



For God And Country . . .

FREE STATE WARRIOR



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Commander's Message

David Heredia, Commander, Department of Maryland

Honoring Legacy, Service, and Unity: Celebrating Black History, Women in Service, and the Strength of Our Legion Family

Greetings, Department of Maryland Legion Family, As we step into the months of February, March, and April, we are reminded of the rich history, remarkable contributions, and unwavering dedication of those who have served our nation, both in uniform and beyond. February marks Black History Month, a time to honor the sacrifices, leadership, and achievements of African Americans throughout our history. March is Women's History Month, where we recognize the pioneering spirit, resilience, and service of women in the military, Department of Defense civilian workforce, and veteran community. March 15 marks the birthday of The American Legion, celebrating 105 years of service and advocacy for veterans, their families, and our communities. March 29 is National Vietnam War Veterans Day, a time to honor and remember those who served during the Vietnam era and to ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten. Finally, as we look to April, we prepare to celebrate Legion Family Day on the last Saturday of the month, recognizing the strength, unity, and shared mission of our Legionnaires, Sons, Auxiliary, and Riders as we continue serving those who served.

African Americans have played a pivotal role in shaping our nation's history, from the brave men of the Buffalo Soldiers and the Tuskegee Airmen to modern-day leaders in service, innovation, and advocacy. Here in The American Legion Department of Maryland, we proudly honor the trailblazers who have made a lasting impact, including Past Department Commanders Robert Johnson, Leroy E. Thornton, Melvin G. Smullen, and Ronald L. Holcombe, along with many others, who have exemplified the values of service, sacrifice, and leadership—ensuring that the voices of all veterans are heard, respected, and empowered.

Women have also been an integral force in our nation's defense, serving with honor, courage, and distinction in every branch of the military. Since the Revolutionary War, more than 3 million women have served in the U.S. Armed Forces—many giving their lives in the service of our country—and their unwavering dedication has helped redefine what it means to be a patriot. Their sacrifices, both seen and unseen, remind us that freedom is often secured at a profound cost.

One striking example of this indomitable spirit is embodied by the Hello Girls, the pioneering female telephone operators of World War I. These brave women were tasked with establishing and maintaining secure lines of communication amid the chaos of war. In a time when clear, reliable communication was a matter of life and death, the Hello Girls not only bridged critical gaps between command centers and the battlefield, but also shattered prevailing gender norms. Despite facing skepticism and initial exclusion from official recognition, their essential contributions eventually earned them the honor they deserved—affirming that the strength and skill of women are indispensable assets to national defense.

Today, as we celebrate Women's History Month, we also recognize the historic service of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion—the first and only all-Black Women's Army Corps unit to serve overseas during World War II. These women were charged with the monumental task of clearing a massive mail backlog that had stalled, thereby ensuring that morale-boosting letters and packages reached American troops at the front lines. Despite overcoming racism, sexism, and the challenges of wartime logistics, the "Six Triple Eight" completed in six months what was originally estimated to take a year. Their story, now brought to life in the newly released film *The 6888*, serves as a powerful reminder of the unwavering resilience, dedication, and impact of women throughout military history.

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The American Legion, Department of Maryland

Black History Month

Honoring our African American Veterans, Historically Black Posts, and Department Leaders

By: Russell W. Myers Jr
Department Adjutant
February 25, 2025

This is our sixth anniversary of publishing an article highlighting the achievements of Black Veterans and Historically Black Posts in Maryland. This year we will mix in Women Veteran history updates as well because March is Women's history month.

This year the Department continues to pay honor and tribute to these deserving Veterans and hopes that the information shared highlights and educates our members about the deep history and record of service of the Posts and Veterans in/from Maryland, the Black communities, and at the Department level within The American Legion. The space available for this article is limited and all efforts are being made to include as much detail as possible, the extensive histories are far deeper than we could cover in a few pages. All are encouraged to continue to investigate and expand their knowledge of the stories. This year the article will update on the 6888th Central Postal Battalion ("Six Triple Eight") and the long overdue recognition they are receiving, then we will briefly discuss the Harlem Hellfighters being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, and finally the awarding of a special Congressional Gold Medal for the Hello Girls of WWI.

For those who have a Netflix account or those who were watching entertainment news in December of last year, the trending movie on that platform was a familiar group of Veterans to all of us in the Department. The *Six Triple Eight*, written and directed by Tyler Perry, took the streaming app by storm in December. The riveting portrayal of the Veterans of the 6888th and their ground-breaking accomplishments during WWII is a must watch for everyone. Many may not know but a leading champion of the 6888th is our very own Elizabeth "Lizz" Helm-Frazier of Greenbelt Post 136. Lizz was on the set of



the film and encouraged Mr. Perry to make sure the film portrayed the story of the unit and the struggles for the world to better understand what was achieved by these approximately 855 women. Lizz has worked tirelessly with other champions to ensure these women and others are recognized in every way possible. She regularly updates me on the efforts and welcomes others to take up the banner and make sure our Veterans stories are preserved for the ages. I will not provide any spoilers for the movie, but those who joined us in 2021 at the Department Convention or who saw the documentary from 2019 surely know how the story unfolds.

The power of the movie is the underlying story and humanity. It makes the struggle and perseverance real from the eyes of the Veterans who accomplished the overwhelming mission they were handed, and the hopes by many that they would fail and thus prove African-Americans generally and African-American women in this specific instance were not up to par with their counterparts serving in the Armed Forces. The performance of the star-studded cast include Oprah Winfrey as Mary MacLeod Bethune along with Sam Waterson and Susan Sarandon playing the Roosevelts. The film is up for one Oscar for "Best Original Song" for the featured song "The Journey" and scored five NAACP Image award nominations including Outstanding Actress for Kerry Washington who portrayed Maj Charity Adams and Supporting Actress for Ebony Obsidian for her role as Lena Derriecort Bell King. Lizz also reported that Mr. Perry had a special draft of the film sent to the real Mrs. King to view before her passing in January 2024. While not the finished product Mrs. King was happy to see the portrayal and shared her happiness with Mr. Perry.

The unit still has two surviving members we are aware of at the time of this writing, Fannie Griffin McClendon who went on to serve in the US Air Force after her service in the 6888th and retired as a Major has a delightful oral history online at the Library of Congress website and recently turned 104 at her home in Tempe, Arizona. The other surviving member is turning 101 on

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Reflections of an Adjutant

By Russell W. Myers, Jr.

The weather this winter has been cold and Southern MD is ready to relinquish its snow total crown. But the cold weather has us looking towards our annual trip to Ocean City for the 107th Department Convention. Our Department Convention is scheduled for July 15-18, 2025, at the Roland Powell Convention Center. The crowds at the convention were up again last year and the experience, along with the second contested election in a row saw great attendance throughout the week. If you have not attended the convention, it is a worthwhile experience. It highlights the great works of our Posts and Programs. This year Legion College will be held on July 15th at 8:00am and one can bet this educational opportunity will remain a must for all Legionnaires. The online Legion College registration is open and available on the Department Website in the left-hand column under "Department Convention Documents" to access that link to the Eventbrite site to register.

Make your travel plans now and save if you book your room by March 31st. The convention and the things to do outside the convention floor have been increasing in recent years. The Fish Fry inside the air-conditioned bayfront location, and the crowds keep getting larger every year with many families enjoying the food and activities. Southern MD Region deserves thanks for this great event. The Sons of the American Legion Detachment in past years has provided a gaming truck, games, and food (other than the fish) for the youth in the family. They do a great job as well and have corn-hole and other fun stuff available.

The Opening Reception on Tuesday evening was also well attended and features a keynote address from the leading candidate for National Commander. This year Dan Wiley of Kansas is the leading candidate and will hope to have him share his vision for the organization after the social part of the reception. His campaign website can be found at <https://dankwiley.com/>. For attendees, these events offer great social events for the family to share on Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening respectfully. If all you take part in is business meetings, then you are missing a lot of fun and comradeship. Through more participation and activities, it is our hope to continue to grow the event for the whole family. 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.

On Monday afternoon July 14th at 4:00pm the Southern MD Region Fish Fry is held at the Convention Center. This year the location will remain the Southwest corner of the Center in the Dockside Hall. This is the side closest to Thunder Island and for those more experienced Convention attendees it is where the Fish Fry was held for many years, just instead of outside the loading docks, it is now an air-conditioned hall. Come over and grab a bite to eat, enjoy the music by the DJ, and share good times with everyone. The hall is large enough to accommodate everyone, and the location puts us right against the board walkway behind the center and a view of the Bay. I suspect there will be more to do for everyone. The SAL will surely have their games and items for sale nearby. 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 Region 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 wonderful way to kick off the Convention and everyone is invited. There is light fare and drinks provided.

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. This program takes a lot of 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. The remembrance of those transferred to Post Everlasting is a duty of those of us still living, and this program is the finest service one can witness.

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. The town has events throughout the week and they can be found on <https://www.ococean.com/events/>. Again this year Synepuxent Post 166's renovation and addition of the open air lounge offers more space to share in camaraderie. The local Post always hosts events in the evenings of the convention so check out their calendar as well.

We are again working on an event or course to assist our delegates with our mission of Be the One. More to follow in the May edition but the drive to end Veteran suicide is a critical ideal that all of us in the Legion Family share.

Posts again this year CAN submit ads, boosters, and sponsor golf tournament holes online. All these things can still be done the same way as previous years; however, we now have a Convention

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Sr. Vice Commander

By Nikki Randolph

"Building a Legion for the Future, One MEMBER at a Time!"

Okie doke! Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Valentines Day to all of you all!!! Those were the major holidays that happened since our last FSW came out!!! Exciting times!!! It's been a crazy quarter for sure!! I had the honor and privilege of getting out there and spending a lot of time with many of our Legionnaires across the state! I believe I attended events, meetings, social activities in every Region this quarter!! I enjoyed every minute of it! Got to see and be a part of many exciting events that truly showcases what our Home Posts in Maryland are truly about – Serving Veterans and their Families and the communities that we live in! The positives of all our hard work shows in our unstoppable generosity of our own Legionnaire's leading the way in not only taking care of our own Maryland Legion Family, but many times we are leading the charge in helping our Legion Families in places such as North Carolina, Georgia, and even California receive the help that they need. I joke all the time how much I hate living in Maryland --- But I am SO VERY PROUD to be a part of this Legion Family --- We truly stand above the rest!

I can't believe that this year is almost over! We are starting to move into that transition phase where leadership roles change, and many are affected from the Post all the way to the Department. I can only encourage all of those who are seeking new positions to prepare yourself for the role you are stepping into, and to guide those that are filling roles that you are vacating!

Training is the key to every successful

organization and our department has the ability to provide all sort of training for individuals, groups and Legions to be successful. As we move forward to another great Legion year, I impress on all of us that making training a priority in all aspects of our Legion lives. Don't wait for that one day of Legion College at convention to be your only source of training----- it's a good start---- but let's try setting up individualized post training instead! Bring the trainers into your Post.

Mentor! You want to succeed and move up the chain? Get yourself a Mentor. I know many in our department who will make fabulous mentors for those testing the waters of upward mobility! Perhaps now is as good as time as any to investigate putting into practice a great mentor/mentee program. Pairing up those who want to move up with those who have already traveled that path is a great start in honing leadership skills for the future!

I just want to extend a very heartfelt thank you to everyone who has and is supporting me in my campaign for Dept Commander. I appreciate each and everyone of you!!! Please let me know what I can do for you!!! Like I say all the time: I am here to help not hinder; and I work for you.....!!!

Have a great Quarter!!!

Nikki Randolph
Senior Vice Commander



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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.

NEC Report

Melvin G. Smullen, National Executive Committeemen

I extend my greetings to all on behalf of our National Commander Jim La Coursiere Jr. The National Commander will officially visit the Department of Maryland on March 15th and 16th. The Spring National Executive Committee will not be held until May the 7th and 8th. Under old business of the NEC, I received an email from National on 1/31/2025 reference Resolution #1 Reinstatement of the Charter of the American Legion Department of Washington. The resolution is from the Subcommittee on Resolutions which seeks to return the charter of the Department of Washington, subject to various benchmarks included in the resolution. It was a vote to approve the "Reinstatement of the Charter of the American Legion Department of Washington." Hopefully, the decision was made on February 15, 2025. We will be informed. Veteran Suicide Prevention continues to be the American Legion Number One Concern. In accordance with January/February Army Times Volume 86., suicides among veterans remain unchanged despite Federal Focus. "Every Veteran Suicide is a tragedy." There is nothing more important to all of us than ending Veteran suicide, and that means providing veterans with the care they need, wherever they need it and whenever they need it. Unfortunately, even Military Suicide increased again in 2023, continuing a steady and concerning rise in self-inflicted deaths among service members.

It has been brought to the members of the DEC during a prior meeting that the Department of Maryland must be more tentative about issues that impact on both veterans and the military; followed by developing resolutions to support your action. The Department of Maryland has not recently been supportive of this endeavor. Please do not hesitate to attempt to write a resolution. We just need the idea and help in writing the resolutions will be provided. It is

suggested that resolutions be only one page as you lose your audience when they become too wordy. It was also brought up at the DEC that Military Retirees are the only federal retirees to waive a portion of their retired pay to receive VA Disability Compensation, while all other Federal Employees are permitted to receive both retirements pay disability compensation concurrently. Well! I know now that Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland is working diligently on this issue. He is the co-sponsor of the Major Richard Star Act, which would allow disabled veterans to receive both their retirement pay and their disability compensation, concurrently.

Several posts throughout the state of Maryland and other states normally sponsor programs during the month of February to honor the four Chaplains. No words can better explain the story of the four chaplains who sacrificed their life on February 3, 1943. (Rev. George L. Fox, Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Catholic priest Father John P. Washington, and Reformed Church in America Minister Rev. Clark V. Poling. They all served as US Army Chaplains in the first year of World War II. It has been said several times that "There is no greater love, says the Lord, than to lay down your life for a friend." Finally, I want to say Happy Birthday! March 15 is the designated birthday of the American Legion. On that date in 1919, the first American Legion Caucus held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris.

Thank You and enjoy the summer!

Melvin G. Smullen
National Executive Committee



From the Chaplain's Desk

Greetings, Department of Maryland Legion Family! To God be the glory from Whom all blessings do flow. This is a moment to pause and thank the Creator for the opportunity to live this thing called life. The journey is fraught with challenges, circumstances and confusion yet, if we stay true to our spiritual truth, we become more than conquerors if that makes sense to you. And amid any storm, I offer you these profound words, "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning" (Proverbs

3:5 KJV). I believe the Creator absolutely intended to establish morning in the darkest hour of the day. Although it may be unseen with your physical eye, your new day begins during obscurity.

Praying the Creator's continued blessings upon you, your family and our Maryland American Legion family as we engage in this critical work of caring for our veteran community. It can be a tall order but as I have witnessed thus far, together, you and I can make a difference.

Thank you for being a difference maker.



In our American Legion family, we are blessed to have a place where fellowship is at the heart of what we do. Many of us joined looking for camaraderie and support, and as Department Chaplain, I have personally witnessed the incredible bonds that grow among our members. Fellowship is not just about being together—it is about being there for each other, in good times and in times of difficulty. It is about sharing stories, offering a listening ear, and being a source of strength for those who need it. I encourage all members to participate in our upcoming fellowship events, where we continue to foster these lifelong connections. In a world where many feel isolated, let's continue to build bonds that remind us that we are B.E.T.T.E.R. T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.,

By Exemplifying Timeless Truths Exercising Responsibility The Opportunity Granted Everyone To Help Each Reach

As we honor Black History Month, we celebrate the incredible contributions of African Americans in shaping our nation and defending the freedoms we hold dearly. From the battlefields of history to leadership in our communities today, the courage, perseverance, and dedication have strengthened our country and our military.

This month is not just about remembering the past—it is about recognizing how diversity continues to make us stronger as a people and as an American Legion family. The spirit of service, sacrifice, and unity is what binds all of us, regardless of race, background, or experience. As Legionnaires, we stand together, upholding the values of justice, equality, and inclusion for all who have served and continue to serve.

Let us use this time to educate, uplift, and embrace one another, fostering a community where every veteran feels valued and supported. By learning from our history and working together in the present, we build a future that truly honors the sacrifices of those who came before us. May we continue to stand united, serving with honor and respect for all.

As your Department Chaplain, I am here to support you in this mission. Together, we can create an environment where every veteran feels valued, supported, and heard. Let us take up this call with courage and determination. By being the one, we honor the legacy of service that unites us all. As I mentioned during the November DEC, "I see you."

May we continue to serve with love, compassion, and strength, always ready to "Be the One."

Something to Ponder - Someone may ask what does it require to be a positive difference maker? Always seek inclusivity and do the best where you are with what you have...RIGHT NOW!

As our Department Commander, David Heredia, Jr. often reminds us, "We could not be successful without the Blue Caps." Let us continue to forge ahead on the "Maryland Express."

I am soliciting your prayers and contemplative moments on behalf of all families whose loved ones have gone from labor to reward.

God bless you.

Make a GREAT day!

Rev. Otis D. Wilson, Sr., MDiv
Department Chaplain

Department Sgt-at-Arms

By John Luque

Greetings Comrades, The holiday season has come and gone, and as we step into the New Year, it's a great time to reflect on what worked well for us this past year and continue building on those successes.

I had the privilege of attending the Army-Navy football game alongside Commander Heredia. We not only had the opportunity to work the American Legion booth but also to experience the incredible energy of the game itself. While at the booth, we were able to spread awareness about the Legion's mission, particularly 'Be the One,' and engage with many who share our commitment to preventing veteran suicide. As we move through the winter months, please remember that flu season is hitting hard this year. Stay vigilant—hydrate, wash your hands often, and take care of your health.

I also want to remind everyone to continue supporting the Commander's VA&R project. This initiative not only ensures that veterans and their families receive the vital services and care they deserve, but it also reinforces our commitment to bringing greater awareness to our mission, 'Be the One.'

May God bless you and keep you and your families safe. Let's continue working together to make a difference in 2025!

For God and Country,

John Luque
Department of Maryland
Sergeant at Arms
#ChampionsOfHope



CALL FOR THE 107TH ANNUAL CONVENTION THE

The One-Hundred-Seventh Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Maryland, Inc., is hereby called, and in conformity with the action of the One-Hundredth-Sixth Annual Convention and the Department Executive Committee, will be held in Ocean City, Maryland, Tuesday, **July 15** through Friday, **July 18, 2025**.

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 10, 2025.

All Department and all National Officers listed in ARTICLE VI, Section 1 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 25th this year), and at the same time pay the registration fee of \$20.00* for each and every Delegate, in the case of an Alternate taking the place of a Delegate such Alternate shall be required to pay the registration fee of \$20.00* which shall be done when the substitution takes place or sooner; unless and until such registration fees of the Delegates have been paid, the Delegation is disqualified to act for any purpose, and no individual Delegate will be allowed to vote, provided, however, that the mere non-payment of registration shall not deprive a Delegate otherwise duly qualified, of the right to vote in any Region or District Caucus, on any matter (including election of officers) which thereafter is subject to ratification by the Department Convention. Post Commanders are urgently requested to have at least one member of their Delegation on the Convention floor at all times. *Cost of Delegates will be \$30.00 on or after June 26th.

VOTING

Department Constitution, ARTICLE V, Section 3

- (a) On all matters of business except the election of Department Officers, members of the DEC and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention, and except amendments to this Constitution or the By-Laws, voting shall be by voice. 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 DEC, and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention, shall be in accordance with such rule as adopted by the Caucus in and for the Region 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 alternate whose delegate also is absent, and thereby acquire the right to vote, provided said alternate delegate is the senior alternate present at the time. Alternates shall have all 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 any changes in voting and has recorded the vote of any Post which originally passed, then the conducting officer shall announce that the voting 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 Post, shall be delegates for life to all Department Conventions with voice and vote, to be exercised by them with their respective Post and all Region or District Caucuses at which any election provided for in this Constitution shall be held, and at which their respective Post may be entitled to vote. The failure of such Post to properly register its delegation shall not deprive such Past 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, with the exception of Department Officers concurrently serving as a paid employee of the Department, 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 Post; provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall give any person 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)

- Section 4 (a)** The Department Convention shall elect a Department Commander, a Department Senior Vice-Commander, a Department Judge Advocate, and a Department Treasurer, a National Executive Committee member and an Alternate National Executive Committee member for the respective terms for each office as specified in Section 4b hereof. The Department Convention shall elect such other offices as may be authorized by the Department Convention for such terms appointed by the Department Convention.
- Section 4 (b)** The Officers positions listed in Section 4 (a), elected by the Department Convention shall be nominated and elected for office in the following sequence and for the term of office, as listed:
1. Alternate National Executive Committee member – 2 Years (on odd number years).
 2. National Exec. Committee member – 2 Years (on odd number years).
 3. Department Treasurer – 1 Year.
 4. Department Judge Advocate - 1 Year.
 5. Department Sr. Vice-Commander – 1 Year.
 6. Department Commander – 1 Year

REGION CAUCUSES

(ARTICLE V, Sections 6-7-8-9)

A caucus shall be held by each Region during, or not more than twenty days prior to, the convening of each Department Convention, at which caucus the election of the Region Commander, (serves concurrently as Department Vice-Commander for said Region), Region Vice-Commander, District Commanders, District Vice-Commanders such Department Executive Committee members, and Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention of The American Legion to which such Region may be entitled by this Constitution shall be held. It shall be the responsibility of the Region Commander in and for each Region to see that at least fifteen days prior notice of any Region Caucus convened for the above purposes shall be given by mail to the Commander of each Post in the Region, and no such Caucus shall be deemed legally convened in the absence of such notice; provided, however, that any Region 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 Region 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 7. A quorum shall exist at a Department Convention or at a Region Caucus when one third of the Posts in the Department or Region, as the case may be, are represented by duly elected Delegates or Alternates.

Section 8. Delegates to National Convention.

Each Region 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 Region; 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 Commander for the immediate prior year, the Department Adjutant,

the Alternate National Executive Committeeman and the Department Senior 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 Region with the highest percentage of their previous year's membership as of the day that determines the Department Convention membership strength for the Region.

Section 9. Region Election of DEC Members.

Each Region 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 500 members or major fraction thereof in the said Region.

The membership strength of said Region for this purpose shall be computed as paid up membership in the Department Headquarters at 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 Region 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.

The distribution of the Regions' representatives to the DEC shall be divided in an equitable manner between the Districts of the Region utilizing the membership strength of each District.

The Region 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 Region Caucus for the purpose of such election shall be convened sooner than June 25th, 2025.

MEETINGS

The opening Joint Session will begin at 8:00 PM, Tuesday July 15, 2025. All business sessions of The American Legion, Department of Maryland, will be held in the Convention Hall (Roland Powell Convention Center, Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor) and will start promptly at 8:00 AM on Wednesday, July 16th, Thursday, July 17th and Friday, July 18th, unless changed by the Convention or Department Executive Committee. 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 \$20.00* per Delegate, and MUST accompany the Credentials Certificate. All Constitutional Delegates (ART. VI) and Past Department Commanders must also pay the \$20.00* Delegate Fee or they can not vote. It is extremely important that the certificates be forwarded to Department Headquarters as soon as possible after June 10, 2025 (35th Day before the Department Convention). District 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. The delegate fee shall be \$30.00 per delegate on or after June 26th.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Department Constitution and

AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND, INC.

By Laws must be submitted in typewritten form to Department Headquarters by June 6th, 2025 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 casting votes on the amendment at the Convention. However, the Constitution may be amended without notice by unanimous vote at any Department Convention. (ARTICLE XV, Section 1).

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions shall be submitted typewritten, in triplicate, to the Resolutions Committee at the Convention, or prior to June 7th 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 6th 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 on 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, or appointed as prescribed in the Post Constitution and Post Standing Rules, 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, but NLT June 6, 2025.
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 15th. DO NOT SHOW UP BEFORE THEN AND EXPECT US TO ACCOMMODATE YOU. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO OPEN EARLIER THAN 7:30AM ON TUESDAY.

NO CREDENTIALS ARE REQUIRED FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OR DEPARTMENT LEGION COLLEGE. EVERYONE

WILL BE GRANTED ACCESS TO THESE EVENTS WITHOUT CREDENTIALS.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the registration office 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. 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.

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.

Russell W. Myers Jr.
Department Adjutant

David Heredia Jr.
Department Commander

NOTE: DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND DISTRICT COMMANDERS MUST HAVE THEIR WRITTEN REPORTS IN DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ON OR BEFORE 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 15TH. 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 2025-2026 DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THIS IS TO BE HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION.

There is a link to the free registration website for the Department Legion College on the Department website at www.mdlegion.org in the left-hand column under "Department Convention Documents".

CONVENTION PROGRAM

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND, INC.

JULY 15, 16, 17, 18, 2025

CONVENTION HALL, OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

PRESIDING OFFICER, DAVID HEREDIA, JR., DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

MONDAY JULY 14, 2025	
7:30AM	Convention Center Set up; Volunteers always accepted
4:00 PM	Southern Maryland Region Fish Fry (Dockside Hall, SW Corner of Convention Center) (All welcome; donations appreciated)
TUESDAY, JULY 15	
7:30 AM	Registration - Convention Hall – Room 213, 2nd Floor
****8:00 AM	Legion College – Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
9:00 AM	Legion College – Classes Located as Posted
1:00 PM	MyLegion.org Course Bayfront Ballroom, 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 16	
7:30 AM	Registration - Convention Hall – Room 213, 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 Mayor Richard W. Meehan Secretary, Maryland Dept. of Veterans Affairs Special Presentations Historian Report SAL report VSO reports
12:30 PM	Suicide Prevention and Awareness (Buddy Checks) Presentation
After Session	Past Department Commander's Luncheon (Invited Guests)
****7:00 PM	Post Everlasting Ceremony – Bayfront Ballroom, 2nd Floor
THURSDAY, JULY 17	
7:30 AM	Registration - Convention Hall – Room 213, 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 After Session Rehabilitation Luncheon (Invited Guests)
FRIDAY, JULY 18	
7:30 AM	Registration - Convention Hall – Room 213, 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

Black History Month

Continued from page 1

March 1st. PVT Anna Mae Wilson Robertson lives in Milwaukee and also has a great number of stories written lately about her service and the unit. On her 100th birthday Mrs. Robertson was recognized by the Milwaukee Mayor who attended the celebration, Governor Evers, and then President Biden.

In late April the Speaker of the House will host a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the unit's survivors and families. Beyond this occasion through the generosity of U.S. Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame members and charter donors BG (Ret.) Clara Adams Ender, COL (Ret.) Edna W. Cummings and MSG (Ret.) Elizabeth Helm-Frazier the Army Women's Foundation will award the Six Triple Eight Legacy scholarship for the third time at their event on March 19, 2025. The legacy of the Six Triple Eight will live on through the efforts of these remarkable Veterans and their established legacies. The legacy of service they share with other units who fought not only the enemy but also the racism and misogyny prevalent in the US military during WWI.

On August 25, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed into law the Harlem Hellfighters Congressional Gold Medal Act. The act recognized the service of the 369th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters, for their service to the nation during WWI. The New York National Guard unit established in Harlem in 1913 was one of the earliest units sent overseas to serve in WWI. Facing prejudice and segregation the unit was attached to fight with the French Army instead of serving with US Forces in France. The unit embraced their mission and cemented their legacy through their service.

The 369th spent an unprecedented 191 days in the front line trenches and the Regiment was the first American unit to receive the French Croix de Guerre (War Cross) and its soldiers' bravery in combat are legendary. Sgt Henry Johnson distinguished himself in battle in May 1918 and for his battlefield valor Johnson became one of the first Americans to be awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme, France's highest award for valor. Johnson returned home from his tour and was unable to return to his pre-war porter position due to the severity of his 21 combat injuries. Johnson died in July 1929. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart in 1996 and the Distinguished Service Cross in 2002 Finally in 2015 he was awarded posthumously the Medal of Honor for actions in WWI by President Barack Obama in 2015 97 years after his heroic actions The Medal of Honor battle narrative reads:

Area of Operations - Argonne Forest, Champagne, France; Position – Sentry; Date of Action May 15, 1918

"Then-Pvt. Henry Johnson served as a member of Company C, 369th Infantry Regiment, 93rd Division, American Expeditionary Forces, during

combat operations against the enemy on the front lines of the Western Front in France.



While on night sentry duty, May 15, 1918, Johnson and a fellow Soldier, Pvt. Needham Roberts, received a surprise attack by a German raiding party consisting of at least 12 soldiers. While under intense enemy fire and despite receiving significant wounds, Johnson mounted a brave retaliation resulting in several enemy casualties. When his fellow Soldier was badly wounded, Johnson prevented him from being taken prisoner by German forces.

Johnson exposed himself to grave danger by advancing from his position to engage an enemy soldier in hand-to-hand combat. Wielding only a knife and being seriously wounded, Johnson continued fighting, took his Bolo knife and stabbed it through an enemy soldier's head.

Displaying great courage, Johnson held back the enemy force until they retreated. The enemy raid's failure to secure prisoners was due to the bravery and resistance of Johnson and his fellow comrade. The effect of their fierce fighting resulted in the increased vigilance and confidence of the 369th Infantry Regiment.

The va.gov news story about the unit's award of the Congressional Gold Medal marks the legacy of the unit in these words, "Upon their return to the United States, the Harlem Hellfighters received a hero's welcome, yet they continued to face the harsh reality of injustice. Nonetheless, the regiment's service in World War I marked a significant milestone in fighting for civil rights and equality. Their actions paved the way for future generations of African American soldiers and contributed to the eventual desegregation of the U.S. military. The 369th Infantry Regiment will forever be remembered as pioneers of change and defenders of liberty."



Another WWI unit overlooked for years for their service recently were recognized when President Joseph Biden signed the latest National Defense Authorization Act on December 24, 2024. When US troops were being deployed to the European Theater in the early stages of involvement in WWI by the United States General John Pershing urged the US Army Signal Corps

to recruit women to be trained and operate a vital communication network. The effort was meant to show that women had a role on the war front overseas not just at home. The result was the recruiting of approximately 300 women many who were bilingual in French and English. They were the country's first effort to place women in the hazardous areas in combat theaters and they popularly known as Hello Girls. They paved the way for women to serve and though they were told afterwards their service did not count as Veterans they served with distinction and proved that everyone had a place in the war effort.



One of the women who volunteered for service was Marie Edmee LeRoux. Marie was born in Montreal and moved to the US at the age of 10. She is buried in Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood, Maryland in an unmarked grave as the War Department at the time still did not classify the Hello Girls as Veterans.

Congress in 1977 acknowledge the women as Veteran, but sadly many had already passed. With the NDAA passage in December 2024 the Hello Girls are receiving long overdue recognition and we will update on the progress of the recognition for these pioneer Veterans of WWI.

Over the last six years the process to highlight a few personal stories and deeds of Veterans has started many conversations. The continuation of these conversations and the development of a better understanding of the impacts these men and women had on the world around them is still far from complete. There are many more personal stories, and Post histories, one could highlight in these articles. It is tough to not only fit the stories in the brief space available but then to pick which stories to highlight. There are so many stories to tell, and next year we will surely recount more of these deeds. 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.

The recounting of the actions and works of the heroes from this article can serve as a reminder that many served and were never appropriately recognized. Striving to educate and illuminate the deeds of a few is a calling for all to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars.

It is past time to make this a constant effort to promote all Veterans' contributions, and share the history, good and bad, 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 the solid foundation for the future!

Greetings from the Baseball Committee!
PLAY BALL! It is with great excitement that we approach the 100th Anniversary of Legion Baseball in the 2025 season. In celebration of this Centennial, the pictured commemorative T-SHIRT promotes this milestone. Please consider placing an order to help our Baseball Program. Our teams and young players will be competing in each of our Districts, and will need YOUR help to play baseball. Orders from the Posts are highly encouraged.



Payment instructions: Please mail checks to: Centurion Shirts, C/O Legion Post 29, P.O. Box 518, Denton, MD 21629

ORDER FORM
Checks and orders **MUST** be received by **May 20**.
Please Specify Quantities
S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___
2XL ___ 3XL ___ 4XL ___

\$30
PRICE
INCREASES
TO \$35
AFTER
MAY 20

include your Contact Info
Name: _____ Phone: _____
All orders require a \$10 shipping fee regardless of quantity.
Please send orders to Don DeGraves
at donalbb1@gmail.com for
Questions, please call 301-481-2958

MORE NEWS: Mark your calendars for the **FIRST ANNUAL RECOGNITION NIGHT** on June 29 at the Chesapeake Bay Sox Stadium in Bowie MD. We look forward to all the Post Commanders being there and recognized on the field during the Pregame Celebration.

COMMITTEE MEETING: Our last meeting took place at the Bay Sox Stadium, hosted by General Manager Brian Shallcross. As part of his introduction, he emphasized the need for growth, not only in professional baseball, but in Legion Baseball as well. Brian played Legion Ball when he was a youngster, and his son now plays for Post 7 in Annapolis. He stressed the importance of our Program, teaching our youth not only the fundamentals of the game, but also sportsmanship and character. In attendance was our Department Commander, David Heredia, and American Commission Chairman, Todd Morris.

They also expressed their strong support for Legion baseball, and the need to promote and expand the number of teams. **COME OUT AND ENJOY OUR GAMES – AND BRING THE FAMILY – YOU HAVE A SEAT IN THE FRONT ROW!**

Bernie Liswell
Chairman
Department Baseball Committee

You Served, Now Let VA Serve You with World Class Health Care

If you are a Veteran who isn't already taking advantage of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits you've earned through your service, there's no better time than now to apply. The PACT Act expanded VA health care eligibility and benefits to an unprecedented number of Veterans—including many who were previously not eligible. Since its enactment in 2022, hundreds of thousands of Veterans across the country have enrolled in VA health care.

There are no enrollment fees, monthly premiums, or deductibles associated with VA health care and you can maintain your current health insurance and continue to see your community provider. This is known as "co-managed care," and it provides you with the flexibility to take advantage of VA health care services when they are needed. The VA also understands the unique health care needs of Veterans and has received outstanding feedback in multiple studies and recent surveys, including:

VA health care is as good as—or better than—non-VA health care.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care have better health outcomes than those not enrolled.

VA patient satisfaction rates outperform the private sector.

Among the Veterans who receive their care from VA, 90% trust VA to deliver their care.

Veterans who enroll with the VA Maryland Health Care System can choose to receive their care at any of its eight locations throughout Central Maryland and on Maryland's Eastern Shore. This includes medical centers in Baltimore, Loch Raven, and Perry Point, and outpatient clinics in Cambridge, Eastern Baltimore County, Fort Meade, Glen Burnie, and Pocomoke City. The health care system offers an array of comprehensive services, including medical, surgical, rehabilitative, neurological, primary, mental health, and long-term care on both an inpatient and outpatient basis.

This care also extends beyond the state of Maryland. As America's largest integrated health care system, VA has more than 1,320 facilities throughout the country. Regardless of where Veterans are enrolled, they'll have access to services at any of these VA health care facilities, providing extra convenience when they travel or move.

A unique benefit of VA health care enrollment is access to a variety of community care resources. Veterans who see their VA primary care provider at least once every two years maintain their eligibility for the following community care resources:

Emergency care services in the community at VA expense; Urgent care through participating community urgent care facilities; and Care in the community at VA expense based on specific eligibility criteria and a referral from a VA provider.

How to Apply

There are four easy options to apply for VA health care:

Apply by Phone

Call toll-free at 877-222-8387, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. A VA staff member will collect the needed information to process your application over the phone.

Apply by Mail

Visit www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-10ez/ to print and complete the Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ). You or someone acting as your power of attorney must sign and date the form. Once completed, mail your application to: Health Eligibility Center PO Box 5207, Janesville, WI, 53547-5207.

Apply in Person

Apply in person by visiting the Enrollment Center on the 1st floor of the Baltimore VA Medical Center or the Admissions Office on the 1st floor of Building 361 at the Perry Point VA Medical Center, Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Apply Online

Apply online by visiting www.va.gov/health-care/apply-for-health-care-form-10-10ez/introduction. The online portal will guide you through each step of the process and will take about 35 minutes to complete.

You can also receive ongoing information from the VA Maryland Health Care System to learn about new programs and services, educational opportunities, and upcoming events such as our quarterly Veterans Claims Clinics & VA Health Care Enrollment Fairs. To sign up to receive email updates, visit <https://www.va.gov/maryland-health-care/>, scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on "Subscribe to VA Maryland health care news and announcements."



10th Annual Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run



When we ride next June 5-8, 2025 we will be holding the 10th Annual Maryland Gold Star Legacy Run. It's hard to believe that what started as a dream and only raised \$13,500.00 on the first Run back in 2016, has now through 9 years, raised and donated to Legion Charities \$765,000.00. Wow!! This is what a Legion Family can do together!

We are having a four day ride this year to commemorate the 10th Annual Gold Star Legacy Run. We will be leaving Overlea-Perry Hall Post 130 in Perry Hall, MD on Thursday morning June 5, 2025 at 7:30 am with stops at Sgt Preston Ashley Post 228 in Rock Hall, Talbot Post 70 in Easton and conclude the day in Ocean City at Synepuxent Post 166. On Friday June 6th, we will leave OC for stops at Dor-Wic Post 218, and Kent Island Post 278 before concluding the day in Frederick at Francis Scott Key Post 11. On Saturday morning we will be leaving Post 11 for a trip to, hopefully, Proctor Kildow Post 71 (to be confirmed) and then off to Flight 93 Memorial for a wreath laying and then finishing the day in Cumberland at Ft. Cumberland Post 13. Sunday morning, we leave Cumberland for stops in Boonsboro at Clopper Michael Post 10 and finish the trip in Cascade, MD at Cascade Post 239. In going to be an incredible trip.

This coming year, I have set a lofty goal for the Maryland Legion Family to achieve. If we can somehow raise \$235,000.00, we will reach the \$1,000,000.00 mark over the 10-year life of the MD Gold Star Legacy Run. I know that this is a big request on my part, but if we can all pitch in, we can do it.

Last year's big Legion Family donors to the Gold Star were Overlea-Perry Hall Post 130 with \$13,700.00, Laurel Post 60 with over \$20,000.00 and Harry White Wilmer Post 82 with over \$28,000.00. In total, we had over 40 post families donate to the Veterans and

Children Foundation on the 9th Annual MD Gold Star Legacy Run. To hit our goal this year, we are going to need more help. As the saying goes, no donation is too small.

The reality is, we will hit the \$1,000,000.00 mark. It's not a matter of if, but only a matter of when. It would be great to hit it next June, but as always, I will be grateful for the bounty we receive.

About VCF

The Veterans and Children Foundation is an American Legion 501 C (3) charity Fed ID #35-6039680. VCF provides financial grants to soldiers and veterans that have children and are having financial difficulty, and as important, to fund the training of our American Legion Service Officers. These services officers fight daily to help our veterans get the service-connected benefits they are entitled to. Millions of dollars a year are going to help our veterans in need from the VA that might not otherwise have been received.

With your help we will reach our goal of \$235,000.00 and hit the \$1 Million Dollar mark. Please send all donations to Towson ALR 22 C/O John Horner 1606 Dunwich Garth Timonium, MD 21093 or you can present them at any of our stops on the 2025 Run to get credit from the MD Gold Star Legacy run and from the National Organization. Together we can make Maryland the largest donor again. We will be mailing our ride packet out in by the end of February 2025. It will be interesting to see what Legion Family receives that Top Donor Plaque at the Department Convention in July 2025 and to see whose name will join the list of past winners of this coveted award!

United In Service

Joe Gladden

Towson ALR 22

Past SAL National Commander 2013-2014

AMERICAN LEGION Dept. of MD
Americanism
Commission

**Programs Fundraiser Proceeds to benefit
Americanism Commission Programs**

1st Prize - \$300 in MD Lottery Scratch Off Tickets & \$200 CASH!

2nd Prize - \$200 in MD Lottery Scratch Off Tickets & \$100 CASH!

3rd Prize - \$100 in MD Lottery Scratch Off Tickets & \$100 CASH!

Donation: 3 for \$5 or 7 for \$10

All top prizes available at the time the tickets were purchased! Drawing on Friday at Department Convention in Ocean City Tickets available from Americanism Commission Members or Contact Todd Morris (301) 928-5160 for tickets



(SAMPLE PRIZE BOARD, ACTUAL
BOARDS WILL BE PRESENT AT DRAWING)

REGION/DISTRICT DATA

Eastern Shore Region

Comrades and sisters of the great Department of Maryland, “HOOOWWWDDDD EEEEEY,, Its Dug “RATTLENALE MALONE” the Numba 1 trail boss here. I AMA HERE PONTIFICATIN and RUMINATIN on the trail ON THIS SIDE that big pond that sum of us call a DITCH. But what I am sayin is that the trail ride heading to Baltimore by June 10th is well on its way. The Heredia Trail is long and winding, but my point and trail riders are takin the lead and their navagatin is good. We be sittin in the point position all the way to Baltimore with no trail dust to eat. As of this writin is 86% and is darn good. I am a thinkin with only about 900 little doggies to get in the herd before we get to the stock yard. Since our last Department campfire last November, I have visited several different smaller camps throughout the Eastern Shore Region preaching the gospel of being a Legionnaire. Our biggest was the Region family campfire on December 1st and Distct 2 on December 8th at Post 64. Was fortunate to visit our new ranch on the prairie Post 303. Met the new ranch hand Commander Seth and he is just getting settled in and is looking forward to growing his herd of doggies. I attended my Post Christmas Party as well as the Department’s Party on December 15th. After that to much prairie dust for awhile and was under the weather throughout the holidays but I must say the herd kept moving and gaining momentum. Just want to pass some word to everyone the Eastern Shore Region will be holding is Department Commanders Reception on April 26, 2025 at Caroline Post 29. Tickets are \$30.00 per person cut off for tickets is April 14th. Don’t forget to get your Post Data reports before April 1st. Our trail boss “Minnie the moo hoo” Randolph will be coming to get ya and it won’t be prerty Remember cow hands, The American Legion “Saves Lives and Changes Live” So lets all of us bring in new and reinstated members to help our Cattle Baron Commander Heredia. Our next Eastern Shore Roundup will be on March 2nd at Post 91 in Cambridge. Mighty fine country cookin at 1 pm and Meeting is at 2pm.

Semper Fi!!
“GIT ER DUN”

G. Douglas Willey
Department Vice Commander
Eastern Shore Region



From the Desk of the District 1

Team: Well, it looks like we just got a little road rage courtesy of District 7! They zoomed past us in the membership drive, taking 2nd place with a 1.329% lead. And if that wasn’t enough, District 8 pulled a sneaky Ricky Bobby Shake-n-Bake move and snatched 3rd place away from us by a mere 0.231%. Now here we are, holding onto a solid 4th place—definitely not where we want to be! So, I’ve got to ask: Are we really going to let the western shore leave us in the dust like this? I say it’s time to put the pedal to the metal! Let’s channel our inner Magic Man and El Diablo! If you don’t know what I’m talking about, you might want to binge-watch *Talladega Nights* about 300 times to catch up.

Let’s rally together and show them what we’re made of! We can turn this race around—so let’s rev up those engines and get moving! Every post needs to reach 100% membership by April 1, 2025!

I just wanted to take a moment to share my experience from November 2024. I had an amazing opportunity to attend the National American Legion College in Indianapolis, IN. Let me tell you, it was truly phenomenal! If you’re ready to put in the work, this is an experience you definitely don’t want to miss.

The friendships you build there are incredible and will last a lifetime. The people you meet are always there for advice and counsel when you need it most. Trust me, it’s worth it! I highly recommend starting with the Basic Training available through the mylegion website. There are so many training opportunities through the Department and Legion College that can really help you grow.



As we gear up for the Convention, I’m excited to represent the District and the Eastern Shore Region. I can’t wait to see all of your friendly faces there—let’s fill our ranks and make the most of it together!

Folks please get a copy of our District Newsletter - Shore’s Best News and Information from their Commanders and Adjutants.
Thanks!

Take care, God bless, and keep pushing our membership so we can do some victory laps with the checkered flag!

Regards,

Ken “Radar” Huddleston
Commander
District 1, Eastern Shore Region
The Department of Maryland,
American Legion

From the Desk of the District 2

Hello from District 2, and welcome to the third quarter of the legion year 2024-2025. As of this date, our District is still in first place in membership within the Department at 93.2%, and we only need to renew or find 240 new members to reach our magic goal of 100%. As I reported in the last FSW, our Posts are getting this done with good ole fashion teamwork and communication. Three Posts within District 2 have already attained 100%, these are Walker Polk Post 132, Synepuxent Post 166 and Sharptown-Columbia Post 269. We also have 7 Posts who have already met the 90% goal. Congrats to those Post Officers that made this possible. During the last quarter my team and I completed our Post Inspections. This was accomplished by visiting Worchester Post 67, Howard J. Purnell Memorial Post 145, Dor-Wic Post 218, Spring Hill Post 237, and finally Sharptown-Columbia Post 269. I can report that all these Posts are doing great.

On a sad note, on December 27 of 2024, we lost Dorchester Post 91 Commander and four term Maryland State Senator, Richard Colburn. Richard was in his first year as a Legion Commander and was just starting to make changes for the better at the Post, he will be sorely missed by all. His memorial service held in Cambridge was attended by the Dept Commander, the Senior First Vice Commander, the Eastern Shore Region Commander and many others within the American Legion. Richard’s 1st Vice Commander, Curtis Satchell, has stepped up to become the new Commander and he is doing a great job too.

Finally, our 16 Posts also completed their Buddy Check phone calls over the Holidays and in doing so we were able to check on some aging veterans that we just do not get to see as much as we once did. I cannot express how important the Buddy Check calls are to our aging or even shut-in veterans. Please continue to complete them and always remember to try to “Be the One”.

Jody McCout
District 2 Commander
“The Land of Pleasant Living”



Northern Central Region

Just a few weeks ago, I sent out a notification to the posts in the NCR regarding members sending emails to National, Department Resolution D9924 regarding IAC and Department Policy for Post Issues and Investigations (which was approved on February 18, 2024 by the DEC), and of course, membership. I received some good responses from that email, and others saying that they had never seen the resolution. One was from an adjutant who raised some serious questions stating that there seems to be a disconnect between the Department (Regions & Districts) and the posts. I do believe



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that is partially true, however, our Department (including the Regions and Districts) provides quite a bit of communication on events, programs and policies. This resolution was mailed to all posts the week after the February 2024 DEC meeting.

When I first got involved on the County and District level, I saw that there is much more than what goes on inside our four walls of our Post. Being a Post Adjutant or Commander is tough, because you are not only volunteering to be the eyes, ears and voice of the Post, you are also the legal representative, and you assume obligations that a non-active member would not understand. Yes, membership is one of the biggest concerns and it does seem that we have quite a bit of communication about it happening all over the Department, but without members our organization would not exist. The best thing I can say is that we need more Post officers and representatives at the District and Region meetings. Having that representation will not only make the communication and connection between Posts and Districts better, but it will also provide an opportunity for those Post officers to see what is being done outside the four walls of the buildings that they call their Post Home. Districts 3 and 4 have held very successful revitalizations. District 4 held theirs at the Rita Church Community Center in Clifton Park.

District 3 held theirs at Towson Post 22. Both had some unique challenges, and both were able to adapt to the situations and make the best. George Delaney from Columbia Post 300 was on-hand at the revitalizations and he provided a unique training opportunity to the attendees about how to conduct a “Buddy Check” and revitalization call. Those in attendance made quite a few calls and were able to get several transfers and took some call-backs from the members they left messages for. Coetta Miller from Liberty Post 122 really knocked it out of the park by contacting nearly 100 Post 297 members and transferring many into several posts. Wild Bill reported that Dewey Lowman Post 109 held their own revitalization, reaching out to their expired members as well as Post 297 members in their area. This resulted in a nice jump in their membership. Ultimately, it isn’t about how many members you can transfer, but how many members you can reach out to just to let them know we are here for them. Department Commander Heredia and Sr. Vice Nikki were supportive of both events and would like to see the Districts and Posts conduct revitalizations throughout the year.

Speaking of Wild Bill, I can’t thank him enough for what he and the Special Olympics committee does all year round. Bill and Ray (Staniewski) attend nearly all of the events throughout the year. This year Ray even got to introduce the competitors and announce event winners during one of the events, while Bill handed out the medals. Bill raised over \$25,000 this year for the Polar Bear Plunge, helping the American Legion Family raise well over \$35,000 this year. Thank you to all of you for supporting our team this year with donations, volunteering and especially to those who plunged in the frigid Chesapeake Bay with us.

Continued on page 15

From the Desk of the District 3

Greetings NCR-District 3 Post Commanders and Legionnaires. I hope your Winter events have been prosperous and memorable. Our current Post membership drives have been a bit steady, but our latest report shows our membership numbers increasing steadily. Overall, we’re currently just short of our 85% goal. However, I’m sure all are working diligently on your recruiting and retention efforts to achieve and exceed our next milestone of 90% in March. Good job to Posts 17, 39, 130, 174, 182, and 263 who have worked hard and vastly exceeded (or on their way) our membership objectives.

The District 3 Membership Revitalization Event at Towson Post #22 on 31 Jan and 1 Feb, 2025 was a very successful event for those Posts that participated and gained from the transfers in their areas. They not only realized a membership boost, but also benefitted from services provided by our Department VSO. Hats off to Post 22 Commander Michael Pitter for an outstanding job hosting our Revitalization event.

As we’re pushing through the winter, we’re looking for each of you to conduct “Be the One” Buddy Checks on your members, especially those you haven’t seen in a while. Both your Post and your members will benefit from these interactions as you’ll find their passions and interests as it relates to your Posts. Hat’s off to Posts that are on their second round of Buddy Checks. We’re also proceeding into the time when reports are due, starting with your Post Data Report, which will be due in a few weeks, culminating with your Consolidated Data Report due in May. Lastly, as always, when we refer to the Legion, we’re referring to the entire Legion family, including our Auxiliary, SAL, and Legion Riders. Collectively, we’re the premier Veterans Service Organization (VSO) serving our greatest priorities: our Veterans, Military, Youth, Families, and our Country.

Yours in Service,

Henry (Hank) Allen
Commander, District 3
Northern Central Region



From the Desk of the District 4

It’s once again I am able to extend greetings to all my Fellow Veterans, Comrades & Legionnaires. To date it has been a gracious, satisfying and rewarding year being able to visit, share and service the mighty District 4 of Maryland. I have traveled to the Eastern Shore, Baltimore County, Howard County, and Harford Counties of Maryland. It has been a hell of a ride, meeting, talking with and fellowshiping with many Post leaders and their membership. Post Leadership and its membership have really been very hospitable and graceful. I was welcomed in each home I was able to visit. Thank you and I appreciate each of you. As I mentioned in my previous Warrior message, you must go to know. “We all must get out and move around to the Post in and outside your District and Region. Relationships are built and grow upon supporting and getting to know each other. Patrick Dailey-Mark Logsdon Memorial Post 17, Cmdr. Richard Drabic Sr. welcome upon my visit during the Christmas Holidays. Overlea-Perry Hall Post 130, Cmdr. Joseph Greenbeck Jr. and Ms Jackie introduced me to a wonderful banana split that both my wife and I enjoyed. Mary Jo from Rosedale Post 180 welcomed my family to their Post home for our annual Family Christmas Party. Dundalk Post 38, Cmdr. Unger, along with Mark & Cmdr. Eric Warthen welcomed Denise and I to such a wonderful Bull Roast, fun filled with so many activities. Kent Island Post 278, Dept. Sr. Vice Cmdr Niki Randolph presented that warm welcoming holiday smile to my family at the Department Holiday Christmas Celebration. I want to thank all the many Post that are continually doing great amazing things in and around the communities they serve. You truly make a huge difference in the lives of so many. It has been now three months since becoming a certified Volunteer at the Loch Raven VA Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, and this year I teamed up with Parkville Post 183 along with its SAL & Aux unit to distribute over 75 gifts to the Veterans, Comrades and Legionnaires that are cared for by such a wonderful staff. I thank

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Region / District / Post Legend	
ESR (Eastern Shore Region)	
District 1: Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot	
POSTS: 15, 18, 29, 36, 70, 77, 135, 143, 193, 194, 228, 246, 278, 296, 303	
District 2: Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester	
Posts: Post 16, 64, 67, 87, 91, 93, 94, 123, 132, 145, 166, 218, 231, 237, 243, 269.	
NCR (Northern Central Region)	
District 3: Baltimore, Harford	
Posts: 2, 17, 22, 38, 39, 47, 55, 122, 128, 130, 148, 174, 180, 182, 183, 256, 263.	
District 4: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Howard	
Posts: 14, 19, 34, 40, 95, 109, 127, 139, 154, 156, 187, 213, 276, 277, 285, 294, 300, 332.	
SMR (Southern Maryland Region)	
District 5: Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Prince George’s,	
Posts: 7, 41, 60, 66, 86, 105, 108, 131, 136, 141, 172, 175, 196, 217, 226, 235, 268, 275.	
District 6: Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s, St. Mary’s	
Posts: 54, 82, 85, 170, 206, 220, 221, 227, 233, 238, 248, 255, 259, 274, 298.	
WMR (Western Maryland Region)	
District 7: Allegany, Garrett	
Posts: 10, 13, 24, 26, 42, 71, 155, 189, 202, 208, 211, 214, 222, 236, 239.	
District 8: Carroll, Frederick, Montgomery, Washington,	
Posts: 11, 31, 68, 96, 116, 120, 121, 168, 171, 191, 200, 223, 247, 282, 295.	

REGION/DISTRICT DATA

Southern MD Region

From the desk of: Dept of MD Vice Commander

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope you and your families had a blessed and great holiday season. Now it is time to get back to the business of the Great Southern Maryland Region. Yes, we are in fourth place, but as we continue to process membership on a weekly basis, we can overcome our deficit. That is all I am going to say about that. The Vice Commander will touch on that in his article.

From our last SMR and DEC meetings I have traveled over one thousand miles, including several Veterans Day Programs, an award ceremony for Clinton Post 275 Commander Shay Brown given by Prince George's County, DEC 3rd Meeting, The National Security Forum at Greenbelt Post 136, Wreath across America, Districts 5 and 6 Membership meetings, Forty Years of Continuous Membership Ceremony for members of Stalling-Williams Post 206 and just recently the Sons of The American Legion Winter Conference in Ocean City. Also had several post visits during the quarter.

Congratulations to both District Commanders on achieving 100% completion of your post inspections. Next up is the Post Data Report (4/15/2025) and it is not too late to start working on the Consolidated Post Report (CPR). Congratulation to the following posts: Jack R. Cross Memorial Post 233 for attaining 102% in membership and 99% in Retention and John F. McNulty Memorial Post 298 for attaining 100% in retention; thank you. Congratulations to the following posts on receiving the Southern Maryland Region Commander's Award: Harry White Wilmer Post 82, Greenbelt Post 136, Stalling-Williams Post 206, Southern Maryland Post 221, Jack R. Cross Post 233 and John F. McNulty Memorial Post 298. Job well done and thank you for you do. Post Commanders, Adjutants and members, if you are having a problem with understanding the compliance or membership reports, please reach out to your District Commanders, Region Vice Commander, or I will be glad to go over it with you.

Some upcoming dates:

March 9, 2025 – Daylight Saving Time

March 9, 2025 – Day for God and Country, SMY Camp, 1:pm

March 15, 2025 – National Commander Banquet, Hartford Post 39

March 23, 2025 – Department Oratorical, Towson Post 22, 10: am.

March 23 – 26, 2025 – Washington Conference, Washington Hilton

April 12, 2025 – SMR Oyster Bowl, Laurel Post 60, 4: pm.

April 19, 2025 – A Celebration of Champions, Water's Edge Event Center, Belcamp, MD

May 3, 2025 – District 6 Membership meeting, Harry White Wilmer Post 82, 1:pm

May 4, 2025 – District 5 Membership Meeting, Severna Park Post 175, 1: pm.

May 10, 2025 – SMR Membership Meeting (Public Safety), John B Latimer- College Park Post 217, 1: pm.

For Good and Country,

Stanley 'Stan' Shaw
Commander, Southern Maryland Region
240-518-5765

From the Desk of District Five

Greeting Comrades from "All the way live, District Five. We are into a new year and spring is in the air. First let me thank all of the Posts in District Five. I know it's been a trying time for some of our Posts and comrades. But the beauty of life is "We are still here"

If you are applying for you VA Disability and are feeling discouraged, DON'T GIVE UP! Remember it's a process and being patient is part of it. District 5 is a unique District, with Posts in 3 counties, Anne Arundel, Montgomery and Gorgeous Prince Georges. But the way we support each other, it's what makes our District so amazing. One of the things that is coming up is the Oyster



Bowl, which will be April 12th at Post 60. They are planning something BIG, so get your tickets, as soon as possible.

In closing, check up on each other. Pay a visit to a Post that you have never been to. In the month of March, I am planning to visit every Post in our District. Contact me if you want to go along for the ride. And remember, American Legion is a Great Organization. They are meeting with CONGRESS on our behalf, fighting for our benefits. Let's get with our friends and comrades, that have not renewed their 2025 membership and remind that, TOGETHER, we are better and if we keep looking after each other, there's nothing we can't accomplish. Stay in prayer, Pray for me, I will Pray for you. God Bless and God Bless the American Legion.

William A. Speight
Commander, District 5

From the Desk of District Six

Greetings Legionnaires, April is Children and Youth Month. Children and Youth is the fourth pillar of The American Legion. For over 80 years, The American Legion has supported today's young people by observing April as Children and Youth Month. How is your post observing Children and Youth Month? One suggestion would be to contact the local school in your post area and explain the program. All school districts would welcome this program into their school. A financial contribution is always welcomed.

We are halfway through the Legion year, and some new post officers may still need training in their elected positions. The American Legion offers Training Tuesday, the last Tuesday of each month, provided by the National Headquarters staff. These 60-90 minute sessions offer various topics on post operations, including welcoming new members. All members of your post who are interested in becoming post officers should consider reviewing these training sessions.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration extends from Memorial Day 2012 through Veterans Day 2025. The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act empowers the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program on behalf of the Nation commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Some American Legion posts have observed this commemoration by having a pinning ceremony at their post. This recognition is for all veterans who served on active duty during the Vietnam War. If your post wants to receive pins for a pinning ceremony, visit www.vietnamwar50th.com.

District Six continues to work on the Four Pillars, with February being Americanism month. The District will host the Oratorical Contest at Clinton Post 259 on February 22nd. This year, students from various schools in the District are participating. Last year, the District did not have an oratorical contest; however, Posts in District Six are determined to make it happen this year. We are a strong District because of our Members, our Programs, our experience, and our willingness to serve Veterans regularly. As we sunset this American Legion year, let us press on smartly by honoring our preamble and oath as members and Post Officers. The Southern Maryland Region has a rich history of selfless service and commitment to excellence, and you're the reason why.

Murray Hall
Commander District Six



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

REGION/DISTRICT DATA

Western MD Region

Comrades- Greetings from "The Ferocious Four – the Western Maryland Region!" I hope this article finds you and your families in good spirits and health. Hard to believe we're halfway through the Legion Year...soon we will be together again in Ocean City for the annual Department Convention! Information is out now, so begin to register and book your travel plans.

I truly appreciate the hardworking, passionate, and dedicated Legionnaires of the Western Maryland Region. We've seen some tremendous progress since the department reorganization we have many new faces and a lot more inclusion in the planning and execution of our programs and services. Working together and having fun is our priority. Another one is showing appreciation and acknowledging the hard work our Legionnaires are doing.

Recently my wife and I had the privilege to attend the membership dinner for Damascus Post #171. Damascus does it right and by right, I mean by recognition of those members of the entire Legion Family who go above and beyond, those who are always helping out, those who are passionate about what we do. The night was amazing with honorary life memberships, Legionnaire of the Year, and more. The camaraderie in the room was simply awesome. Great job Damascus! If you do the same, be LOUD and PROUD about it – share it with me and rest of the district, region and department officers. We must recognize the hard work of our members, or they might stop being so dedicated.

Another highlight of the past quarter was the attendance and graduation of several Maryland Legionnaires of the National American Legion College. As a 2015 NALC graduate, I know the efforts they put into (1) applying, (2) attending and (3) graduating from the program. Our very own Todd Morris, WMR Vice Commander, attended recently and made us proud. NALC applications are OPEN NOW – if you're interested, willing to contribute a larger role in the department and want to help lead the organization apply. Reach out to me or a fellow NALC grad for additional info and support.

With a new year, let's kick into overdrive with our recruitment and retention efforts. As of this article, our region sits in 2nd place – with District 7 in 2nd and District 8 in 3rd. Kudos to Farrady Post 24 for being the 1st post in the region greater than 100%. The Bear Claw is still up for grabs...as well as many department awards too. Membership is our organizations heartbeat – let's stay at it, and finish strong. Need help? Reach out to me or Region Vice Commander Todd Morris for assistance; we're here to help!

Upcoming soon is our National Commanders visit, the Region Reception, Department Oratorical Contest, Boys State and more. Lean in where you can, help promote our programs and services.

Know that what we do is vital to our Veterans and our communities. I see and hear about the opportunities we have, to continue to advance the welfare of our brothers and sisters – as many need our support, encouragement, and love. The bond of service is strong, and what separates our organization from many others. Thank you for your dedication whether through membership or involvement – it makes a difference!

I continue to be PROUD of our region – and dedicated to all of our efforts. Please let me know how I can help.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Clevenger
Dept Vice Commander
Commander, Western Maryland Region
The American Legion - Dept of Maryland
P: 301-514-6641
Email: wmrcommander@mdlegion.org
Website: www.mdlegion.org
Facebook: @FerociousFourWMRTAL



From the Desk of the District 7

Greetings veterans, comrades, and members of The American Legion family and all our Western Maryland region and our District 7 members. During the past quarter district 7 has been remarkably busy with numerous programs of the American Legion happening at all posts all around the district. Everyone is working extremely hard on keeping our membership numbers up and our community activities strong working the four pillars of the American Legion and sharing that the American Legion is still active in our communities our districts our regions and our department.

We have had a good turnout with our oratorical this year and it is an incredibly good program that all posts need to continue collaborating with their local schools to keep this thing going and get it to be bigger and stronger year after year. As I am making this article for the Free State Warrior we are now into the second half of our fiscal Legion year, now and as always is a good time to plan for any programs and ideas that would be beneficial to any people in this great Organization for next year. Also, the 12-step membership program that the department senior Vice Commander put into effect at the November DEC meeting is a very good idea and it is helping some of the posts get some good ideas on recruiting and retention of new members. Every post needs to push this harder throughout the year. It is a good tool, and I have heard lots of good things from people about it. In closing, I just want to thank District 7 for all their support we have had a successful year so far and everybody is working well together. Things are going smoothly, and we are having another wonderful year here in the Great Western Maryland region and District 7. Remember our troops, our comrades are members are legion family members and all our veterans out in the community that are just waiting to come join us in our family.

Respectfully



Vaughn K Beard
Commander District 7

The American Legion Department of Maryland

From the Desk of the District 8

Greetings from District 8, proud member of the Western MD Region Four. We have made it to the halfway point of the year. Where has the time gone? Here are my updates from the past 90 days.

We completed our Post inspections by the allotted time. Many thanks to my District Vice Commanders Kevin Cogan and Richard Stem (Stemmie). The Posts passed with flying colors.

I obtained my goal to visit all fifteen Posts by the holidays. I am very proud of what the District 8 Posts have achieved so far this year. Their programs to support Veterans and their local communities are top notch. This is one of the things that make The American Legion an outstanding organization. Furthermore, they embrace our "Be the One" campaign to help reduce our Veterans suicide. We care about our fellow Veterans who are in crisis. We are doing well with our membership goals. The District made our February 85% number and we are in third place in the Department. Eleven out of fifteen Posts are at or above goal. Like last year, my personal goal is to have every Post in District 8 make 100%. We can make this happen.

We are moving forward with honoring our Department American Legion Commander Heredia, Auxiliary President Johnson, and Detachment Commander Obremski at our annual Western Maryland Region Commanders Reception. This will take place on Saturday April 5th at Post 171 Damascus, MD. Cutoff date for reservations is March 14th.

Lastly, District 8 will be having our fourth annual Warrior Canine Connection Poker Run fundraiser. On Saturday May 10th our Legion Riders and non-riding Legionnaires will participate in this wonderful event. I am so proud that our District 8 Posts care about this important initiative. These dogs make such a huge impact on our Veterans with PTSD and other challenges they endured during their time in service. This non-profit organization provides dogs at no cost our Veterans in need. Typically, it costs \$18K to purchase a trained dog. Amen to Warrior Canine Connection for all they do.

God bless you all,



Cliff Bergstresser
The American Legion
District 8 Commander

POST EVERLASTING As of November 18 2024 - February 19, 2025

NAME	POST #	NAME	POST #	NAME	POST #	NAME	POST #	NAME	POST #
Guy Carleton Parlett Post 7, Annapolis		James H Friedline	38	Earl M Neall Jr	91	Richard Offutt	166	Lester W Fox	206
Philip L Wagner MD	7	Paul M Gaydos Jr	38	James C Newcomb Jr	91	Richard Offutt	166	James C Jensen	206
Clopper-Michael Post 10, Boonsboro		Earl G Rutherford Jr	38	W M Turner Jr	91	Harry A Tillmann	166	Ronald E Kersse	206
John H Lloyd Jr	10	Harford Post 39, Bel Air		Worcester Post 93, Pocomoke City		Edwin C. Creeger, Jr Post 168, Thurmont		James E Moore	206
William L Smith	10	Lawrence W Albergo	39	Marion C Bozman	93	Oliver F Hoffman	168	Rafael J Nieves	206
Francis Scott Key Post 11, Frederick		William W Dobbs	39	Oliver T. Beauchamp, Jr Post 94, Pr.Anne		Randall R Wolf	168	Lonnie L Ramos	206
Sam Ayala	11	Michael E Hamblin	39	Edward D Webster	94	Randolph Rurey Post 170, Indian Head		Gary A Rose	206
Heston Bass	11	William .Jiebeg	39	Steadman-Keenan Post 96, Brunswick		Francis X Cooper	170	Garrie L Shope Jr	206
Barry K Brouse	11	Norman J Mead	39	Raymond T Cullen	96	Joseph Greenfield	170	Dixon-Troxell Post 211, Funkstown	
John D Brunk	11	Glen Burnie Post 40, Glen Burnie		Herman I Williams	96	Willie T Raines	170	Homer Abbott	211
Carroll L Crabbs	11	Daniel C Marchetti	40	Fitzgerald-Cantrel Post 105, Bethesda		Jerrald L Thomas	170	Paul J Alexander	211
Ronald T Dudley	11	Stanley A Smith	40	Brooks E Blunck	105	Damascus Post 171, Damascus		Paul E Bernard	211
Randolph L Everhart	11	John N Sprucebank Jr	40	Dewey Lowman Post 109, Arbutus		Milton R Mullican	171	Kenneth A Bladen	211
James D Hart	11	Cissel-Saxon Post 41, Silver Spring		Chester Delmartin Jr	109	Severna Park Post 175, Severna Park		Jack W Coffelt	211
Ronald W Turley	11	Leonardo D Mangum	41	Albert J Herold	109	Michael J Collins	175	Joseph V Desensi	211
Richard Waterman Jr	11	Jimmy McGonigle	41	Joseph M Sanphilipo	109	Lawrence A Dale	175	Jay R Everly	211
Bernard R Willis	11	Phillip L Perritt	41	Authur M Stoltz Jr	109	Erwin H Geresbeck	175	Elwood E Hauver	211
Fort Cumberland Post 13, Cumberland		Morris Frock Post 42, Hagerstown		Reisterstown Post 116, Reisterstown		Michael M Kalis	175	Keller L Iseminger	211
Arthur E Beaulieu Jr	13	Charles H Beckman	42	Carlton Harveson	116	Louis McWilliams	175	Glenn E Peterson	211
Vickie D Brown	13	William D Godwin	42	Lawrence O Nolte	116	Robert D Montgomery	175	Joseph J Stubits	211
P T Burke	13	Ralph H Helman	42	Francis X. Elder Post 121, Emmitsburg		Rosedale Post 180, Rosedale		William Whalen Jr	211
Michael E Davis	13	David Johnson	42	John R Matthews	121	John W Hagert Jr	180	Grantsville Post 214, Grantsville	
Robert P Harvey Sr	13	Jack W Koontz	42	Boggs-Disharoon Post 123, Berlin		Jerry A Hower Sr	180	Gary R Bonar	214
Malvin H Haubenstein	13	Steven McConnaughey	42	Howard L Jarmon Jr	123	Bernhardt W Zybell Jr	180	Charles D Moffatt	214
Elmer S Keller Jr	13	James D Neville	42	John J Troutman	123	Slate Ridge Post 182, Whiteford		John B. Latimer College Park Post 217	
Louis J Klepitch	13	Joseph L. Davis Post 47, Havre De Grace		Chesapeake Post 127, Baltimore		Thomas A Burke III	182	Sterling G Gregory	217
Roy E Mills	13	Barry K Childress	47	Wayne L McConnell	127	Thomas A Burke	182	Dor-Wic Post 218, Sharptown	
Cecil J Moore	13	Philip A Cianelli	47	Bernard L. Tobin Post 128, Aberdeen		John Edelmann Sr	182	Donald L Eskridge	218
John E Robertson	13	Richard L Goerwitz Jr	47	Milton A Feliberty	128	Marvin Wright Jr	182	Marie M Lynch	218
Earl E Royce	13	Dane L Hirsch	47	Robert L Monden	128	Parkville Post 183, Parkville		Robert H Nelms Jr	218
Cecil Post 15, Elkton		Charles E Hrzic	47	Roy G Tate	128	John C Barnold Jr	183	Southern Maryland Post 221, Avenue	
Robert W Alcorn	15	John R Lee	47	Overlea-Perry Hall Post 130, Perry Hall		Vincent D Fonte	183	Jack B Seagrove	221
John J Jodlbauer	15	Randy L Sweat	47	Robert R Dennis	130	David J McDonnell	183	Joseph C. Herbert Post 222, Clear Spring	
John J Johnson	15	Laurel Maryland Post 60, Laurel		William J Flynn	130	Robert Pluchak	183	Lloyd A Chaney	222
William M Moore	15	Richard G Jensen	60	William L Lawson	130	Raymond Rillon	183	Eugene A Duffey Jr	222
Stanley Cochrane Post 16, Crisfield		Roger E Kaufmann	60	Louis G Lomp Jr	130	Joseph E Robel	183	Robert E Shirk	222
Scott D Hanback	16	Michael A Robertazzi	60	Charles F Marshall	130	David A Roesner Sr	183	Sykesville memorial Post 223	
Edgewood Service Post 17, Edgewood		Earl A Skidmore	60	Francis McLhinney	130	James B Via	183	Robert L Alford	223
Muncy Duty Jr	17	Disney-Bell Post 66, Bowie		Walter H Niederwemmer Sr 130		Robert L Ward	183	George T Arnold	223
Jeff Davis Post 18, Centreville		Warren D Bradley	66	F R Nohe	130	Brooklyn-Curtis Bay Post 187, Baltimore		Raymond A Coluzzi	223
James R Brown	18	Nicholas M Lomangino	66	Thomas Price	130	Richard J Koel	187	Guyfred A Haynie	223
Towson Post 22, Towson		George H Messenger	66	James G Quigley	130	Barton Post 189, Barton		David R Malat	223
Jerome L Somerville	22	Norman Price Post 68, Sandy Spring		Susquehanna Post 135, Perryville		William R Beeman	189	George Stafford	223
Farrady Post 24, Frostburg		Halsey W Smith Jr	68	Charles F Cunningham	135	Paul C Nolan	189	Cummings-Behlke Post 226, Mayo	
John F Bartles	24	Talbot Post 70, Easton		Greenbelt Post 136, Greenbelt		Stephen M Timney	189	Robert L Bennett	226
Robert R Broadwater	24	Ellsworth D Brooks	70	Stephen E Donn	136	Gold Star Post 191, Mount Airey		Larry D Boerste	226
Ronald G Laber	24	Robert J Cole	70	Richard E Henthorn	136	Douglas D Barnes	191	Hubert L Cave Jr	226
Webster B. Harrison Post 26, Hancock		David H Kemp	70	George W Ryan Jr	136	Steve M Biancaniello	191	William H Choate	226
Robert M Barnard	26	Wayne A Layfield	70	Warren C Wilcox	136	Joseph Flood	191	Arthur A Cousin Jr	226
Calvin Hoffman	26	James J Nagle	70	Cook-Pinkney Post 141, Annapolis		John W Lauterbach Jr	191	John R Eisel	226
Roy M McKee	26	Barry Noonan	70	Edwin Herring	141	Ronald E Reese	191	Robeto Garcia	226
Ralph E Wachter	26	Proctor-Kildow, INC. Post 71, Oakland		Samuel R Hull	141	Mason-Dixon Post 194, Rising Sun		John T Moreland Jr	226
J Theodore Wolford	26	Edward A Bateman	71	Michael W Johnson	141	Ratib S Baker	194	James K Reece	226
Caroline Post 29, Denton		Wayne R Glotfelty	71	Ephriam W Jones	141	Robert W Bolt	194	Brandywine Post 227, Brandywine	
Francis A Callahan Jr	29	Carl W Spiker	71	Essex Post 148, Baltimore		Hampstead Post 200		Martin J Concannon Jr	227
Robert D Larrimore	29	Blake-Blackston Post 77, Easton		Bernard F Bell	148	Enoch E Brown	200	Robert L Miller	227
Carroll Post 31, Westminster		James K Camper	77	Jack Gay	148	Raymond E Newton	200	Sgt. Preston Ashley Post 228, Rock Hall	
Alfred J Bailey Jr	31	Lorenzo C Ferguson	77	Victory Post 155, Westernport		David A Pilley Sr	200	Thomas D Bottomley	228
Douglas M Blizzard	31	Harry White Wilmer Post 82, LaPlata		William C Shimer	155	Russell R Ruby	200	John R Durocher	228
Charles D Dorsey	31	Vernon E Benson	82	Jack D Snyder	155	Phillip M Stansfield	200	Jack R. Cross Memorial Post 233, In.Head	
Theodore D Fringer	31	James E Wright	82	Adams, Hanna, Moore Post 156, Ellicott City		Joseph P Taymans	200	Larry G Smith	233
Gordon E Jenkins	31	Henderson-Smith-Edmonds Post 86, Rockville		Julius F Beverly	156	Phillip J Wilson	200	Jameson-Harrison Post 238, Hughsville	
Walter K Logan Jr	31	Richard C Browne	86	Albert D McCracken	156	Potomac Post 202, Williamsport		Richard Canter	238
Steven J Moxley Jr	31	David M Hill	86	Stephen T Mexia	156	Jerome J Dittman Jr	202	Richard E Howard	238
David M Reese	31	Wellington Moy	86	Roger T Nichols	156	Stephen L McKinley	202	Robert E Tankersley	238
Fred M West Jr	31	Dorchester Post 91, Cambridge		Harry F Smith	156	Ronald E Speaker	202	Cascade Post	239
Frank M. Jarman Post 36, Chestertown		John C Bechtold Jr	91	Synepuxent Post 166, Ocean City		Harry N Welty	202	Robert W Ridenour	239
Darrel Commodore	36	Richard F Colburn	91	Allen W Cathell	166	Stallings -Williams Post 206, Chs. Beh.		C. Henry Price II Post 246, Betterton	
Dundalk Post 38, Dundalk		James R Condon	91	Marcus C Collier	166	Karen EA Calvert	206	Robert W Smith	246
Brant Cramer	38	Charles E Connelly	91	Robert A Dawson	166	Russell M Caudill Jr	206	Parkton Post 256	
Dominic N Deludos	38					Joseph S Curran 2	06	Daniel W Openshaw	256

Commander

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Together, the legacy of the Hello Girls, the 6888th Battalion, and the millions of women who have served and sacrificed across generations underscore a timeless truth: service to country transcends gender, and the courage of these women continues to inspire us all.

As a Legion Family, we stand together in celebrating the richness and diversity of these contributions—not just in February and March, but throughout the year. The American Legion's mission is to support all veterans, service members, and their families, recognizing that our strength comes from our unity. It is through our collective efforts that we continue to make a difference, ensuring that no one who has served is ever left behind.

To our Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and Riders, thank you. Your dedication, service, and passion are what make this organization strong. Your continued support of veterans' programs, youth initiatives, and community outreach reflect the very best of what we stand for as Champions of Hope.

As we celebrate these achievements, I encourage you to take action by hosting a Patriot Social Hour in your community. This simple but meaningful gathering—whether at a local restaurant, post home, or coffee shop—is an opportunity to connect with fellow veterans, active-duty members, and their families. It allows us to share our mission, promote The American Legion's initiatives, and strengthen our membership. By engaging new members and educating the community about programs like Be the One, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R), and Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW), we ensure that our mission continues to grow and thrive.

I also want to personally invite each of you to attend our Inaugural Department of Maryland Gala on April 19, 2025. This event will be a celebration of our collective achievements as a Legion Family and an opportunity to honor those who have dedicated themselves to serving veterans and their families. It's more than just an event—it's a moment to unite, recognize, and inspire as we continue our mission of service and support.

At the heart of our efforts this year is our Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Project. This initiative is dedicated to ensuring that the over 350,000 veterans, active-duty military, National Guard, and Reservists in Maryland receive the support, care, and resources they deserve. The funds we raise will stay right here in Maryland, directly impacting veterans in need. Your support—whether through fundraising, awareness, or participation—is critical to the success of this mission.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we will honor the legacy of those who have paved the way. Together, we will build a Legion Family for the future—one member at a time. And together, we will continue to be Champions of Hope, advocating for those who have sacrificed for our country. Let us move forward united in purpose, committed to service, and driven by the legacy of those who came before us. Thank you for all that you do to make The American Legion Department of Maryland a force for good in the lives of veterans, service members, and their families. May God bless you, may God bless our veterans, and may God bless The American Legion Family.

Respectfully,

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
#WeAreChampionsOfHope
#VeteransStrengtheningAmerica

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



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

Adjutant

Continued from page 2

Webstore where Posts and supporters can do all the things that before could only be done by mail. All the links and downloadable forms are available on our Dept website at www.mdlegion.org. To submit ads, boosters, or golf tournament items (including registering for golf foursome, and individuals) just go to Convention Corporation website at www.mdlegionconvention.org. The ability to order a Convention Polo Shirt online is available again this year. Cutoff for the shirts is May 1, 2025. On the Convention website one can upload an ad, booster list, or do about everything that used to be mailed. Payment methods include all major credit cards and PayPal.

Again, this year Posts CAN register delegates and alternates using the webstore at www.mdlegionconvention.org. Post Adjutants will receive the Tally Sheets and registrations forms about 33 days (by about June 12th) before the Convention, and they can complete the forms and mail back the traditional way, or they can pay for the delegates online, and upload the registration forms to the item before adding to the cart.

Vendor registration can also be done on this website, and if you are aware of someone that would like to set up in our vendor area, please spread the word. Vendors will make the convention a better time for the entire Legion Family and provide needed products and services.

In closing, I pass along well wishes from myself and my family for a Happy Easter, and please do not forget to encourage all Veterans to join the Posts in commemorating Memorial Day. Take the time to invite Post 297 members and all Veterans living in your area to visit the Post or services on these special days.

Russell W. Myers, Jr.
Department Adjutant

Join Us in Supporting Maryland's Veterans

Champions of Hope Gala

Dear Legion Family, I am thrilled to extend a heartfelt Save the Date invitation to our Inaugural Celebration of Champions Gala – A Night of Hope Celebrating Maryland's Veterans. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Water's Edge Event Center in Belcamp, MD. This special evening is dedicated to honoring our shared mission and raising vital funds for our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) project, which supports over 350,000 veterans, service members, National Guard, Reservists, and their families right here in Maryland.

Through our work, we ensure that essential resources remain local and accessible uplifting the lives of those who have selflessly served our nation. Now, you have the opportunity to make a difference by being a part of this transformative event.

The evening promises to be unforgettable, featuring exceptional entertainment by the all-veteran group, Chasing Friday. Enjoy an open bar from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, a lively social hour from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, followed by a served dinner, an inspiring awards ceremony, and dancing that will bring our community together in celebration.

There are several ways you can get involved: Fundraise: Organize a fundraiser with your post, unit, or squadron to rally additional support for VA&R—every dollar raised makes a difference!

Become a Legacy Supporter (Sponsor): Amplify our reach and impact

by becoming a legacy supporter. To join as a sponsor, please reach out to your District, Region, Department Sr. Vice, or the Department Commander for a sponsorship form.

Donate Silent Auction Items: Contribute your unique items to our silent auction, helping to generate excitement and additional funds for our mission.

To Purchase Your Tickets: Secure your spot for this unforgettable night of celebration and hope. Please scan the QR code to purchase your ticket(s).



Your participation—whether by attending, fundraising, sponsoring, or donating—plays a crucial role in our commitment to Maryland's veterans and their families. Together, we can build a brighter future and create a lasting legacy of hope.

Join us at Water's Edge on April 19, 2025, at 6:00 PM, and let's show the strength of our Legion Family by making this gala an inspiring success.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission. Together, we are champions of hope!

Respectfully,

Julie Daly
Harford Post 39
Chairwoman, Celebration of Hope Gala

#ChampionsOfHope

S.A.L. Commander

Hello to All, I bring greetings from your "SONS HAVING FUN GETTING IT DONE" Detachment of Maryland. Back in June of 2024 when I came into office as your 60th Commander for the Detachment of Maryland I gave an acceptance speech emphasizing the word "WE". The Detachment can not run on the word "I" as it is not one person but all of us to come together and take care of things that are needed to be done. Well, we have been doing just that. Membership is still on track to make 100% as all four regions are ahead of current goals. Please continue all that hard work as we are all in this together and we need keep the health of the Detachment SAL STRONG.

My project for this year is coming right along but still needs support from you and the entire Legion Family as the Southern Maryland Youth Camp is in need of a playground system and half court basket ball for our youth. The success of this playground project should be something near and dear to everyone's heart as it for our youth and future leaders. Let us all join together and not let our children grow up to fast before our own eyes. Rather let us help to let children be children and enjoy these younger years.

In my travels around this great state I have been meeting many great people and seeing all the great work everyone is doing. You are all truly exemplifying this year slogan of "Sons Having Fun getting it Done". Seeing everyone holding their events and fundraisers in order to make donations to not only my project but also all the programs under the Four Pillars is continuing to show we are stepping up to the challenge. Keep up all this great work.

The end of year will soon be upon us and you all know that means Consolidated Reports (CSR), Squadron Data Reports (SDR) and



Certification forms (SCR) are due. Last year Maryland only reached 51% of reports submitted. Gentlemen 51% is not a good number. We need to be at 100%. Everyone is always looking at Detachment of Maryland and everything we do. They wish to learn from us and copy what we do, but how can they copy all of our success if we do not send in our reports. Remember SCR's Squadron Data Report are due in April and then the SCR and CSR are due no later than 30 May 2025. Not after May 30th. If you do your CSR Report online and submit directly to National, PLEASE make a copy before sending it out and send that copy to us at the Detachment. We need these forms as well for end of year judging. So many Squadrons that are worthy of awards are not getting them because they are not submitting CSR's. Without these reports we cannot show all the great work you do. Let's lead the way this year and hit 100% on reports. What do you say?

Thank you so much for allowing me this honor to be the Detachment Commander for this 2024-2025 year. I am still looking forward to getting out there to see you and having fun getting it done.

For God and Country

Michael Obremski
Commander
Detachment of Maryland

Clinton Post 259 CDR Shay Brown Recipient of Prestigious 2nd Lt Emily Perez Courage Award

Clinton Post 259 CDR Shay Brown was awarded the 2nd Lt Emily Perez Courage Award by Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks in Largo, MD on 14 Nov 2024.

The award was presented to Brown by Legionnaire Dr. James A. Dula, PhD, Veterans Affairs Officer and Military Veterans Liaison to the County Executive of Prince George's County.

Alsobrooks recognized Brown's courageous commitment to service, leadership, and the community.

Distinguished guests, family and friends,

Clinton Post 259 and other local legionnaires were in attendance.

Perez was the first female African-American officer in U. S. Military history to die in combat and the first female West Point graduate to die when her Humvee was struck by an improvised explosive device as she was leading a convoy during the Iraq War in 2006.

Submitted by:

Bill Johnson
Department of Maryland Photographer
Clinton Post 259

S.A.L. National Vice Commander

This past August in New Orleans, the Maryland Sons of The American Legion was blessed with another National leader.

Past Detachment Commander Bob Manzo from Parkville Squadron 183 was voted in as National Vice Commander for the North East Region. Bob is serving with four other National Vice Commanders and National Commander Joseph Navarrete from New Mexico. Bob has been traveling around the East on trips to New York, New Hampshire and Vermont and has several more planned for the rest of the year. On the weekend of March 28 and 29, 2025, National Vice Commander Bob will be holding his North East Region Gathering and Homecoming at Overlea-Perry Hall Post 130 in Perry Hall, MD. Legion family from the North East Region will be making their way down to Maryland for a weekend of camaraderie, and a chance to hear about what's going on in other detachments across the North East.

On Friday night at 6:30 pm, there will be a meet and greet at Post 130 for National Vice Bob and the Leading Candidate for Bob's job,

Jeremy Revell from Vermont. On Saturday morning, there will be some training to hone the skills of our members and then on Saturday night starting at 5:30 pm, there will be a Homecoming Banquet for our National Vice Commander Bob Manzo.

We would like to invite you to attend the various activities over the weekend. If interest, please visit the Detachment of Maryland website at www.mdsal.org, and then go to the events tab at the top right corner and look for the NVC Homecoming for the registration packet. Hotel rooms have been blocked for both Friday and Saturday night. Please submit your forms for the banquet by March 15th. We will also have an ad book, but the cut off date for that is March 1, 2025. If are interested and need more information, please contact me at joelglad123@aol.com or by phone at 443-742-0842.

We hope to see you there.

United In Service

Joe Gladden
Past National Commander

Polar Bear Plunge 2025

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! To the more than 16,000 people who plunged for our Special Olympics MD athletes and unified teammates, giving them the opportunity to train and compete in 27 different sports year-round free of charge. Thank You! to the more than 5,000 people who supported plungers with donations large or small. Thank You! for creating a more inclusive MD. The Polar Bear Plunge is part of MD's history. For the past 28 years, thousands of plungers have jumped into the icy waters of the Chesapeake Bay all in support of SOMD. Your dedication to the athletes and Unified Teammates is impactful and has created countless inclusion experiences across MD. If you go on Polar Bear Plunge.com you will see our American Legion logo and the SONS logo which means we are partners of this great event.

The goal this year is \$4.750M and so far, they've raised \$4.493M. Our Plunge Team goes in with the Law Enforcement Community. So far, they've raised \$338,739.00 w/64 teams. We raised \$43,942.00 w/1 team, you do the math. My goal this year was \$20,000.00. I didn't make my goal. . . I exceeded it. With

your help and kind donations my total so far is \$26,021.00. I was presented a plaque that reads, "Top Individual Fundraiser - 2025 Police Plunge". Legionnaire's, we have a lot to be proud of.

To all Post Commanders, Region Commanders, District Commander's, and fellow legionnaire's, I Thank You! from the bottom of my heart for supporting me this year.

As you can see, we go all over the State in attending and working these events. Please take the time to come out to one of these events and see these special athletes in action. I would like you to see the smile on their face when I give one of these special athletes a challenge coin. I guarantee you will fall in love with them and not only will they will change your life, they will steal your heart. God bless all our Special Athletes, real good!

Commander David, I thank you once again for appointing me Chairman of this very renowned committee.

William J. Ganz, Jr. Chairman (109)
(See Spec.Olymp Comm Rpt
D.E.C.(FEB2025))



Oratorical Contest 2025

The 2025 Oratorical Contest will be Sunday, March 23, at Towson Post 22. Everyone is welcome to join us either as a volunteer helper or just as a part of the audience. Please plan on arriving by 10:00. We plan to start promptly at 11:00 and there can be no admittance while a candidate is speaking.

As of this writing, we shall have 5 candidates. Our candidates arrived at this point by winning their respective District contests held over the course of the past two months. Our winner in Towson will represent Maryland at the National Contest, May 16-18, at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

In each phase of the Contest (Post, District, Department and National), the candidate must be prepared to deliver 5 speeches from memory, in front of a live audience without

the aid of notes or props. The first speech is the Prepared Oration. This is the primary work by the candidate of their own creation, 8 to 10 minutes in length, on some aspect of the US Constitution. Of the remaining four, only one will be drawn at random and delivered by each speaker at that contest. This is the Assigned Topic and must be 3 to 5 minutes on the subject that was drawn. The four for 2025 are Amendments 1, 7, 18, and 26. This is where the contest is usually decided.

Everyone is reminded that there is no recording of any kind or photography during the contest. Cheering and applause are also saved for the end. For further information check the Maryland and National websites or previous editions of the Warrior.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Auxiliary participated in the Polar Plunge with the American Legion Family Team. This is a great event for a great cause, the Special Olympics.

Most of us are ready for Spring temperatures to start. The Presidents Project is the Wellspring of Life Farm located in Monkton (Baltimore County). They provide various therapeutic services for Veterans, Active-Duty Military, First Responders and their families. They do that in part with their horses, goats and dogs.

March is Red Cross Month. Consider helping with a Blood Drive, etc. Volunteers



American Legion Auxiliary



are a very valuable part of our community and organization. All of our members are very much appreciated. More information and educational opportunities may be found at our National Website; alaforveterans.org. The first of every month is 'Be the one day' and RED (Remember Everyone Deployed). FRIDAYS wear red shirt. Wear something branded to help bring awareness to these causes. In Service not Self.

Connie J. Johnson
The American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Maryland President

District 4

Continued from page 9

Ms. Pamela Green for coordinating that effort. I also had the opportunity to attend Adam. Hanna, Moore Memorial Post 156, Howard L. Turner Post 276, Columbia Post 300, Northeastern Post 285, and Dewey Lowman Post 109 Christmas family celebrations. What a good time we shared together. The fellowship was super, thank you for the invitation. To me, invitation are special and everyone doesn't get one. The District Leadership Team and I took the time to visit every Post of the District this past fall and look forward for our second winter visit during Feb. "In order to know, you must show." Currently the District Membership is at 77% and climbing, we got all Post Inspection Report in before December, Pearl Harbor at Baltimore Station went well, (4) Chaplain Services will be hosted by Dewey Lowman Post 109 on Feb. 2 at 10am, and as a reminder that Consolidated Post Reports are due into Dept. Adj. Russell Myers as soon as possible. I want to also thank our Department & Regional Leadership for always showing up rendering any support they can. It means a lot. To all the Post of this Mighty Striving District we need your continual support, because without you and cannot do. The District Annual Bull, Oyster, & Clam Roast is Sat. April 26, 2025 at Howard L. Turner Post 276 from 2pm – 6pm. See your Post Leadership for Roast and Raffle tickets. See you there.

Tim Causion
District 4 Commander

Northern Central Region

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We have some events and fundraisers coming up, and I would like to share them with you. I know that by the time you receive the Warrior, the Northern Central Region Reception will have passed, so please consider attending one of the Region Receptions that remain.

- March 1 – NCR Reception, honoring the Department and Detachment leaders. Flier is enclosed. Please encourage your members to support this event as we will be honoring the Department of Maryland Commander, David Heredia, Jr., the ALA Department of Maryland President, Connie Johnson, along with SAL Detachment of MD Commander, Mike Obremski, the ALA Junior President Sylvia Apshago and the SAL Youth Commander, Gabriel Dorsey. Dave and Connie are representing the NCR, and specifically Post and Unit 128!
- April 19 – Innaugural Department Gala – A Celebration of Champions will be held at the Water's Edge Events Center, 4687 Millenium Drive, Belcamp, MD 21017. Proceeds supporting this event will go to the Department Commander's Project, supporting Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. Fliers have been sent out and posted on the Department website as well as the Facebook pages.
- April 26 – District 4 Bull Roast/Fundraiser, Howard L Turner Post 276, 8086 Quarterfield Rd., Severn, MD 21144 from 2-6pm. Commander Causion will provide more information at the D4 meeting.
- May 31 – NCR BONANZA! Fundraiser. The location will be at Dundalk Post 38, and a flier has been shared. We will only be selling 160 tickets at \$40 each. We will have a drawdown, horse races and a few bingo games. We need your support to raise some funds so we can support the American Legion Programs.

I want to offer my sincere gratitude to each of you for what you do to help the veterans and their families in your communities. Tom Longest, Commander of Mahool-Potts Post 2 in Hampden has followed in the footsteps of Darrell Truesdale in helping some homeless veterans get off the streets. Tom has been doing quite a bit for his home post, resurrecting it in the Hampden community and putting a lot of time and effort into not only keeping the doors open, but also updating the building. Tom is one of the hardest working Post Commanders out there, all while dealing with several personal issues. His ideas to increase awareness and treatment for those dealing with TBI issues, to personally helping homeless vets find housing and treatment with places like the Baltimore Station are paving the way for other posts to do the same. In 2024 alone, American Legion members in the NCR have helped more than 60 homeless vets get help.

I want to send a personal thanks to my home post, Rosedale Post 180 and the members of District 3 and the Northern Central Region for endorsing me for the office of Department Senior Vice Commander for the 2025-2026 administrative year. I also want to thank Post 19, District 4 and the NCR for endorsing Ron Holcombe for the office of National Executive Committee Member for 2025-2027. Ron will do a great job as he always does, and I look forward to working with him for another two years. With this, we have some changes coming to the Districts and Region. I am looking forward to Junious Lee Lewis becoming the next NCR Commander. His many years of experience serving in nearly all offices of Post 285, the Baltimore District, and with the reorganization, District 3 and the NCR, will make him a huge asset in the Region. Junious has been exemplary in his role as Region Vice Commander for the last two years. Hank Allen has been endorsed by Post 55 and the District 3 council for the office of NCR Vice Commander, this opens the door for a new District 3 Commander, and I can't think of anyone better for the position than Anita Stewart-Hammerer. She has been endorsed by Towson Post 22, where she served in many positions, including six years as Post Commander. The District and Region will be in great hands.

Lastly, I have to share some unfortunate news. Posts come and go all the time. This past year the Department welcomed Post 303 in Port Deposit. This is an exciting time for new posts, while for some older posts have to change how they operate or go away forever. Now is that time for Rosedale Post 180. Our Post Executive Committee has made the difficult decision to cease the operations of our post hall and lounge. Ultimately, it came down to money, or the lack thereof. While none of us want the post to disappear, it is futile to operate a building with a net loss each month. The Post 180 membership will meet on February 22 to decide the fate of our building. Our intention is to remain a post but simply operate like Post 174, Post 156 and Post 300 does. We want to increase our community presence, and partner with other organizations to further the mission of the American Legion. We have had several posts, churches and a senior center offer us meeting locations. I have heard from a couple of members who have visited other posts, that they were told that they MUST transfer The Northern Central Region The American Legion, Department of Maryland to another post. That is simply not true. If they wish to transfer to a post, that is their prerogative, but it is not a requirement. We will provide more information in the near future, but please keep our members in your thoughts at this time. See you all soon!

For God & Country,
Eric V. Warthen, Sr.
Department Vice Commander
Commander, Northern Central Region

Department Service Officer

Adrian G. Gamboa

Greetings Legionnaires, Our office is now located in room G603 on the ground floor of the George Fallon Federal Building (next to the IRS). Our telephone number is the same, (410) 230-4420. Ext. 1 for William Brown and Ext. 2 for the Department Service Officer.



Region and District Commanders please reach out to set up the Resource/Service Officer Training and any Veterans Claims Clinics you may have on the horizon.

VETERAN'S BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION PREPARE FOR VA'S SECURE SIGN-IN CHANGES

To continue to protect Veterans' identities and benefits, VA is making changes to its online sign-in process. In 2025, you'll need to use a Login.gov or ID.me account to sign in to all VA websites and apps, including My HealtheVet. VA will remove the My HealtheVet sign-in option after March 4, 2025, and the DS Logon option after September 30, 2025. If you don't have one of these accounts yet, VA encourages you to create one now. Both Login.gov and ID.me require multifactor authentication (MFA) as part of the account set-up process. This extra layer of protection helps VA make sure that it's you trying to use your sign-in account and not someone pretending to be you. Multifactor authentication is a common practice for many websites and apps. You may already use it to access your email, bank account, or social media accounts.

When you set up your Login.gov or ID.me account, you can choose the multifactor authentication option that works best for you.

This account allows one to sign in to VA.gov, VA mobile apps, and any other VA online service. One can manage and stay up to date on VA Benefits and VA Healthcare on this applications and sites.

Post 9/11 Veterans who also served a qualifying period for the Montgomery GI Bill please pay close attention!! VETERANS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR ONE MORE YEAR OF G.I. BILL BENEFITS - Impact of Rudisill Supreme Court Decision on Veterans' Education Benefits

On April 16, 2024 the Supreme Court of the United States decided that if you served at least two periods of service-one that qualifies for the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and another that qualifies for the Post-9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) you may be able to receive additional GI Bill benefits.

For more information on the impact and possible additional education benefits go to <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/rudisill.asp>.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING – GET FIT TESTED!

Aged 45 or older? Get screened for colorectal cancer at home with a FIT test. Talk to your VA provider or civilian primary care doctor about the risks and need for regular screening.

Colorectal Cancer is one of the most diagnosed cancers in the US.

Each year VA diagnoses approx. 4,000 new cases of colorectal cancer in Veterans. Screening is crucial to detect cancer early, when treatment is most effective.

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is cancer in the colon or rectum. It's a leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. But when this cancer is found and removed early, the chances of a full recovery are very good. Because colorectal cancer rarely causes symptoms in its early stages, screening for the disease is important. Many abnormal growths (e.g., polyps or cancers) in the colon bleed. A fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is a screening done at home that checks for blood in stool that you can't see. Screening with FIT can catch cancer and polyps early.

Free Tax Assistance for Veterans Enrolled in the VA Maryland Health Care System

WEDNESDAYS
FEB 19 – MARCH 19
10AM – 2PM
(BY APPOINTMENT ONLY)

Our most common service is tax return preparation and filing. We review your tax situation and all your tax documents to prepare and electronically file your federal and state tax return. For more information: <https://tinyurl.com/taxaided8>

- Current year taxes
- Prior years taxes for the past three tax years
- Amended tax returns for those that need to amend a return that was previously filed (current year or prior three years).

**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

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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PERMIT NO. 230

To Schedule an Appointment:

- Go to tinyurl.com/BVATaxes, or
- Get tax prep sign-up assistance at the Baltimore VA Annex (209 W. Fayette St.) community Resource and Referral Center (2nd floor) Mon-Fri, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- For appointments at other AARP Tax Locations: tinyurl.com/taxaidelocator

Adrian Gamboa
Department Service