthy, it was informative and we got a lot done!

I am looking forward to the Official Visit to Charlotte Hall Veterans Home on February 22, 2020, and the many Department Receptions honoring our Officers which begin on or about March 14, 2020. National President, Nicole Clapp will be visiting Maryland on March 21-23, 2020. The banquet is being planned for March 21st at Bernard L. Tobin Post 128 in Aberdeen with the Juniors and a 100th Anniversary celebration. Sunday, March 22nd she will be attending the Creative Arts Festival in Bowie followed by light meal at Severna Park Post 175, and Monday will find us at Fort McHenry. As details will be out shortly, we hope you can attend at least one of the events honoring our National President.

My project this year -- The Johns Hopkins University Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Clinic. Donations have been awesome, and I am most grateful for all of them to support this debilitating disease – . the goal has almost been met. If you want to donate, please send donations to our Department Office, check payable to “ALA Department of Maryland, earmarked President’s Project.

We are always grateful for the Legion Family support to our Veterans programs within the American Legion Auxiliary. With your support, we can keep the momentum flowing for our Veterans and their families.

As always, the American Legion Auxiliary members are continuing to spread Holiday/Christmas Cheer Throughout the Department of Maryland spiriting Teamwork in Service-Not Self to the Veterans, the Youth, the Communities, and the Active-Duty Military. This has made me a very proud President. Our Volunteers Brighten Lives for the Veterans and Active Duty Military in 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. 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: cjsslg@aol.com
MEMORIAL BOOK INSCRIPTIONS

In Memory of Francis M. White, by Audrey Rhodesy.
In Memory of Francis M. White, by Richard & Bonnie Zentz.
In Memory of Francis M. White, by Mike & Cindy McIntyre.
In Memory of Francis M. White, by Charles & Jane Meyer.
In Memory of Francis M. White, by Stephen & Beverly Adamo.
In Memory of William “Bill” Milligan from Southern Maryland District Youth Camp.
In Memory of Mark A. Main, by Maryland Boys State Staff.
Scouting In Maryland

The Scouting community lost a link to the founder in December with the death of the Third Baron of Gilwll, Robert C. Baden-Powell at age eighty-three. His brother, D. Michael Baden-Powell, Fourth Baron of Gilwll, succeeded him. Both are the grandsons of the founder of the Scouting movement, Robert S. S. Baden-Powell. This may sound like a heap of hereditary nonsense when viewed through the prism of the modern world with all the problems of everyday, but when you consider that any organization is only as good as the traditions it is based on then you must ask are we living up to our values of the Four Pillars.

February is the birth month for Scouting B. S.A., the month it was chartered by Congress, the month of the founder’s, Baden-Powell’s birth, 22nd of the month, in all a busy time. Scouts will be accepting their rank badges at Courts of Honor another step on the road to Eagle. Cub Scouts will hold “Blue & Gold” Banquets and Pinewood Derbies, where Cub Scouts and adults race wooden cars for the honor of a plastic trophy. In all it’s the recognition that you did something and not simply hung out with the group.

The pieces of cloth we hand out to mean the Scouts are accomplishing their goals, but what do we do for the Leaders that hold together the program that allow the youth to flourish. In the military we can read the accomplishments, on the uniforms of the individuals. In Scouting it is much the same, the leaders wear “knots” that tell of the training they have done, and any honors that have been bestowed.

Honor can be their awards from youth, the Arrow of Light Knot, the Eagle Knot or Order of the Arrow Service Knot. A leader can be awarded a Scouter’s Leadership Knot, a District Award of Merit or the top prize a Silver Beaver Award. All these awards are recognition given because someone else believed they were doing their best for the program. Typically it is the unit committee that puts forward the application, but often such recognition goes unnoticed. The individual drifts away when their child ages out of the program, taking with them a wealth of knowledge.

Even a trinket hung around their neck or a piece of embroidered cloth should reward talent and longevity. One I remember was a plaque I was given after I left being Cub master and moved on to the Boy Scout troop. It was for providing a large trash bag full of plastic film cans for a neckerchief slide project at one of the Pow-Wows. The company I worked for processed film and these cans were normally tossed away. My plaque read, “For recycling to the point of ridiculousness.” I treasure it to this day.

Finally, organizations the leaders belong to other than scouting are recognizing their efforts. Known as an “Affiliated Organization Award” in The American Legion’s version is a gold knot on a blue background with the small emblem pin attached in the center. The requirements are found in The American Legion publication on their website.

A quotation from Mike Rowe (Dirty Jobs) bears repeating in reference to how we prepare the youth of our communities. He said that in the end it is not the metal the Scout receives, but the mettle they learn from the lessons of Scouting.

2nd Vice Commander
Continued from page 3

Post Report Form because it wasn’t one the Post Adjutant priorities because of all above.

Once the Post Adjutant has the Consolidated Post Report Form in hand they should fill out the TOP PORTION of the Form with the Post information and then read the other Eight Sections and they might find that the Post has participated in at least one of the Programs. Remember to sign and date the Form and submit it to the Department Headquarters prior to or on May 31st regardless of how many questions wasn’t answered on the Form just submit it as is.

My goal is to reach a 100% prior to or on May 31st and with your efforts and dedication I know that we can reach the goal of 100% in a timely manner and if you need my assistance feel free to contact me. Dept. 2nd Vice 443-854-0990.

Department Commander Philip Dorsey: He has declared February as Buddy Check Month. He’s asking that the Post setup a visiting committee or if you know of a member that you haven’t seen or heard from in a few weeks, take time out of your busy day to check on him/her to see how they’re doing and remember don’t mention renewing their dues, let them bring up subject.

Food for thought: Once you have a job to do you must first understand what you are doing and then you will love what you are doing so that you will be successful in doing the job.

Ronald L. Holcombe
Department 2nd Vice Commander

Southern Maryland District
Continued from page 8

put our members and our pillars at the forefront of our efforts. Our programs will bring in new members, and our support for each other will bring in hundreds, but our service will bring in thousands. We are in the business of providing service to Veterans, let us strap on the ruck sack one more time, and accomplish this last mission. In the meantime, the Commodore of the Southern Maryland District would like to share our condolences to the family of our Comrade, Mr. William “Bill” Milligan who has transferred to Post Everlasting. As most of you know, Bill was a Navy Veteran that wore many hats in the Department of Maryland, and provided his services at the Southern Maryland Youth Camp, Sons of the American Legion, Legion Riders, and Southern Maryland District Commander. He will be missed, but he will want us to continue to move the District forward.

Let us rededicate ourselves to God and Country through our time and effort as well as we remember the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future. Members of the Southern Maryland District are stronger together than we are apart. God Bless you Comrade, and may God bless our country.

For God and Country,

Haywood Moss
District Commander,
Southern Maryland District

The Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run…
On The Road Again

The first annual Maryland Gold Star Memorial Ride is set for April 4, 2020. The ride will benefit the Maryland Gold Star Mothers and the programs they support. We will be leaving from Bernard L. Tobin, American Legion Post 128 at 10:00 am on Saturday, April 4, 2020. Registration will begin at 8:00 am. We will have coffee and donuts for everyone.

Our planned ride will be to travel from Legion riders Post 128 via some of the most scenic backgrounds to the Gold Star Memorial located near the Concord Point Light House in Havre De Grace, MD. We plan to land in HDG by 11:00 am we will conduct a ceremony at the memorial, have a few guest speakers by noon we will leave the memorial and begin our travels again by scenic back roads through the Eastern Shore of Maryland to the Gold Star Memorial and World War II Memorial in Annapolis. We plan to visit both memorials and by about 3:00 pm to make our final stop at The American Legion in Severna Park, MD for our final ceremony. We be accompanied by the Rolling 9/11 memorial.

We are asking for Legion Family support for this NEW event. Please help support our Gold Star Families by attending one of the stops along the way. Please use this Facebook group link to watch the ride progress and join the group to remain informed on the ride https://www.facebook.com/MDGoldStarMonuments/

During the ride we will be selling Tee Shirts, additional patches as well as well plan to run several 50/50 raffles and at the end of the ride at post 175 we will be conducting a silent auction. All these fund-raising events will benefit The Maryland Gold Star Mothers Chapter of Maryland, Inc.

Our Ride Captains for the day will be several Gold Star Mothers so come out cheer them on as well make our way around the Western and Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Remember we cannot do this without everyone’s support and assistance. So please if you would put April 4, 2020 on your calendar our Gold Star Mothers and Families greatly appreciate your support!

Serving for GOD & Country
Continuing to Serve American’s Veterans

William Sparwasser
Past National Commander
Sons of The American Legion
Detachment of Maryland

Maryland Gold Star Monument Ride
2020 Chairman

John R. McLaughlin
Scouting Committee Chair
Department of Maryland

Ronald L. Holcombe
Department 2nd Vice Commander

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know that we can reach the goal of 100%
to or on May 31st regardless of how many
Remember to sign and date the Form and
Sections and they might find that the Post has
Post Report Form in hand they should fill out

13
FREE STATE WARRIOR
Spring 2020

Scouting In Maryland

The Scouting community lost a link to the founder in December with the death of the Third Baron of Gilwll, Robert C. Baden-Powell at age eighty-three. His brother, D. Michael Baden-Powell, Fourth Baron of Gilwll, succeeded him. Both are the grandsons of the founder of the Scouting movement, Robert S. S. Baden-Powell. This may sound like a heap of hereditary nonsense when viewed through the prism of the modern world with all the problems of everyday, but when you consider that any organization is only as good as the traditions it is based on then you must ask are we living up to our values of the Four Pillars.

February is the birth month for Scouting B. S.A., the month it was chartered by Congress, the month of the founder’s, Baden-Powell’s birth, 22nd of the month, in all a busy time. Scouts will be accepting their rank badges at Courts of Honor another step on the road to Eagle. Cub Scouts will hold “Blue & Gold” Banquets and Pinewood Derbies, where Cub Scouts and adults race wooden cars for the honor of a plastic trophy. In all it’s the recognition that you did something and not simply hung out with the group.

The pieces of cloth we hand out to mean the Scouts are accomplishing their goals, but what do we do for the Leaders that hold together the program that allow the youth to flourish. In the military we can read the accomplishments, on the uniforms of the individuals. In Scouting it is much the same, the leaders wear “knots” that tell of the training they have done, and any honors that have been bestowed.

Honor can be their awards from youth, the Arrow of Light Knot, the Eagle Knot or Order of the Arrow Service Knot. A leader can be awarded a Scouter’s Leadership Knot, a District Award of Merit or the top prize a Silver Beaver Award. All these awards are recognition given because someone else believed they were doing their best for the program. Typically it is the unit committee that puts forward the application, but often such recognition goes unnoticed. The individual drifts away when their child ages out of the program, taking with them a wealth of knowledge.

Even a trinket hung around their neck or a piece of embroidered cloth should reward talent and longevity. One I remember was a plaque I was given after I left being Cub master and moved on to the Boy Scout troop. It was for providing a large trash bag full of plastic film cans for a neckerchief slide project at one of the Pow-Wows. The company I worked for processed film and these cans were normally tossed away. My plaque read, “For recycling to the point of ridiculousness.” I treasure it to this day.

Finally, organizations the leaders belong to other than scouting are recognizing their efforts. Known as an “Affiliated Organization Award” in The American Legion’s version is a gold knot on a blue background with the small emblem pin attached in the center. The requirements are found in The American Legion publication on their website.

A quotation from Mike Rowe (Dirty Jobs) bears repeating in reference to how we prepare the youth of our communities. He said that in the end it is not the metal the Scout receives, but the mettle they learn from the lessons of Scouting.
From Chaplains Desk

Ephesians 4:2: “Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”

Happy New Year family and fellow comrades. I wanted to speak to you from my heart in regards to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Moral Injury. Before I share some information about PTSD, I would like to share with you two truths that I hope encourage us all who suffer from this and who feel ashamed, weird, embarrassed or like no one else will understand us. (1) You are not alone, and (2) There is Hope.

PTSD is a standalone disorder because of the components needed to make it what it is. You can certainly be scared to death and suffer anxiety, but the major issue with PTSD is an event that is beyond human experience to endure. It’s a trauma that alters your reality, distorts your senses and changes your memories. You physically feel strange and you hurt all the time, can’t put it into words so that people understand. When someone you care about suffers from PTSD, it can leave you feeling overwhelmed and it can take a heavy toll on your relationships. It can be hard to understand your loved one’s behavior and at times, why they are less affectionate and more volatile. You may feel like you’re walking on eggshells or living with a stranger. You may have to take on a bigger share of household tasks, deal with the frustration of a loved one who won’t open up, as well as deal with their anger or disturbing behavior.

The symptoms of PTSD can also lead to job loss, substance abuse, and other problems that affect the whole family. It’s hard not to take the symptoms of PTSD personally, but it’s important to remember that a person with PTSD may not always have control over their behavior. Your loved one’s nervous system is “stuck” in a state of constant alert, making them continually feel vulnerable and unsafe. This can lead to anger, irritability, depression, mistrust, and other PTSD symptoms that your loved one can’t simply choose to turn off. Of course, with the right support from friends and family your loved one’s nervous system can become “unstuck” and they can finally move on from the traumatic event. This in many cases will take counseling, possibly medication, time, patience, forgiveness, understanding, a buddy or accountability partner and most importantly Faith in God.

Here are some ways we can help one another if we are dealing with or know of a friend or family, Legion, SAL, or Auxiliary member who is dealing with PTSD: 1. Provide social support by visiting the person or calling and checking on them, 2. Be a good listener; 3 Rebuild trust and safety. If you are the one suffering from PTSD, seek professional help to learn coping skills to anticipate and manage triggers. Some of these are physical discomfort, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, sickness. Others can be bodily sensation that recalls the trauma, including pain, old wounds and scars, or a similar injury. Also strong emotions, especially feeling helpless, out of control, or trapped. Feelings toward family members, including mixed feelings of love, vulnerability, and resentment. Professional therapists and counselors can also help you deal with volatility and anger. A family member of the one dealing with PTSD will also have to get some kind of professional help because this is a condition that ends up affecting the entire family unit.

If you feel you are or know of someone who is dealing with, or you have more questions about PTSD, you can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. They can be reached, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and can get you the help you need to deal with this in a healthy manner. There are also some more resources and tools you can use to learn about PTSD and it’s treatment. These include PTSD Coach: A mobile app to manage symptoms and connect with care.

About Face: A website where Veterans, family members and clinicians share their experiences with PTSD. By watching their videos, you can learn about PTSD, treatment options and get real advice from people who have been there.

Web Resources: Information on topics including the basics of PTSD treatment and why treatment helps. As the world’s leading research and educational center of excellence on PTSD and traumatic stress, they are there to guide you on your journey from treatment to recovery.

Before I close, I wanted to reach out to all the Post, County, and District Commanders and fellow Chaplains. If you are interested in hosting a Chaplains training at your post for the upcoming year, please contact me at (240)383-6920 so we can schedule the day, date and time. The training is for all Post, Sal, and Auxiliary Chaplains and anyone else interested in becoming a Chaplain.

In closing, thank you all for the great work you continue to provide to your fellow comrades and their families and friends. Remember, I am readily available to not only Legion members but to any veteran who is in need of someone to talk to, who may need a prayer, or just needs to be connected to his/her American Legion family. I just want to make sure NO ONE FEELS ALONE!

1 John 4:18 says to cast out fear from your heart. So let Love reign down upon us, bringing healing to our mind, emotions, will and spirit, even our body. Overwhelm us with Your healing power. Overwhelm us with Your loving presence. Amen

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

S.A.L. Commander

Greetings, Spring is fast approaching, with that comes a renewal in nature. Plants blossom, trees green and the grass grows once more. It is also a time that we can renew ourselves. Recommit to working with the Legion and Auxiliary to support them in their work for our veterans and children and youth. April is Children and Youth Month, now is the time to reach out to your local rec councils to see about sponsorships for little league baseball and softball. Your support may be the difference to help a team participate. We are also entering the time when Proms are being planned and many schools schedule events that could benefit from your support as well. Finally, renewal also means reaching out to our members who have not renewed their dues. We need them in our squadrons so reach out and see what you can do to assist them in maintaining their membership. Perhaps there is a hardship, or other issue that is keeping them from renewing. A simple phone call or knock on the door can make the difference.

Membership is doing outstanding; at this writing we have exceeded the March 11th 80% goal and are well on the way to the April 8th 90% goal. Let’s keep climbing those Membership Ladders that VC Fayer gave to all the District Commanders. If you need assistance from Detachment, let us know, we stand ready to lend a hand when requested.

I encourage all our Squadrons to sign up for MySAL.org, this is a valuable tool that allows your Adjutant real time access to membership rosters and now includes the ability to transmit your renewals direct to National online. Simply request access, sign up for E-Check access and you can start submitting your renewals and new members online. It’s just like online shopping, safe and secure and your members are counted within days on the National report. Save the cost of stamps and the need to drive down to Gay Street to submit your membership, also saves on the cost of check replacement. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact Detachment and we will help you.

We had a very successful Mid-Winter Weekend in Ocean City in January. Starting with the Annual Polar Bear Plunge, where I had the honor to represent the Detachment and present a $15,000 check to the Special Olympics of Maryland for our continued sponsorship of the Annual State Bowling tournament. We were honored to have National Commander Bolt and Leading Candidate Fox attend the Plunge and then participate in the weekend training, social activities and our DEC. I thank PNC’S Sparwasser, Gannon and Gladden for putting together a well-received training session on Saturday Morning.

We had over 61 in attendance including the Department Commander and many department Officers, Auxiliary officers and several Past Department Presidents. We followed that up with our Annual Special Olympics Drawdown, where through your generosity we raised nearly $9,100. Our DEC was well attended, and we had Lynn Coffland Founder and President of the Catch A Lift Fund make a presentation on the program and showed a video about how Catch A Lift is helping our disabled veterans through exercise and motivation.

“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 an awning and concrete patio for the Memory Care Wing. Additionally, they have other needs that we plan on supporting with the monies raised. The Catch A Lift Fund is a program that provides grants to wounded and disabled veterans with a 50% or higher rating 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. A part of our fundraising efforts, we will be holding a Commanders Project Cash Raffle and a raffle for a beautiful handmade quilt, these are both $5 each, and both raffles will be drawn at the Detachment Convention in June.

This year’s remaining DEC meetings are as follows:

May 17, 1 PM DEC Post 66 in Bowie. Please note this was originally scheduled for April 5, but due to a scheduling conflict with a National event, I needed to reschedule this date. Thank you for your understanding, I hope to see you there.

Yours in Service,
Bob Manzo
Detachment Commander

FREE STATE WARRIOR
Spring 2020
Hughes Post #87 in Cambridge received charter on March 22, 1930, making them the Federal Post #19 received their temporary charter on March 13, 1929). Post 19 eventually removed the employment requirement from their eligibility. The Post has a great collection of history and the historical research done in support of the Posts property’s landmark designation report is available online by clicking here, and more information is available at the Post website as well. The highlighting of the Post’s traditions and history is a story of veterans continuing their service to the community, State, and Nation. Please take the time to look over the web resources as there is no way to do full justice to the historical significance in this article. By highlighting a few of the Post’s accomplishments and a few short excerpts from the history serve to show the early service of African-American Veterans in the Department of Maryland.

The Landmark Designation Report lays out many accomplishments. The report elaborates that although the Jim Crow era placed barriers and challenges to the members of Post 19 they served in membership roles in the larger state and national structure, continuously fighting for equal opportunities for African-American veterans both in the organization and in society at-large. The report details the leadership roles when it states, “In 1935, Clarence Tydings was elected to serve as one of eleven State delegates to the National American Legion Convention. In 1940, Percy S. Smith was elected State vice-commander-at-large. In 1944, John Stewart, commander of Federal Post No. 19, was elected to the State executive committee of the American Legion. They were involved in state and national conferences of the American Legion, and helped vote for important resolutions, such as the 1934 Federal Anti-lynching bill, and the 1935 Federal American Legion resolution disapproving the discrimination practiced against “colored ex-service men by white posts in several southern states”.

The Department, starting in the late 1930’s, did include the veterans of the Historically Black Posts in leadership roles. Percy Smith’s service as a Department Vice-Commander in 1940 is one example. While these early leaders’ service and drive for inclusion is remarkable, it took 55 more years until the first African-American Veteran was elected as Department Commander. More on that later.

Another source of pride for Post #19 was the Blue Hat Drum and Bugle Corps founded in 1932 by Post 14 and Post 19. The Landmark Designation Report details this accomplishment.

“In 1932, the Blue Helmet Drum and Bugle Corps was organized by efforts of both the Federal Post No. 19 and Walter Green Post No. 14. This was the first black American Legion drum and bugle corps in the state. William Brady served as drum major. Brass marching bands played a significant role in African American culture in the early 20th century. As stated by William Pleasant “They were usually the only organized social vehicles that permitted the full participation of Black artists as both performers and as leader/composers.” “The Blue Helmet Drum and Bugle Corps was embraced by the City government as an excellent ambassador of the City. Over several years, the Corps received funding from the city to partially finance their attendance at annual national American Legion conventions. The Blue Helmet Corps won a number of awards at state and national levels and participated in countless conventions, parades, and competitions. The Blue Helmet Drum and Bugle Corps was a tremendous source of pride for the neighborhood.”

Reading the Landmark Designation Report and the Post history offers many more accomplishments and experiences from the Post’s perspective, and it is recommended reading to understand fully the pride that exists within the Historically Black Posts in Baltimore, and the State of Maryland.

In July 1995, a man respected for his quiet graceful influence, and his steadfast ethics was elected as the first African-American Department Commander for the Department of Maryland. Robert M. Johnson, a Veteran of Maryland. Robert M. Johnson, a Veteran and member of Randolph Furey Post #170 in Baltimore, and the State of Maryland.

In July 1995, a man respected for his quiet graceful influence, and his steadfast ethics was elected as the first African-American Department Commander for the Department of Maryland. Robert M. Johnson, a Veteran and member of Randolph Furey Post #170 in Charles County was elected that July, and his achievement was no small accomplishment. Bob, as we all knew him, was a role model and rock within our Department. Melvin Smullen, the Department’s 3rd African-American elected to be Department Commander said of Bob, “Bob was an inspiration to me, and he was always looking to help people. Bob’s legacy is still spoken about today, and his hard work and dedication to the American Legion will live on forever.”

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In July 1995, a man respected for his quiet graceful influence, and his steadfast ethics was elected as the first African-American Department Commander for the Department of Maryland. Robert M. Johnson, a Veteran and member of Randolph Furey Post #170 in Charles County was elected that July, and his achievement was no small accomplishment. Bob, as we all knew him, was a role model and rock within our Department. Melvin Smullen, the Department’s 3rd African-American elected to be Department Commander said of Bob, “Bob was a very supportive Legionnaire and a true leader. He was always looking to help people and improve our community. Bob’s legacy is still spoken about today, and his hard work and dedication to the American Legion will live on forever.”

The Department of Maryland has benefited from the strong advocacy of these leaders and Posts. They have served with distinction on our governing committees, and among the officer ranks for most of the organization’s history. While racial barriers and bias clouded some progression and opportunity, the perseverance of these Veterans paved the way to a better, more inclusive organization today. When one looks around the Department Executive Committee meetings today they see a diverse group of Veterans that benefit from the history of many of our forbearers.

In July 2002 Leroy Thornton of Northeastern Post 285 in the Baltimore District was elected as Department Commander. Leroy was the 2nd African-American elected to serve in the highest position within the Department. Leroy also was elected as National Executive Committeeman and served a two-year term in that office. His long time leadership and tireless efforts in the City and throughout Maryland reflect great credit on himself and all of The American Legion.

There are many more personal stories, and Post histories, one could highlight in this article. My hope is to spark the efforts to save these memories for posterity and promote a celebration of a part of our history that is not as familiar as many other aspects. The elevation of these stories and history shows the proud traditions, and clearly answers the question of why the members would want to maintain their heritage. While many of these Historically Black Posts have integrated membership over the years their early segregated existence served also as a positive place for community organizing for Veteran needs in the community, civil rights and other issues, as well as offering a respite for Black Veterans from the racism which they faced in segregated society. Just as Black Churches served the needs of their members and communities, so these Posts served in a similar manner. Asking why they still exist ignores the proud traditions, and in many respects is not a fully informed frame of reference.

The Department of Maryland has benefitted from the strong advocacy of these leaders and Posts. They have served with distinction on our governing committees, and among the officer ranks for most of the organization’s history. While racial barriers and bias clouded some progression and opportunity, the perseverance of these Veterans paved the way to a better, more inclusive organization today. When one looks around the Department Executive Committee meetings today they see a diverse group of Veterans that benefit from the history of many of our forbearers.

It is past time to make this a constant effort to promote all Veterans’ contributions, and share the history, good and bad, in order to highlight the proud history of the African-American Veterans and the accomplishments shared with the Department of Maryland. The way ahead is lit brightly by their deeds and the inclusion of all Veterans is solid foundation for the future!

Russell W. Myers Jr, Department Adjutant
Greetings Legionnaires, I hope 2020 is treating you good so far. For our office, the first 2-4 months of the year go by quickly because we have a lot of hearings for our Veterans. These hearings are with the Baltimore Regional Office and the Board of Veterans Appeals. If you are trying to reach us, please leave a voicemail or send us an email. Please understand that whenever we return phone calls our number appears as the VA’s general number which is 1-800-827-1000. This has caused confusion with our Veterans and sometimes it takes multiple attempts before we finally are able to reach them.

I encourage all Post Commanders to sign up their service officers for the Post Service Officer class taking place during our 2020 Department Convention. It’s very important to have them in attendance because this class gives them the tools to assess situations with Veterans in their post or community. This is very helpful for me and Doug; with this information we can take care of our Veterans more efficiently.

Here are a few updates from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA):

**Blue Water Update – As of 16 January 2020, over 400 claims have been completed. Over $13 million was awarded for these claims.**

The VA is still hashing out effective dates. The presumptive period applies to vessels that were within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam during the dates established by the VA and DOD. The presumptive period for the vessels does not extend beyond May 7,1975. Hill and Ponton is a law firm out of Florida, they created an interactive map for Blue Water Navy. You simply select a ship and it will give you a pin drop showing if it was located within the 12 nautical miles. If the ship was within the 12 nautical miles, it will give you the dates and coordinates. To access this interactive tool simply type hillandponton.com in your browser and click on the link at the top of the page.

The Fairness for Korean DMZ Veterans Act (Tom MacArthur Act) allowed about 1500 veterans who served at or near the Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ) an increased time period to qualify for Agent Orange-related illnesses disability. The start of the presumptive period was moved back 7 months to September 1, 1967 (originally April 1, 1968). The end of presumptive period is still May 7,1975. This act does not alter the list of units that have been identified by the VA and DOD as being exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) – If the Veteran served on a Navy or Coast Guard vessel that is determined to have operated offshore of Vietnam as defined in the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 and the cause of death was from a condition related exposure to an herbicide, such as Agent Orange, then VA may award DIC benefits on that basis to surviving spouses and other eligible dependents.

Expanding Benefits for Caregivers - As part of the VA MISSION Act, the VA will be working to give more family caregivers access to the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers so they can be supported as they care for Veterans of all eras. Currently, this program is only available to eligible Veterans injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. VA is currently not accepting applications for Veterans of other eras.

Beginning in the summer of 2020, or once the Secretary has certified that VA’s new caregiver information technology system is fully implemented, they will be expanding eligibility for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Once the system is certified, VA will begin accepting applications in 2 phases: First, family caregivers of Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975, will become eligible for this program. After 2 years, family caregivers of Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975, and September 10, 2001, will become eligible.

Adrian G. Gamboa
Department Service Officer

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

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

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**LIT Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019**

*Continued from page 6*

goals is another key piece of advice from veterans.

“Don’t wait to start planning for the future. The earlier you start saving and thinking ahead, the better prepared you’ll be.”

“Write down your financial goals: short-term, medium-term and long-term.”

“Stick to your plans and goals.”

“Talk to other members and advisors about retirement early.”

Educate yourself.

A key component to successfully planning and saving that many veterans highlighted is making sure to build your knowledge of personal financial issues. The report found a strong tie between financial preparedness and knowledge: 91% of veterans who are ahead of schedule for retirement consider themselves knowledgeable about personal finances, while 75% of veterans who are behind say they are not knowledgeable.

“Use any and every opportunity and resource you can access or utilize.”

“Do your homework, and research every decision you make so you know exactly what you’re getting into.”

“Listen to and learn from every military pension presentation. So much value is given that I learned from them and continue to use what I learned.”

“Take advantage of classes that will prepare you financially for your time in the service and for when you are discharged. Learn about organizations that can help current and former military persons.”

Discover more insights from veterans

The Veterans Financial Preparedness Report 2019 additional advice from the 1,507 veteran respondents as well as insights from a Certified Financial Planner™ with 16 years of military service, including three deployments. The report includes key findings about veterans’ financial situations and shares 5 attributes of veterans who are financially prepared.

The free report is available to all veterans and their supporters at www.TheLIT.com.