



A Publication of The Pennsylvania American Legion  
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## NOTICE OF NEW DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT ADJUTANT

At The American Legion, Department of Pennsylvania's 99<sup>th</sup> annual convention held this past year, the PA American Legion amended its Constitution and Bylaws to provide for a Department Assistant Adjutant position.

Notice of the job opening was posted via several means of correspondence including post mailings, the Keystone News and emails notifications. Interviews were held and we are pleased to announce that the position of Department Assistant Adjutant has been filled.

James "Woody" Hogan will join the Department staff beginning February 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hogan served honorably with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. He is a member of American Legion WWI Memorial Post 109 and served as its



as Department Historian for Department Commander Cleveland. He is a graduate of the 2017 National Legion College.

Commander from 1996 – 1998. He was Post Commander of the Year in 1996 and Post Adjutant of the Year in 2001. He was the Cumberland County Blue Cap of the Year in 2011. He was the 19<sup>th</sup> District Adjutant for 12 years prior to becoming District Commander from 2015 – 2017. He served as Aide to Department Commanders Wasco, Cocco and Haas and

Assistant Adjutant Hogan will report to and assist Department Adjutant Kit Watson. Kit Watson has been Department Adjutant since 2001, bringing a wealth of historical knowledge and applied expertise to his position and the Department and we look forward to his continued commitment and service as the Department Adjutant. Please note that all Legion issues should still be directed to Adjutant Watson for resolution. Department can be reached at 717-730-9100.

Please welcome Department Assistant Adjutant Woody Hogan to Department Headquarters and we look forward to his contribution to the great teamwork that all of our staff strives to provide for the Pennsylvania American Legion.

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention

We kick off the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on **Saturday, July 14, 2018** during the PA American Legion Department Convention. The American Legion, Department of Pennsylvania will proudly present the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade in Downtown Harrisburg on Saturday after the convention closes for the day. We are excited to say that the parade will feature musical acts, floats, military displays, food vendors and much more. We want you to be a part of this historic event. Make your arrangements as soon as possible to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> Department Convention.

We are looking for volunteers as well as those who will be participating in the parade.

Parade spaces are limited so we will only be accepting a limited number of applications/entries so get your application in early! The application can be found at [www.pa-legion.com](http://www.pa-legion.com).

#### Application checklist:

- \_\_\_\_ Application must be completely filled out
- \_\_\_\_ Application waiver
- \_\_\_\_ Proof of non-profit status (if applicable)
- \_\_\_\_ Entrance fee payment (if applicable)

Application mailing address  
PA American Legion  
Attn: Parade Registration  
P.O. Box 2324  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

\*Please make checks payable to PA American Legion







**FROM THE DESK OF**  
**Kit D. Watson, Department Adjutant**

Legion family members, the winter season has not been too bad so far. As we get closer to our 100<sup>th</sup> year celebration we all should be working on the programs that have been and are so relevant today. A renewed real effort to retain and recruit eligible Legionnaires into our posts should be a number one priority! Membership is important to each home association, whether the member be a veteran or not, that is the essence of the business of each bar business overseen by your post Legionnaires. The existence of all those businesses have one common denominator: "THE POST". While it is necessary to have enough members to support your business, it is imperative to maintain a strong post membership of eligible veterans regardless of how often they frequent the social quarters. The tail doesn't wag the dog is an appropriate adage. The home association exists only through the post and a strong veteran membership has to be a number one priority! Every veteran in your respective community needs to be reached out to and encouraged to join your post. Don't wait for them to maybe wander into your club. Make a concerted effort to have every veteran within your area become a member!



Our Legion birthday is coming in March. This is a great time to celebrate our anniversary. It is also an opportunity to recognize the students that participated in our programs, along with the teachers of your local schools that assisted. Post Honor Guards should be recognized for their service to your post; your long time members also. Guess who else should be invited? The veterans in your area who may not know what else your post does besides operate the bar. We are our own best kept secret. Our posts should be involved in your communities! Each post has an opportunity to be an asset to your respective community. Use each event as an opportunity to show what we do and continue to recruit prospective veterans into our ranks!

The National Commander's tour dates are set and will be held Monday evening March 19<sup>th</sup> at Sellersville Post 255 for the Eastern Section, Tuesday



March 20<sup>th</sup> at Linglestown Post 272 for the Central Section, and March 21<sup>st</sup> at Springdale Post 764 in the Western Section. We encourage all posts to take an ad in the dinner booklets, send post representatives to support the post's efforts in hosting this event, and to hear from our first woman

National Commander Denise H. Rohan! Help us show our Pennsylvania pride as we host our American Legion National Commander. The Department Oratorical Contest is March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Harrisburg Forum. This is a premier program of our American Legion and it is held free of charge to all who wish to attend. The historic Harrisburg Forum is an outstanding venue to hold this contest. The Department level contest will have three contestants, one from each section, competing for scholarship money totaling \$16,500 for their efforts. The winner will not only receive \$7,500, he or she will move on to represent Pennsylvania at our National Oratorical Finals in Indianapolis, IN,

where they will compete for even more prize money. The contest takes place March 10<sup>th</sup> at 10 am sharp. Parking is limited and if you plan to attend we will shuttle all who park in The American Legion's parking lot at Department Headquarters at 800 N. Front St., Wormleysburg, PA 17043 beginning at 9 AM.

Please note all attendees must be in their seats by 10 am as we need to curtail any distractions for the students. If you have never seen one of these contests, I assure you it is very entertaining. Start to finish, the program is over by noon. We hope to see you there!

All posts need to note a change in the 2017 re-enrollment year for the no cost LIT AD&D Program of \$1,000 free and \$5,000 if on Legion business. When you register now, it will be for life. The process is simple and it works. Call toll free 1-800-235-6943 or register online at [www.thelit.com](http://www.thelit.com). This includes the members of the SAL and Auxiliary too. Please get this information out to your membership.

The Department Executive Committee meetings will be April 20 – 22 at the Harrisburg Red Lion Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn). This will be the location of our Department Commander Paul Kennedy's Testimonial Dinner on the evening of Saturday, April 21. Reservation forms for the DEC and the Commander's testimonial are available on our website at [www.pa-legion.com](http://www.pa-legion.com). Also, on the same website is the information for our three Department Vice Commander's testimonials.

May 28<sup>th</sup> is Memorial Day and as mentioned in this article's second paragraph it is an opportune time to reach out to the veterans in your community as well as the rest of the population there and show them we are more than a bar!



July 12 – 15, our Department Convention will be held in Harrisburg. We will be celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with several events scheduled to commemorate this historic milestone in "our" history! It's never too early to make plans to attend this event. Registration forms are available on our Department website at [www.pa-legion.com](http://www.pa-legion.com). Make plans now to be there!

Posts who have an SAL Squadron and/or an ALR Chapter, please remember any and all checking accounts associated with either group should have one (1) signature required from a Legion post officer/Legionnaire. Both the SAL and ALR are programs of the post and as such they must be monitored by the individual American Legion post.

I want to wish our entire Legion family a "Happy Easter"! Until next time..... Kit



## Join or Renew Your Membership



## Department Chaplain Rev. Dr. Richard E. Denison, Jr.

### American Legion Service Officers A Great Way for Veterans to Help Veterans

We as Legionnaires are rightly proud of our programs to the serve youth, promote Americanism and support our local communities. But one of the forgotten benefits of our legion membership is the way veterans help veterans. One of the programs we often overlook is our Service Officer program. I recently made use of it when I wanted to see if I could receive medical care through the VA system.

Last year my family doctor told me he was retiring soon. Knowing that so many of my Legion friends received great care in the VA system, I decided to see if I could receive similar care. I found out that because of my income I'd be placed on a long waiting list. I stopped in to visit one of our Legion Service Officers to see what could be done. There, I discovered that if I had at least a 10 percent disability rating I could receive benefits. We did a search of my military medical records and found out that as the result of a deployment to Iraq I had knee surgery and still had knee pain. Also, my medical records indicated that I had hearing difficulties following that deployment due to the exposure to high noise.



Paul, my service officer had helped me make an application. Within a few months I was scheduled for a physical to verify that these injuries were continuing problems. Within a week of that physical I was approved for VA health care.

My work as a Pastor had me realize the following:

1. I was starting to ask people to repeat things often and misunderstand words people were saying. The VA audiologist through my hearing test could recommend a set of high tech hearing aids to address this problem and they would be provided at no cost to me. While I'm receiving a small monthly pension now, what was important to me was the medical care. Likewise I will soon be able to receive all my medications at a very low copay.
2. I realized I could have been receiving these benefits for many years but never knew they existed.

Perhaps you or another Veteran could be eligible for similar benefits to improve your quality of life. I never thought to apply before. I thought that I really didn't need them and should save the government resources for those who need them more. But as Paul reminded me, I've already paid for these benefits by my service to our nation. If you are curious about your eligibility for veterans benefits, visit one of our service officers. They are located throughout the state and help any veteran regardless of their legion membership. It's a great service and shows one of the ways the American Legion is a great group of veterans helping other veterans.

### Our National Cemeteries A Great Benefit

I joined the American Legion during Operation Desert Storm. Shortly after that I received a call from a local memorial garden informing me they had a great deal for veterans. They said they were opening a new section that would have patriotic monuments and an avenue of flags to honor all the veterans buried there. I was always a bit suspicious about phone call sales people, but I played along a bit to get more information. After a while I asked this question, "Can you beat free?" The salesperson kept saying how competitive their pricing was. I said, "But I can be buried in a nation cemetery for free."

The salesperson continued to tout the avenue of flags, the veteran's memorial statue and their perpetual care. But I told them at Indiantown Gap Cemetery, not

far from my home they always had a beautiful avenue of flats, a large amphitheater for a veteran's memorial and it was the best kept cemetery I ever visited. The salesperson hung up.

We don't like to think about when we may take our journey from this life to life eternal. Few of us pause to plan for our funerals in advance and leave that up to our loved ones. However, our national cemeteries are a great benefit to all veterans and their spouses. Not only are the grave sites completely free but also all burial vault and grave opening fees included. That can save several thousand dollars of expenses. Even if you chose to be buried in a local cemetery, all veterans are entitled to a complimentary grave marker which can also save considerable expense.



It's a great gift of love to do some planning for your own funeral service. It saves your loved ones questioning what your wishes would be. Most of our local funeral directors are a significant help in this. But, as you make your plans, remember burial in a national cemetery is one of the benefits you have already paid for by your service to our nation. There your service will be respected and honored in perpetuity. It also is a great benefit that can give significant financial savings to your family. Let's make use of this great benefit.

### POST CHAPLAIN OF THE YEAR

The Religious Emphasis Committee of The American Legion, Department of Pennsylvania wants to recognize the ministry that our Post Chaplains are doing for our Veterans, their families and their community. We established the "Post Chaplain of the Year Award". In order to qualify for this Award, the Post Chaplain must be involved in doing the following:

#### Chaplain of the Year Criteria

1. Performance of Duties:
  - A. Exemplary conduct of normal duties: e.g., attendance, dependability, and punctuality.
  - B. Exemplary performance above and beyond the normal expectations of the position and duties.
  - C. Nominations should include some detail about how the chaplain has nurtured the spiritual life of post members, cared for those who are ill and honored fallen veterans. It may also include mention of how as chaplain they serve the larger community.
2. Personal attitude which is positive and professional in all contacts with others and which represents The American Legion and Post in the best possible way.
3. Commitment to the ministry and duties of the Chaplain, as reflected by service to comrades and their families and responsiveness to their needs.
4. A member of The American Legion in good standing with the Post, District, and Department.

#### Review Committee Composition and Instructions

1. A committee assembled by the Department Chaplain will review nominations for the award and recommend a recipient.
2. The committee shall include:
  - A. The Department Chaplain
  - B. Members of the Religious Emphasis Committee



3. Instructions to the Committee
- A. The committee shall follow procedures and criteria as outlined in this document. However, if no candidates are nominated or judged by the committee to meet the criteria for Chaplain of the Year, the committee shall not recommend a recipient.
  - B. All proceedings of the committee must be kept strictly confidential.
  - C. The Department Chaplain will review with the Department Commander the recommendation for Chaplain of the Year prior to announcing the award recipient.

**Procedure**

The following procedure is recommended for receiving and reviewing nominations:

- 1. The Department Chaplain shall solicit nominations from District and Post Commanders through the State American Legion Headquarters.
- 2. All nominations should be submitted to the State Chaplain by March 15.
- 3. A nomination shall address the “Chaplain of the Year Criteria” and shall not exceed two type written pages.
- 4. The committee shall review each nomination according to the selected criteria and recommend a recipient by April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 5. The Department Chaplain will review the Committee’s recommendation for Chaplain of the Year with the Department Commander by June 1st.
- 6. The Department Chaplain will notify the recipient of the nomination and request attendance at the Annual State Convention in July to receive the award.



**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS**

**Department Commander: Paul M. Kennedy**  
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cmdr@pa-legion.com

**Eastern Vice Commander: Michael Bodnar**  
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**Department Adjutant: Kit Watson**  
PO Box 2324, Harrisburg PA 17105 717-730-9100  
kit@pa-legion.com

**Department Assistant Adjutant: Woody Hogan**  
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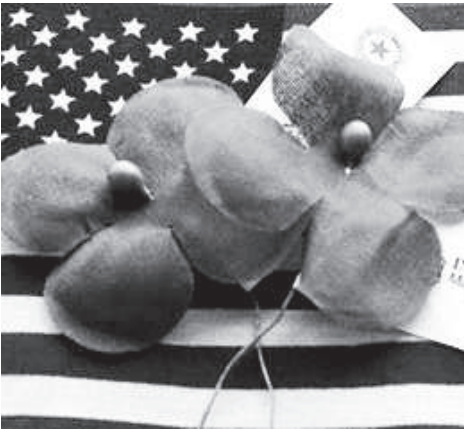
**Racing for Outreach**

To help kick off the 100th year anniversary celebration of The American Legion, our race team brought their 2018 sprint car to the January Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting in Moon Township. The team briefed the DEC on the many Posts they traveled to last year for displays, parades, and car shows in support of membership and veteran outreach.



Gregg Foster, the team driver/owner, was quoted as stating “In his position as a Government Sales Representative for Snap On Tools, he has the unique opportunity to interact with soldiers, sailors and airman on a daily basis throughout the Commonwealth. I get the opportunity to tell The American Legion story and discuss the many programs and benefits of membership daily. At the many race tracks we run, I have grown a reputation for helping veterans and family members with all types of issues. Both fans and fellow racers know that if they need help with VA issues, I will get them hooked up with a Department Service Officer to get them the help they are looking for.”

Any Post who feels the race car could support an event they have planned can send an email to [bruce@pa-legion.com](mailto:bruce@pa-legion.com) to check availability.



**Don't forget to order your poppies from  
Department Emblem Sales**



### Three Alarm Fire at Waynesboro American Legion

Flames gutted a long-standing veterans lodge and vibrant Waynesboro social club in the early morning of Thursday, December 28.



A three-alarm fire broke out in the north side of Joe Stickell American Legion Post 15, located at 63 E. Main St., around 2:12 a.m. and quickly spread throughout the building. There was no one inside of the building at the time of the fire.

“This is just a devastating loss to the community,” said Bernie McGarity, a longtime legion member and former post commander, who watched smoke rise from the social club hours after the fire broke out.

Waynesboro Borough Manager Jason Stains confirmed that a small portion of the roof on Waynesboro’s Borough Hall was damaged as well as an area of the neighboring Bonded Applicators Inc. structure. Borough hall was closed Thursday due to the fire.

“It was a close call that fire didn’t spread further,” Stains said. The cause of the fire is still being investigated by the Pennsylvania State Police fire marshal.

Andrew Gilliland, a lieutenant with the Waynesboro Volunteer Fire Department, said that within five minutes on the scene, a second alarm was requested and not long after it became a three-alarm blaze.

“We made the first attack through the ballroom, but based on the size of the building we could no longer go with an offensive attack,” Gilliland explained. Firefighters were able to get out of the structure before the roof collapsed. It took aerial attacks from four ladder trucks to knock down the fire from front to back.

“It’s a total loss,” Waynesboro Deputy Fire Chief Jody Sanders said.

Gilliland said it’s likely that the fire started in the north side of the building where the club’s kitchen is located, but he couldn’t confirm.

Crews were still putting out smoldering areas of the building more than seven hours after the initial fire call. Temperatures of around 10 degrees also challenged firefighters to keep water flow through hoses as some hoses that weren’t being used froze quickly.

Main Street from Broad Street to Center Square was shut down for close to 10 hours.

Accredited Services, Inc., the local building inspection agency, confirmed that building permits were obtained for work recently completed at American Legion Post 15 and everything appeared to be up-to-date.

Fire crews and emergency personnel from across Franklin County including Blue Ridge Summit, Greencastle, Waynesboro, Mont Alto, and New Franklin as

well as companies from Hagerstown, Leitersburg and Smithsburg assisted on the scene.

According to Waynesboro Assistant Fire Chief John Beck, Thursday morning’s fire is the first three-alarm in Waynesboro since flames destroyed two duplexes on Ringgold Street in December of 2016.

Beck also noted that considering the estimated property damage which is expected to reach several million dollars, he would rank the American Legion’s fire as one of the worst the community has had.

“You see this happen to other people, but you never think it’s going to happen to you,” said Don Kauffman, president of the Legion’s Home Association.

The American Legion, which has a full-service kitchen and bar that plays host to several community events, currently employs 28 people. Thousands of dollars worth of paintings and veteran memorabilia located throughout the club was either touched by fire or damaged by excessive water.

Mainstreet Waynesboro’s staff issued a statement in the hours that followed the fire, “The American Legion Post has been a part of the fabric of Waynesboro for more than 100 years. It has been the site of countless parties, weddings, class reunions and celebrations, as well as somber ceremonies honoring those who have served their country and have made the ultimate sacrifice.”



Kauffman and several American Legion officials planned to hold a meeting Thursday afternoon to begin discussing the aftermath and future plans for the club that has been in the community since 1919.

“It will take us a long time to come back from this,” Kauffman said.

Waynesboro Mayor Richard Starliper said the fire at American Legion Post 15 created a big loss for the downtown area and the community, in more ways than one.

In addition to helping many people and supporting charities, the legion was always a good place to go for a meal, he said.

“I’m sure a lot of people will miss it,” he said.

Mainstreet Waynesboro’s staff, board of directors and volunteers are deeply saddened by the tragic fire that destroyed American Legion Post 15 on East Main Street in Waynesboro this morning.

The post was a great community partner and supporter of Mainstreet, as well as countless local organizations throughout its long history.

*Continue on page 7*



Three Alarm Fire cont. from page 6

Mainstreet will support the American Legion and its leaders as they recover from this terrible fire.

We salute the firefighters and fire police who battled the blaze and monitored traffic in bitter cold and kept the fire from spreading to other buildings.

We are confident there will be a happy ending to this very sad event.

Most of the damage is visible only from the alley at the rear.

The building has been termed a total loss. It took firefighters nearly three hours to knock down the fire.

An emergency meeting of the post leadership and ladies auxiliary was held. The leadership will be considering whether to rebuild at the same site or somewhere else.

In addition to the canteen operated at the post, the legion conducted numerous community-service activities, including supporting scholarships for students, the Memorial Day parade and veteran charities.

The post home, which has been the scene of many social gatherings, has more than 900 veteran members.



The fire that destroyed Joe Stickell American Legion Post 15 in Waynesboro was determined to have started accidentally when a smoldering cigarette was discarded in a trash can, Waynesboro police and fire officials said the Sunday after the fire.

Officials said the fire started in a plastic trash can under the post's bar. The trash can contained paper products.

Post Commander Bill Hoover said temporary offices are being established at 353 S. Potomac St. and late fees are being waived for dues not paid by Dec. 31. Hoover described feeling a range of emotions as he walked through debris from the post.

"Everybody is still in shock," he said.

While most everything inside the structure was ruined, Hoover was pleased to find displayed firearms undamaged by fire or water. Among them were a rifle dating to 1903 and two nonfunctioning, display-quality machine guns.

Legion posts and other veterans organizations from the region have offered their facilities for events. Monthly meetings temporarily will be held at Waynesboro VFW Post 695.

"The outpouring has brought a smile to our faces," Hoover said. "It feels good and warm. We're in this together."

“When we rebuild a house, we are rebuilding a home. When we recover from disaster, we are rebuilding lives and livelihoods.”

Sri Mulyani Indrawati

Dear American Legion Family and Friends,

One of the main job requirements of a national commander is to inspire the organization’s volunteers. Yet, I find that the opposite is often true.

During my recent visit to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, it was the American Legion Family that inspired me. Still reeling from two historic hurricanes, I was told repeatedly by residents there that “We’ve been blessed, others have it worse.”



More than 40 percent of the region still does not have electric power and utilities on a permanent or consistent basis. Tarps still cover the roofs of thousands of homes. Tents in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, serve as a VA clinic.

I was concerned about the ability of The American Legion to make a difference due to the remoteness of the islands. Unlike the relief efforts in Texas and Florida, Legionnaires weren’t able to fill trucks with supplies and drive them to the affected areas. Even commercial air travel was nearly impossible during the initial aftermath.

My concerns were unfounded.

In addition to the grants provided by programs such as the National Emergency Fund, Temporary Financial Assistance and Operation Comfort Warriors, American Legion departments and posts have matched their “devotion to mutual helpfulness” with monetary donations. The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania sent “50,000 to the Department of Puerto Rico. North Carolina added another \$10,000. Florida Post 75 raised another \$4,500 and Hollywood Post 43 in California contributed \$2,200. All told, more than \$72,000 have been raised by legion entities.

Due to communication difficulties, Legion Family members in those islands can still apply for NEF grants beyond the February 1 deadline. Extensions can also be granted to applicants in other areas depending on their circumstances.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp of the Virgin Islands was appreciative of American Legion support. But he also pointed out a sad reality. Hurricanes Irma and Maria will not be the last disasters that strike the region. Elsewhere, we have seen crippling blizzards across the United States, gargantuan wildfires in California and deadly mudslides that have killed at least 21 people.

We need a strong National Emergency Fund. It’s not a matter of if but when the next natural disaster hits. Just like insurance, the hope is that you will never need it. But by giving generously, you will be helping your brothers and sisters in the American Legion Family when natural disaster strikes. Like our other American Legion Charities, one hundred percent of NEF donations go to the stated cause.

Family First,

*Denise H. Rohan*

Denise H. Rohan  
National Commander



## Limited Edition Christmas Ornament

The 2017 annual Treasured Scenes Limited Edition Christmas ornament, featuring the DuBois American Legion Post 17, has arrived at the Greater DuBois Chamber of Commerce. But those interested in adding one to their collection better hurry because supplies of this final ornament collection that began in 2000 really are limited.



The 2017 annual Treasured Scenes Limited Edition Christmas ornament, featuring the DuBois American Legion Post 17, has arrived at the Greater DuBois chamber of Commerce. From left are Legion board member Richard Coccimiglio, chamber Executive Director Jodi August and Legion Commander Ben Cramer.

“We’ve done an ornament every year based on a historical monument, an ideal piece of property, a new construction – something along those lines,” said chamber Executive Director Jodi August. “I know one was the Foradora Building whenever they first did it over there along the railroad tracks. One was the Pershing Hotel, (and) DuBois Catholic School. Last year, we chose Treasure Lake Church, primarily because they reached out to us and it was a brand new construction. They actually wanted an ornament for everybody in their congregation.

“And that’s how we ended up here, at the American Legion. Someone, and again I’m only three years into my position at the Chamber, had told me that the American Legion had shown interest in an ornament years ago, but I’m not sure why they weren’t selected,” she said.

“We were talking about finishing up the limited edition collectible. I thought, ‘If the American Legion was interested, it definitely is a historical monument and placed here in our city,’ so we reached out to John Fritz.”

The chamber has also selected a place that it believes someone



would appreciate and value in an ornament, August said.

“We felt that the American Legion was a great place to feature for our final ornament,” August said.

There have been some “hardcore collectors” of the ornaments over the years, she said, citing the DuBois Area Historical Society, a woman from California and a local man who enjoys collecting and clipping the news article about the release of the ornament.

August believes this year’s collectable is “one of the prettiest ornaments we’ve ever had.”

This year’s ornament is a golden yellow color and shows the front of the Legion Hut located on Liberty Boulevard in DuBois.

“With the 100th year anniversary of the American Legion coming up in 2018, both statewide and locally, I’m glad the committee decided to put our American Legion Post 17 on the Christmas ornament,” Commander Ben Cramer said. “It’s a beautiful building and a big part of the community. We try to be good stewards to our veterans, which is our primary purpose, and the community.”

The DuBois American Legion was started in 1919 and the first meeting was held at the former Courier-Express building in downtown DuBois, said Richard Coccimiglio, Legion finance officer and member of the board of directors. He is also the past state commander for the American Legion. After the first meeting in the Courier building, he said it was later moved to a bank building. John DuBois donated the property and the logs to build the hut in 1932. The Legion hut was dedicated on Nov. 11, 1932.

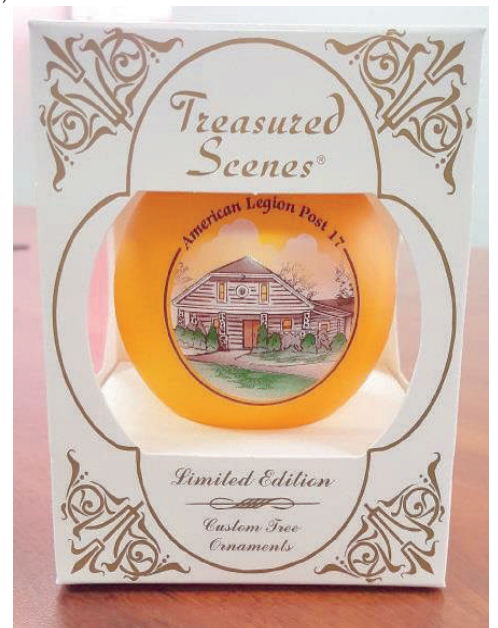
“It’s a very active part of the community,” he said.

Coccimiglio noted that two of the Legion’s prominent members were members of the American Legion before they became judges, John Pentz and the Honorable John Cherry.

Back in the early days, there were approximately 800 members. Today, there are about 650 members who are Legionnaires. There are more than 300 members of the Sons of the American Legion and about 275 auxiliary members. Coccimiglio said it’s very nice that the Legion is being featured as the final ornament in the collection.

A limited number of the ornaments are available to purchase for \$15 at the chamber office located at 103 Beaver Drive, DuBois, or at the American Legion, August said.

In addition to the 2017 ornament, August said there are a variety of older ornaments available for sale by contacting the chamber office. For more information, call the office at 371-5010.



"In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders."

*Sheryl Sandberg*



## Post 440

The Morell Smith Post 440 of the American Legion said thank you to Bucks County Recorder of Deeds Joseph Szafran and First Deputy Christine Ferrara for the work they have done for the veterans of Bucks County.



Commander Mike Errico, second from left, and Legionnaire Jim Anderson, right with Joseph Szafran (Recorder of Deeds Bucks County) and Christine Ferrara (First Deputy)

Szafran is the chairman of the Bucks County Tour of Honor and Ferrara serves as the secretary/treasurer of the Tour of Honor. Szafran also was responsible for implementing Veterans ID and Veterans Discount program in Bucks County.

"They are both true friends of Bucks County veterans and will continue in the future," said American Legion Commander Mike Errico, who presented each with a plaque at the Legion's Dec. 19 meeting.

Also at the meeting, State Rep. Perry Warren presented the Morell Smith Post 440 American Legion Junior Prep Baseball Team with a citation read before the Pa. House of Representatives congratulating them on winning the 2017 American Legion State Baseball Championship.

From left: State Representative Perry Warren presents a citation honoring the post's State Championship American Legion Junior Prep Baseball Team to Post Commander Mike Errico and Post 440 baseball liaisons Brian Mills and Jim Casey.



The Newtown team took the state title – the team's first – with an 8-5 win over the Plumstead team this past summer.

The team was 32-3 overall with a record of 22-2 in the regular season. The team took first place in the Lower Bucks League.

"This team posted several dramatic come-from-behind wins, and they attribute their success to the hard work all 15 members of the team put in," Warren said. "It's great to see such wonderful teamwork and spirit, and I'm pleased to be able to recognize them in the House chamber. Congratulations to the team, coaches and those who supported them."

*"Animals don't lie. Animals don't criticize. If animals have moody days, they handle them better than humans do."*

Betty White

## Legion honors Commander's Heroes and listens to veterans talk about Christmases past

On December 1, 2017 American Legion Post 343 added to their Commander's Heroes during the annual Christmas party. The Commander's Heroes program was created by former Post Commander Robert Lutton to honor a medically challenged child.

This year's 2017 recipient of the award proudly goes to Cameron Houk. Cameron was presented a plaque, a silver American eagle and a gift of \$1000.



Later, Cameron received an impromptu surprise from local physician Dr. Pek The. The Legion had offered a giant stuffed bear to the highest bidder as a fundraiser for the post. The \$300 bid was announced as the top one but The no sooner had the bear in his arms than he headed for the back of the Legion to

give it to Amy Houk, Cameron's mother, to give it to Cameron.

Previous recipients of the Commander's Heroes honor also attended the dinner. They are Alex Brown (2014), Josie Greco (2015), and Keegan McDade (2016).

Pictured above front row is Keegan McDade, Alex Brown, Josie Greco and Cameron Houk. Back row is Max Roseck and Robert Lutton.

### Veterans recall Christmases away from home

This year's Christmas party also had special guest speakers as they spoke of Christmases away from home.

Army vet Max Roseck remembered opening a care package from home on Christmas 1962, when he was doing military police duty in Seoul, South Korea. The box included homemade Christmas treats as well as a piece of kolbassi, but "by the time that care package got from Uniontown, Pennsylvania to Seoul, Korea, there was stuff growing on that kolbassi."

Roseck recalled that after being served a turkey dinner that day he said some companions decided to attack the care packages, sharing the desserts and even the kolbassi. "We scraped that stuff off and had that, too."

The Rev. David Bell, who served in Vietnam with the Marines, offered a similar tale from Christmas 1962.

"Most of us were eating C rations at the time," Bell said. "I had been looking forward to opening the packages I'd been sent from home for Christmas. In one of the packages I got was a little canned ham.

"I got my three buddies with me and we opened up that ham – and sure enough, didn't I drop it in the dirt. We picked it up and scraped it off and ate it anyways. It was really good."

Despite allowing that his life with the military police was not the toughest, Roseck went on to note that being far away from home at Christmas remained a sobering experience. He recalled returning to his barracks that night, looking at his watch, and realizing that his parents would be just getting up and opening presents around their tree.

"Even though I had a 'very tough' life over there, there was something missing," he said, "and that was family."

Bell, meanwhile, added that "I can't remember anything about Christmas. For us, it was like 'We're not celebrating Christmas here. It's at home. You have to be home to celebrate Christmas.' We just kind of went through the day."

*Continued on page 10*



### *Christmases past continued from page 9*

Still, Bell's Christmas 55 years ago also included delivering a bunch of presents that one of his officers had assembled to children in a small village about two miles away. He remembers the youngsters smiling and returning to their huts, but few words were exchanged with them.

For Army veteran James Caparoula, Christmas Day 1950 was spent attempting to hold a position near Seoul in the wake of a massive Chinese counterattack launched two days after Thanksgiving. The offensive had pushed U.S. and ROK forces out of North Korea, completely changing the face of the war.



"On Thanksgiving Day, Bob Hope and his troop was there, and we all had a great time, dancing and food and lots of music," he said. "When I walked in, I saw on the board 'Home for Christmas.' That was the big thought by General MacArthur at the time. But the Chinese had different thoughts. They came down charging and drove us all the way back past Seoul. We lost a lot of good men.

"During Christmas 1950," he went on, "I couldn't stop thinking about my mother, and how she felt about her son being away in a

war thousands of miles away. I always carried her, and my family and my parents in my heart. Being away at Christmas made me understand at an early age that the holiday is not about the decorations, the presents ...knowing that I was loved and thought of was very important."

Having grown up as an orphan that was something that Navy veteran Bill Schafer, who reported to basic training in San Diego on Christmas Day 1966, missed.

"One Christmas, I think it was the next year, I had to do something about Christmas," he said. "So I wrote out a money order, I sent it to somebody I knew in New York, and I told them, 'I want you to take this money, and go out, and get me a Christmas basket, and I'd like you to send it to me a week before Christmas so everybody else will know that I have somebody that knows me and so I could have Christmas.'"

Before becoming a Salvation Army captain, Chris Williams served as a radio operator on a submarine in the Pacific. He recalled how tension among crew mates would escalate as Christmas approached, but then was stowed out of sight when the day finally arrived.

"It was like everybody put aside all their differences for one day and said, 'You know what? It's Christmas. We can be friends. We'll go back to bickering and everything the next day.' It was that one day, it was peaceful."

The son of a Navy man, Williams also recalled what Christmas was like when his father served. When approached to talk at the Legion dinner about not being home from Christmas, "I immediately thought about my dad and him being away from home, and seen from the kid's point of view," he said. "It's tough. I don't understand why Dad's gone. Why aren't you home?"

World War II Navy medic Mike Ferraro missed three Christmases while in the service. The first he spent in Long Beach, California; the second, living in a tent city on the island of Leyte in the Philippines.

But just when it seemed he might make it

back home for Christmas 1945 – he'd written his family that there was a good chance he would – the Merchant marine tanker that was supposed to deliver him to Philadelphia got orders instead to turn around and head for South America to pick up a load of oil.

When Ferraro finally made it home in January 1946, he was greeted not only by a joyful family, but also by a Christmas tree with "not a needle on it" and a package for him beneath it.

"They had saved that tree when I told them I could be home for Christmas," Ferraro said. "They kept the tree there. And right there and then I said to myself, 'I know, after three years, I'm home.'"

Though he missed the actual day, Ferraro said, it was still "probably the best Christmas I ever had."

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### **Blankets for Veterans**

Bradford American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108 made 189 Fleece Blankets that were distributed to veteran in nursing homes and a few home bound veterans. Pictured is Bradford Ecumenical Home Assistant Director of Activities, Becky McMullen stands for a photo with Army Veteran Paul Berlin as he's presented with a blanket and a thank you by Keith Reed, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander of Bradford American Legion Post 108.



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### **LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE**

#### **Chairman Lawrence Maggi**

The Law Enforcement Committee will be selecting a Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year annual award. We would like to have more participation in these programs.

One of the big responsibilities of this Committee is the State Police Youth Week. This is a premiere camp for young men and women. Potential cadets, male or female, must be between the ages of 15 and 17 years of age prior to entering the camp and must not have turned 18 before or during the camp. This program is for young men and women who are interested in a career in law enforcement or the military. The program is not a recreational camp, nor is it a disciplinary camp for problem youths; it is a physical, mental, and rigorous training camp run like a military boot camp. The 2017 camp was held again at York College in York, Pennsylvania from June 11-17, 2017. We started out with approximately 85 cadets; 79 completed the camp and graduated. This week was one of the better camps with a lot of team work from all involved. This camp is one of the best programs that the Department runs. It is recognized nationally and we have had numerous inquiries from other states about it. I believe this is one of two programs run by American Legions nationally.

The Department sponsors State Police Youth Week in conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Police and the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. All entities put a lot of resources into this camp which makes it so successful. The cadets spend a day at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy and a day at Fort Indiantown Gap military base. They get a real feel for life in the military or law enforcement. A lot of the success for this program is due to the dedication of the staff at Department Headquarters and their hands-on approach. We used Facebook, a social media platform, again this year so that the parents of the cadets could remain informed and involved with what their children were doing. It is a very popular tool.

State Police/American Legion Youth Week camp plans are being coordinated now for later this year and will again be held at York College in York, Pennsylvania from Sunday, June 10 to Saturday, June 16, 2018.





**Hospital Tour**

It's no surprise but the hospital tour was a great success as the Legion Family visited VA hospitals and state veteran homes. Here's just a few pictures sent in by Michele Deems.





## HOSPITAL & CONVALESCENCE COMMITTEE

### Chairman Edward Connell

Our past year saw many changes for VAVS Representatives and Deputies for our state homes and VA facilities. The new folks on board are doing well in their new positions and have been aided by those volunteers and staff at the respective homes. We always need volunteers so please see your representative at your local facility for details on how to get on board. We were pleased to recognize two gentleman, regularly scheduled volunteers who are in their nineties! They were Chris Thompson and Henry Parham.

Events that are being done for our veteran men and women are appreciated by us as volunteers in these establishments. The support shown by our Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders is second to none! Community involvement like ARRP's, churches, fraternal groups and others is top notch as well. Please encourage others to become active as well.

We had the Department Christmas Tour early in December with no bad weather to speak of, and I want to thank those who turned out to meet our Department officials and to meet and greet our hospitalized veterans. This tour is your opportunity to meet the Department Commander, the Auxiliary President, the Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander, and the Riders President. The veterans appreciate meeting new folks just to mingle and talk. Legion turnout was great in some areas and poor in others. ***Please attend this tour if at all possible!***

The Committee is updating our forms for awards to be more user friendly and brought up to date and we made a name change for our Committee to be called "Hospital & Convalescence Committee". This was accomplished at the Department Convention.

As always, we ask that those of you who volunteer in any state or VA facility to please listen to the residents and their complaints or praise of their respective VA or state home. Many problems are able to be resolved locally and those in need of more research may be helped by our Department or National officials. This is important to the men and women who live in these environments.

My thanks to Commander Kennedy for being appointed to this position and I appreciate all committee members for what they do throughout the entire year! THANK-YOU! Please make donations through your AL VA representative so that proper recognition can be credited.

Pictures from the hospital tour are on the previous page.

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## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

### Chairman Aaron Campbell

The Department Fundraising Committee met at the Department Headquarters on Saturday, June 10, 2017. Attending were Department Commander Paul Kennedy, Department Adjutant Kit Watson, Department Finance Committee Chairman William Cleveland, Department Fundraising Committee Chairman Aaron Campbell and Department Fundraising Committee Vice Chairman Michael Tomolonis.

Adjutant Kit Watson referred to our current three (3) year contract which extends until July 2018. We continue to receive \$400.00 quarterly. He brought up several items for additional fundraising ideas. They are notebooks, calendars, 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary coins and purchasing bricks. The bricks were a project sponsored by the Riders and they are visible at the Department Headquarters. All are welcome to purchase a brick in honor of a post, district, county or individual. The Emblem Sales at Department Headquarters does an outstanding job obtaining all types of needs that are requested. All posts are strongly urged to them for the purchasing of items needed at your post home. We must not forget to contribute towards our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The American Legion. This event could be a great inspiration for all those comrades who wonder what is The American Legion and what can I do to make our organization greater in the future.

Most important is getting those younger veterans throughout the state to join us and continue to breathe life into our many programs in The American Legion.

## SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

### Chairman Jack Tully

Pennsylvania still holds the distinction of the largest Sons of The American Legion detachment with 61,161 members in 2017. This accomplishment is due to the diligence and dedication of the officers and members of the SAL throughout the Commonwealth.

The proposed budget for 2018 was submitted and reviewed by the Legion's Finance Committee, Department Commander Paul Kennedy, SAL Commander Dennis Smale, Department Adjutant Kit Watson, SAL Finance Chairmen, and the SAL Committee.

The proposed budget for 2018 was calculated with last year's membership of 61,161 at \$2.00 per member totaling \$122,322 for "Income". "Expenses" totaling \$121,800 were calculated for travel, Washington Conference, donations, and administrative cost which reflects an anticipated surplus of \$522 (*copy of proposed budget can be found in your book*).

All DEC members are reminded to instruct all posts with SAL squadrons that they need to include the SAL squadron when filing the IRS 990. The post is responsible for reporting funds of the SAL. Federal taxes must be filed each year to retain tax exempt status.

Membership is at the top of the list for our SAL organization. Pennsylvania SAL detachments have increased each year, but retention is another issue. We must make our SAL members aware of how important their help is to our American Legion's voice about concerns on issues like Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, and Americanism.

I would like to thank Commander Kennedy for the opportunity to serve on this Committee and I would also like to thank Adjutant Kit Watson and his Department staff, SAL Vice Chairman Ray Woof, John Amole, Roger Pospisil, Rich Pelec, Brad Simpson, Leonard Clawson and SAL Advisor Jonathan Wiest for their help in making this American Legion program so successful.

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## AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

### Chairman Jon Hosfeld

ALR membership for 2018 – 2019 is 2,307. Total Chapters stand at 163. Currently, forty-two (42) Chapters have not paid per-capita dues as of this report date of 1/11/18. After February 1<sup>st</sup>, Chapters will be considered delinquent and must pay dues to get reinstated.

An update of the ALR annual ride is Post 273 Bloomsburg will be our base camp. The ride will be held May 17 – 20, 2018. Two days of rides and events are still in the planning stage. Again, President Tom Ross informed the ALR program committee he will be requesting support from Posts throughout the state and will be sending letters in the immediate future.

Events statewide since September 2017 DEC:

- Honor Bus escort
- Philadelphia Veterans Day Parade in which Department Commander Paul Kennedy took part in
- Holiday Hope Drive to provide families Thanksgiving Day meals
- Several toy drives for children's' Christmas
- Christmas bags delivered to veterans in nursing homes
- ALR supported Marines Toys for Tots program
- The annual Holiday Tour by Department Commander Paul Kennedy and Auxiliary President Mary Greiman was attended by ALR statewide in all the tour locations
- Wreaths Across America were well attended and supported statewide
- President Tom Ross stated rides throughout the state are being planned AND Spring is ONLY ABOUT sixty (60) days away.
- For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the ALR is planning a spectacular flag display to kick off the convention parade in Harrisburg



### American Legion brings Christmas cards, mini flags to local veterans

Members of the Greenville American Legion Post 140 — (from left) Dick Landfried, Bill Bartell, Billy Stanley and Jim Marsteller, working with Maria Russo (center) of St. Paul's — distributed Christmas cards and miniature flags to the veteran residents at the facility, part of the annual Christmas card campaign.



According to Jim Marsteller, the post's service officer, this year, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other volunteers assisted the Legion in signing Christmas cards for veteran residents at the Mercer County area nursing homes, as well as residents at both the V.A. facilities and the Soldiers and Sailors home.

While his family was visiting, James Riley, U.S. Army veteran 1944-1945,

looks at a miniature flag that Greenville American Legion Post 140 Commander Billy Stanley and Jim Marsteller, service officer, presented along with Christmas cards Friday afternoon. New this year, Legion Commander Billy Stanley said miniature flags were presented along with the cards, an effort originally started by the Mercer County Veterans Administration and picked up by the local post.

Stanley and Marsteller said the flags, collected from the graves of veterans from around the county — namely Greenville — were cleaned, folded and tucked into a bag, which were marked with specially made tags and presented to each of the veterans.

Each year, the Greenville American Legion presents hundreds of Christmas cards, many of which had been donated for the effort.

Marsteller coordinates with the staff at each of the nursing facilities to be sure to have enough cards for each resident.

In the coming years, the Legion plans to continue to distribute the flags to both veterans and civilians, as a reminder of the service of the military members.

Each Memorial Day, working with different groups, flags are placed on the graves of veterans throughout all of Mercer County, an effort in Greenville coordinated by the local American Legion.



### Squadron 205

On January 16, 2018 Memorial Post Squadron 205 presented a \$1000 check to PA Soldier & Sailor Home for Resident Activities. From left to right are Ken Culbertson a dual member, Commandant Barb Raymond and Sons Reese Larson. Squadron 205 is a strong supporter of our Veterans and Community.



### Donation to VA home



American Legion Commander Ron Ttrobel of Post 105 presents a donation to volunteer coordinator Ken Vybiral of the Soldiers and Sailors home in Erie. Harry Steward, Chairman of Soldiers and Sailors home is pictured in the middle.





## Billy Stanley: Giving of himself to help others in need

Stanley has had a headache since 2005.

“Not ‘headaches’ with an ‘s.’ ‘Headache,’” the 60- year-old explained. “Twenty-four hours a day. Seven days a week.”

The constant pain ranges from a constant squeezing to a sensation similar to being stabbed in the brain with an ice pick. Doctors can’t — or won’t — say for sure what’s causing it, but he has his theories.

One is radiation exposure from his stint working on nuclear steam generators for U.S. Navy submarines during the 1970s. The other is that it’s God’s plan.

“Otherwise, I’d be driving truck. I love driving trucks,” he said of his 3,500-mile-a-week, 27- year habit.

The reason God would prefer him suffering a constant headache to having him behind the wheel of a big rig has a lot to do with what he does with his time outside a truck cab — he uses it to help out just about anybody that needs it. From lawn work, to household maintenance, to runs to the beauty parlor, if someone needs help, Stanley rarely says no, assisting rosters of dozens at a time. It’s a habit he says he came upon honestly.

“I was kinda brought up that way,” Stanley said, recalling his father doing yardwork for others, or taking them on errands.

He recalls his own efforts starting in earnest with Elsie and LaVere Baker, who were in their 90s at the time. Elsie was in a nursing home, and LaVere could use some help getting the lawn mowed.

“He wanted the companionship more than anything,” Stanley said, “but his wife didn’t like me at all.”

At 6’3”, Stanley is a tall man, but what’s likely most striking about him is the length of his hair and his beard, each of which extend well beyond his shoulders.

They’re the reason he left the Navy — “I didn’t want anyone telling me to cut my hair” — and they’re the reason many folks misjudge him, including Elsie.

After LaVere passed in 2007, though, Stanley started helping Elsie, doing odd jobs around the house, taking her to hair appointments, those kinds of things.

“She started taking a liking to me,” he said. “She found out that when you have long hair and a beard, it doesn’t mean you’re a bad guy. I’ve had a lot of older women talk to me about that.”

Of the dozens of women he’s helped over the years — his joke is that he refers to them as his “harem” — the majority have been older, and the majority have learned a similar lesson.

After Elsie’s death in 2012, he began helping a woman that lived across the street.

“Then she started telling all of her widow friends, and it just snowballed from there.”

As of now, Stanley has a roster of about 18 local people who he helps out mowing lawns, fixing leaky facets and the like, changing light bulbs.

“They all want me to change light bulbs for them,” he said referencing his height.

Some come from referrals, but he does his fair share of spreading the word, too. He served as the post commander for the Greenville American Legion for the past five years, and on his card for that role, he poses a question: “Need help?”

For those answering yes, he offers the number for the cell phone he carries in his pocket. Over the years, he’s helped dozens and dozens, but of them, two have been his top priority.

His mother, Martha, who’s currently battling cancer, is one.

“She’s my number one priority right now.”

And the love of the his life, Cindy Noble, who passed in 2014 from cancer, was the other. When he met her, she was working at the new Sheetz Greenville gained in 1988. He’d never been in it and was avoiding it. It was new, and he had certain negative feelings about new additions to town.

But, when his brother came out of the gas station telling Stanley, “You need to come in here. There’s this cool chick in here,” his interest was piqued. He’ll never forget the way he felt when he saw her.

“I got this weird fluttering feeling inside me,” he explained. “I never felt anything like that before. She said she felt the same things when she saw me.”

They were both involved with other people at the time, although Stanley admits flirting with her a bit before those other relationships wrapped up. But eventually, in 1995, they connected, and were committed to each other two years later.

“It took a while for us to find each other,” he said. “But if we had met when we were younger, it might not have lasted that long.”

It lasted, and they were determined to make it last.

When she got sick, he took her to doctor’s appointments; he kept a mental log of every detail of her treatment; and he did hands-on work, too, such as changing her bandages.

“She told me, ‘I didn’t think you loved me this much,’” he recalled.

He did. Maybe more. So, when he lost her, everything began to tumble.

“Two weeks after she died, I was in the hospital with a-fib,” or atrial fibrillation, which can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and other complications.

The heart issue stemmed from a broken heart, he explained, and the stress of the last 15 months

“I couldn’t stop crying.” he said.

But, when he was back on his feet, he was ready for more. He wanted to help more.

“I needed something to occupy my mind,” he said.

In addition to the regular roster of folks he helps, he’s involved in various efforts at his church, First Baptist, including Hometown Missions, as well as his work as commander of Greenville American Legion.

His Legion service stems back to his service in the Navy, which started more than 40 years ago. The Jamestown High School graduate said he enlisted in February 1975, to get away from his parents.

That journey led him to work on nuclear steam generators on submarines for the Navy. He was primarily stationed out of Charleston, S.C., but the service sent him to several corners of the globe, including Scotland and Brazil and crossing the equator multiple times.

The work itself had him inspecting the dozens of tubes within the generators as part of a team, and plugging any tube where the walls had become too thin. He served four years active duty, two years inactive, wrapping up in 1981.

William “Billy” Stanley Jr. is the son of Bill Stanley, a man he says was known locally primarily for two of his public duties.

One was streetsweeping for the borough, a 30- year gig that Stanley recalls started after his father walked into the “cop shop” in 1959 without a job and a parking ticket he couldn’t pay, just as the streetsweeping position opened.

The other community members also likely remember Bill Sr. as his time as the community’s Santa Claus, a job Stanley recalls helping to fill after he covered for his father one deer season when he was 16, and his father hadn’t gotten his deer. No one was the wiser that it was the younger Stanley behind the white beard. With Stanley old enough to drive, and passing for St. Nick, he said his substitute duties became more frequent.

Looking over his life so far of service, “I don’t think I’ve done anything super fantastic,” but those he’s helped disagree.

Billy Stanley is pictured on page 13 top of the page in the Christmas cards and mini American flag story.



## Research and documents for veterans

As the largest veteran service organization, our continuation to provide for veterans depends on our membership. New members bring new ideas, diversity, and youth to our organization in order to carry our mission into the future. The American Legion Family includes the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and the American Legion Auxiliary (Auxiliary). Eligibility for the SAL requires the applicant to be a male descendant of a wartime veteran. The Auxiliary has a slighter broader eligibility of a female relative to a wartime veteran. To determine eligibility, normally the veteran's discharge record (DD-214) is submitted with the application.

In our daily efforts assisting veterans as a Department Service Officer, we also receive many requests to assist family members to locate discharge documentation in order to join The American Legion Family. Those records can be requested through agencies such as the National Archives. Those requests commonly take three to five weeks to process and occasionally return with negative findings. We have found an alternative search for service documentation that will provide immediate results with zero cost in cases where the veteran was a resident of Pennsylvania when they entered active duty. This can be accomplished through the Pennsylvania State Archives and Ancestry.com of Pennsylvania website.

The Pennsylvania State Archives is an important resource for researchers and citizens. It was created in 1903 and in 1945 combined with the State Museum and Historical Commission to form the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). Their primary function is to acquire and preserve valuable public records of the Commonwealth. Some of those records include veteran burial cards and compensation given to wartime veterans, sometimes referred to as war-bonuses. The Commonwealth has given a war-bonus to its veterans in every major wartime period since the War of 1812. The application document for their compensation contains all the necessary information that can be used for membership in the same way as a DD-214. The decrease of burden for membership application this can provide makes it an invaluable resource.

- To access this resource, go to [phmc.pa.gov/archives/pages/default.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/archives/pages/default.aspx)
- Select Ancestry.com PA The website will redirect you to [phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx)
- Enter your zip code at the bottom of the page
- Select the "Click here to verify Zip code" and the results will render, "This is a PA zip code."
- Go to Pennsylvania State Archives records at Ancestry.com as the final link
- Enter as much information as possible about the veteran including an optional keyword such as "WW II."
- If successful, the results will yield several documents.
- To view and save those document results, the user will be required to establish a free account with Ancestry.com. The documents that contain "Veteran Service Compensation" should be examined for accuracy of the veteran being researched.

Serving a veteran or a veteran's family member is our daily goal. When we make use of alternative methods that provide useful and timely results, we are better serving them.

## Four Chaplains Day

Feb. 3 marked the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army Transport Dorchester and the selfless acts of four Army chaplains who were aboard. American Legion posts nationwide are encouraged to commemorate the anniversary each February and honor Four Chaplains Day.

The Dorchester tragically sunk on Feb. 3, 1943, while crossing the North Atlantic, transporting troops to an American base in Greenland. A German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck the Dorchester, killing 672 of the 902 officers and enlisted men, merchant seamen and civilian workers aboard.

Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by four chaplains of different faiths, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

As soldiers rushed to lifeboats, Reverend George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic) comforted the wounded and directed others to safety. One survivor watched the chaplains distribute life jackets, and when they ran out, they removed theirs and gave them to four young men.

As the Dorchester sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying. Fox, Goode, Poling and Washington were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. And in 1948, Congress declared Feb. 3 to be Four Chaplains Day.

American Legion posts nationwide remember Four Chaplains Day with memorial services that pay tribute to the courageous chaplains and the brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. This year, Four Chaplains Sunday was Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>.



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## Two Legion Baseball alums elected into 2018 Hall of Fame class

Two former American Legion Baseball players, Chipper Jones and Jim Thome, were announced as members of the much-anticipated 2018 National Baseball Hall of Fame class.

Jeff Idelson, president of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., announced the results on MLB Network on Wednesday night. Both Thome and Jones were first-ballot Hall of Famers.

Jones and Thome will be the 75th and 76th Legion alums in the Hall of Fame, with 13 former Legion players inducted in the last five years. They will be enshrined on July 29 and will be joined by fellow Legion alums Jack Morris and Alan Trammell, both of whom were elected to this class through the Modern Era Committee in December.

Jones played American Legion Baseball for Post 6 in Deland, Fla., from 1986-1989 with his stellar play earning him the top pick in the 1990 MLB draft. Jones's 19-year career with the Atlanta Braves featured eight All-Star Game appearances, a National League Most Valuable Player award in 1999 and a World Series title in 1995.

The third baseman was named the 2000 American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year.

Thome played Legion Baseball for Bartonville Limestone Post 979 in Illinois and became a fan favorite over his lengthy professional career. He played for six different teams, including the Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox and Philadelphia Phillies.

He was a five-time All-Star and earned the Roberto Clemente Award, given to the player "best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and the individual's contribution to his team."

Joining Jones, Thome, Morris and Trammell in this class are Vladimir Guerrero and Trevor Hoffman.



# KEYSTONE NEWS



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## Award Presentation

The 26<sup>th</sup> District of the PA American Legion as well as the Department of PA, would like to recognize Alex Yawor. He honorably served as a United States Marine in WWII where he fought on the Marshall Islands. He also landed twice on Mariana Islands in the North Western Pacific Ocean where he fought both Saipan and the Island of Tinian. From there his unit moved on to and landed on Iwo Jima.

He is not only a true American hero but he still serves his community and others today at the age of 95.

A unique membership Yawor holds is with the Beaver County Woodcarvers Club. He's been an avid painter all of his life.

Nine years ago while our country was in the midst of the War on Terror, Yawor decided to honor our fallen heroes, using his talents by hand painting photographs of the fallen for their families.

It's a sacred event that Yawor goes through when he begins each painting. He starts by saluting the photo first. Then he sits down and states "let's get to work."

To date, Mr. Yawor has hand painted approximately 133 photographs. He maintains a scrapbook with photos of every one that he has ever done and a separate scrapbook with the letters from everyone that has written him.

In addition to the individual photos that Yawor has completed, he has also painted many other photos that are displayed at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Rochester, Pennsylvania.

Yawor currently lives in Aliquippa with his daughter Sharon.

On January 12, 2014, District Commander, Carl Curtis, 26<sup>th</sup> District, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Yawor for his selfless sacrifice. Since that time, he has completed an additional 58 paintings.

Yawor does all of this work free of charge for the families. Once the painting is completed, Yawor, personally and professionally frames the painting, packages it and mails it to the family. As stated, he is a member of the Beaver County Woodcarvers Club and they assist him with funds to help offset the cost of the materials.

Mr. Yawor turned 95 on January 14, 2018.

On behalf of the American Legion, Department of Pennsylvania and the 26<sup>th</sup> District, we would like to pay tribute to and thank Mr. Alex Yawor for his selfless sacrifice to our fallen comrades and their families across the nation. SEMPER FIDELIS.

Pictured to the right is Staff Sergeant Alan Snyder, 28, from Papillion, Nebraska. He is the son of Al and Julia Snyder. Snyder was assigned to 4th Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Baumholder, Germany; died June 18 in Deh Rahwod, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, of injuries suffered during a vehicle rollover. Also killed were Army Sgt. 1st Class Alvin A.

Boatwright, Army Staff Sgt. Edward F. Dixon III and Army Spc. Tyler R. Kreinz.

