



A Publication of The Pennsylvania American Legion
Department Headquarters – PO Box 2324, Harrisburg, PA 17105
Phone: 717-730-9100 Fax: 717-975-2836
Email: hq@pa-legion.com www.pa-legion.com

Housing for Homeless Veterans Celebrates over 30 Years

The Pennsylvania American Legion Housing for Homeless Veterans Corporation is celebrating 30 years of serving our veterans who are experiencing homelessness. Homeless does not only mean out on the street or living in a car. Homeless also includes those men, women and families who are buying their time, living on friends and families' couches.



The fundraiser dinner is always held the Saturday evening of the January Department Executive Meeting (DEC). This year's award winners are Melissa Hrinya, Pennsylvania American Legion Auxiliary President; The Pennsylvania American Legion Riders; Patrick Meyers; Grocery Outlet; Dr. Adelman VISN #4; Millcreek Post 773, and Past Department Commander Paul Kennedy.



The guest speaker was Lt. Col. John Spanogle, U.S. Army Retired. He spoke eloquently about his family, his service, his life after service and the future of The American Legion.

He captivated the audience talking about the difficulty finding employment, fitting in and proving himself after his service to our country. Spanogle figured he was an educated, bright, well trained man wanting to work. He thought he had all the right

connections; yet, he found himself struggling to find employment.

In the end, Spanogle finally landed a job as vice president of a nonprofit organization where he will help former National Guardsmen find jobs. He likes to make a difference for his fellow veterans. "This is for everybody, not only the unemployed but the underemployed as well," he says.

Spanogle also talked about the future of The American Legion and actually being a Family post. He isn't referring to the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders all working together; he is referring to opening the post up to the whole family.

He said, "If you want to get young members to join your post then you need to make your post more family friendly. Put a swing set outside. Don't have a bar inside but instead have a game room. Make your post smoke free."

Today's young veteran is involved with their families more than ever before.

They spend almost all of their time with their families. They are taking their kids to soccer and the park. They are helping their kids with homework and riding a bike. They have spent too much time away from their families while in the service that they now want to spend every possible minute with them.

He challenged the room to make a digital post. Make meetings that you're able to video conference into. Put everything out on social media.

He also talked about the increasing cost of child care for young families. He suggested for a post to open a day care center to help in the cost of child care. This may be an extreme step for most Legion posts but his point is to help the veteran and their family. Be the Legion that is there supporting a young veteran, their spouse, their children and the veteran will be there for the post.

Pictured to the left are Department Commander James Vollrath, Past Department Commander and Awardee Paul Kennedy, and Department Auxiliary President and Awardee Melissa Hrinya.

The organization is selling coins to celebrate the 30 years of assisting veterans who are experiencing homelessness. Contact any board member to see about purchasing a coin.





COMMANDER'S COLUMN

James Vollrath, Department Commander

To the entire Department of Pennsylvania American Legion Family, Greetings. I hope everyone had a joyous holiday season and this new year has started moving forward in the direction of your choice. We have completed the Department Holiday Tour of all state veterans homes and VA facilities and to say it was a humbling experience would be an understatement. We had the opportunity to meet many incredible veterans and

facility staff.

The January DEC is already in the books and we were able to continue to accomplish much work on behalf of our veterans and their families. I would like to take this opportunity to thank PNC Ron Conley, President of the PA American Legion Housing for Homeless Veterans Corporation, for yet another successful fundraising dinner as he continues to set the bar high.

Membership continues to be a formidable opponent, let us all "Continue The Mission" and fight to the end. We are coming into the Farm Show and Great American Outdoor Show to allow us to help veterans, their families and possibly recruit new members.

Don't forget upcoming events, get your reservation and your advertisement sent in for the National Commander's Tour, the April DEC and the Department Commander's dinner.

Much goes on behind the scenes that is not noticed on a day to day basis, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank some people who otherwise go unnoticed. The entire headquarters staff, the Department Service Officers and their staff, as well as the committee chairmen and their committees.

We still have much to accomplish and the convention will be here before we know it. We need to stay focused and keep our sights set on the finish line.

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Department Commander: James R. Vollrath

PO Box 2324, Harrisburg PA 17105 717-730-9100
cmdr@pa-legion.com

Eastern Vice Commander: Craig A. Wilhelm

541 Newbury Court, Sellersville, PA 18960 215-802-4572
craigwilhelm75@comcast.net

Central Vice Commander: Jon A. Hosfeld

200 Hoswick Lane, Marysville, PA 17053 717-485-1011
jonhosfeld@hotmail.com

Western Vice Commander: John W. Fritz

31 10th Street, DuBois, PA 15801 814-603-3477
jflf3110@comcast.net

NEC: Dennis C. Haas

3357 Stevenson Hill Road, Reynoldsville, PA 15851-8073 814-771-1679
seavet2@comcast.net

Alt. NEC: Edward Michael Stelacio

28 Sunnyside Drive, North Cape May, NJ 08204 267-566-5572
emstelacio@gmail.com

Department Adjutant: Kit Watson

PO Box 2324, Harrisburg PA 17105 717-730-9100
kit@pa-legion.com

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

1st Beverly Glover	215-473-8795
7300 Woodbine Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19151	bglover45@comcast.net
5th Edward Manko	215-219-1737
853 Glenn Street, Philadelphia, PA 19115	
8th Edward T. Hatton	610-304-2979
890 Contention Lane, Berwyn, PA 19312	ethatton@comcast.net
9th John R. Pashley	215-752-0598
1134 West Maple Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047	jack.pashley@gmail.com
10th Charles R. McDonald	717-560-0653
2292 Nicholson Square Drive, Lancaster, PA 17601	crmcd717@yahoo.com
11th Richard Craig	570-466-0301
2326 Lyon Street, Clifford Twp., PA 18470	
12th Nicole R. Guest	570-991-0462
294 E. Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705	nikkig1330@gmail.com
13th Larry Marcus Burdile, Sr.	570-590-2782
935 Fountain Street, Ashland, PA 17921-9302	phonix taz14@aol.com
14th Carol White	484-515-1490
1542 Valley Road, Bethlehem, PA 18018	ambbyyy135@gmail.com
15th Ronald Ross	570-721-1262
959 Ross Road, Sugar Run, PA 18846	
16th Mark Budda	570-651-3350
344 Louisa Street, Williamsport, PA 17701	mybudda@gmail.com
17th David Ferguson	570-220-1008
218 Devitt Camp Road, Allenwood, PA 17810	
18th Richard A. Chalmers	570-499-6120
33 Farley Circle, Lewisburg, PA 17837	dranckchalmers@yahoo.com
19th Travis L. Goebel	717-926-1310
7102 Creek Crossing Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17111	tgoebel174@gmail.com
20th Jeffrey D. Kaylor	724-858-8289
325 E. Burrell Street, Blairsville, PA 15717	interceptor106@yahoo.com
21st Dennis S. Haire	814-695-8083
1016 Church Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648	d_haire@verizon.net
22nd Tim Sentz	717-418-5495
355 Timber Road, New Cumberland, PA 17070	pa22commander@gmail.com
23rd Ronald Summers	814-777-5234
734 West Aaron Drive, State College, PA 16803	
24th Kevin Kavanaugh	724-938-7870
928 Scenic Drive, Coal Center, PA 15423	ubuckster@yahoo.com
25th Dennis A. Koman	724-222-1874
217 Cortez Drive, Washington, PA 15301	
26th Jeffrey D. Olson	724-570-4317
375 Holmes Avenue, Baden, PA 15005	jdolson405@yahoo.com
27th James E. Fleming	724-354-2894
224 Stoney Point Road, Shelocta, PA 15774	
28th Melvin M. Frederick	724-264-4532
32 Daugherty Road, Grove City, PA 16127	frederick1234@zoominternet.net
29th Gary O. Weaver	814-898-1884
3528 Hereford Road, Erie, PA 16510	
30th Edward Gallagher	610-253-1416
6207 Franklin Hill Road, Bangor, PA 18013	edgal49@gmail.com
31st Leonard A. Dulik	724-322-7944
193 Adelaide Road, Connellsville, PA 15425	
32nd Michael D. Murphy III	412-781-5691
5421 McCandless Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15201	md1037@aol.com
33rd Darnell "Jeff" Pope	412-795-7452
4932 Havana Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15239	clanceyhome@yahoo.com
36th Lyle E. Grover	724-638-7060
114 Fayette Avenue, Oakdale, PA 15071	lyle@libertytps.com

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FROM THE DESK OF
Kit D. Watson, Department Adjutant
 Legion family members,

The Department Oratorical Contest is March 9th at the Harrisburg Forum. For all of you that can travel to Harrisburg 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 \$16,500.00 for their efforts. The winner will not only receive \$7,500.00, 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 up to \$25,000. The contest takes place Saturday, March 9th 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!

The National Commander's tour dates are set and will be held Monday evening April 1st at Lancaster Post 34 for the Eastern Section, Tuesday, April 2nd at



Chambersburg Post 46 for the Central Section, and Wednesday, April 3rd 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 National Commander Brett P. Reistad! Help us show our Pennsylvania pride as we host our American Legion National Commander.

Our Legion birthday is coming up in March. Posts should consider having an open house where all local veterans are invited! 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. 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!

Also new this year, our Department of Pennsylvania American Legion is holding a "Legion B-day" raffle and you will be able to view it live on our Department of Pennsylvania Face Book page as the winners are drawn. These raffle tickets are mailed out to our members who have donated in the past and to some others. For more information feel free to contact us at Department HQ.

Our 101st Department Convention will be here soon. July 11 – 14, our Department Convention will be held in Harrisburg. 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. Make plans now to be there!

The 101st ad book is also in the works. We want to get the word out to your posts as their support is needed! Our posts support is needed. Please consider placing an ad in the convention ad book.

The Department Executive Committee meetings will be April 5 – 7 at the Harrisburg Red Lion Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn). This will be the location of our Department Commander James Vollrath's Testimonial Dinner on the evening of Saturday, April 6. Reservation forms for the DEC and the Commander's testimonial are available on our website at www.pa-legion.com. Also, on the

same website is the information for our three Department Vice Commanders' testimonials.

May 27th is Memorial Day and as mentioned in this article's third 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!

It is not too early to get the word out for our Pennsylvania American Legion State Police Youth Week (SPYW) runs from June 9-15, 2019 and the Pennsylvania National Guard is the third entity to make this camp the great success it is. Our SPYW camp is held at York College and the program is the oldest of its type in the Nation. The cost per student is only \$175. This is not a basketball camp! Cadets experience a week of boot camp, along with all aspects of serving in law enforcement or our military. The cadets get hands on experience of real troopers' everyday jobs and duties as well as our PA National Guard and all areas they cover.

Likewise our Keystone Boy's State (KBS) runs from June 16 – 27, 2019. The cost per the KBS program is \$200. It takes place at Shippensburg University. It is a week filled with the workings of our government from the towns, counties, state and national offices. Make the students in your area aware of both these weeks.

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. And the financials of either of the groups needs to be reported annually on the post's IRS form 990.

To our posts and home associations. Two issues: The first, all PA skill games old and new are illegal. This is easily confirmed by calling the PLCE chief Councils office in Harrisburg and asking. Second home associations may donate the 60% from small games of chance to the post. When the home association meets to vote on where to make the donations they must have it in their minutes and the post is legally a 501c that the donation may be made. Keep in mind the post can



do anything to their building and property but they can't recycle those funds back to the home association. Furthermore the PLCEB has no legal right to look at or request the books of the Post. If you have questions regarding this give me a call at Department HQ.

I want to wish our entire Legion family a "Happy Easter"!

Until next time..... Kit

RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS COMMITTEE

Rev. Dr. Richard E. Denison, Jr.

Our Constitutions Precious Freedom – The Freedom of Religion

Recently an article was posted on our department web page about the history behind the American Legion's focus on Americanism. It rightly pointed out that 100 years ago the arrival of so many new immigrants, the lack of education standards and the threat of communism created a need for education in the principles of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In the American Legion, the chaplaincy falls under the Americanism program. This is not because our nation is a Christian nation, but because one of the cherished liberties in the United States is the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of one's own heart. Likewise, we respect the freedom of those who choose not to worship God at all. As a Chaplain part of my duty is to cherish and work with all my energy to preserve freedom.

At the last DEC meeting someone remarked to me that the American Legion was a Christian organization. While Christianity and the American Legion may share similar ideals, nothing could be further from the truth. As a military Chaplain I often saw how precious a person's faith was to them amid difficult circumstances. As part of my duties I conducted a variety of protestant service, but also worked with Roman Catholic chaplains to provide for the faith needs of that community. I've driven Moslem service members to a mosque to celebrate their faith and procured religious literature to help Jewish service members. I organized a group of Mormons to be able to conduct their own worship services to meet their needs. While the American Legion does not promote one particular religion, we affirm the importance of faith to those who have served and work vigorously to defend the rights of all Americans to worship as their heart leads them.

Chaplain Branch Insignia



Buddhist



Christian



Hindu



Jewish



Muslim



Chaplain Candidate

This is why it is particularly important, especially at public events, that all American Legion Chaplains offer prayer and readings appropriate to the entire community gathered. Prayers offered only in Jesus' name only serves to irritate those of other faiths and wins us no friends. Today in our Armed Forces, we have chaplains who are not only Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Orthodox, but also Sikh, Moslem, Buddhist and Hindu. In the future I am sure more faith will be recognized. As Chaplains we are to encourage those under our care to find hope and comfort in their religious beliefs while not forcing our beliefs on them.

One of the great principals of Americanism is religious freedom. In the military our Chaplains are the officers that see that freedom is cherished and preserved. Our American Legion must continue to support the right of all Americans to worship God as their heart leads them and to respect the rights of others who may believe differently or not at all.

Blessings to all our comrades,
Rev. Dr. Richard E. Denison, Jr.

Pennsylvania is the first to respond to Panama City; other states followed

Military veterans are service-oriented people, a trait that became clear in Panama City after Hurricane Michael.

American Legion Post 392, 535 Oak Ave. in downtown Panama City, became a focal point for supply distribution in the community after the storm. The building was still standing after the storm wiped out other parts of the area, and received donated goods from other Legion posts throughout the state and country in the days and weeks after.



"It wasn't like anybody said, 'Hey, bring your stuff here.' It just came here," Post 392 Commander Joe Keyes said. "Our first truckload of stuff came from Pennsylvania. After that first load came, we got stuff from the American Legion in Alabama, Georgia, South Florida and Pensacola. There were VFWs that sent us stuff."

Members of Post 392 distributed the goods to members, neighbors and others who needed help. The post was open every day, with people coming in with bags and shopping carts to get what they needed at a time when phones were out and communication was difficult.

"It was for the whole community," Keyes said. "It was all by word of mouth." MRE packets also were available at Post 392 since they were sometimes the only thing to eat before grocery stores opened and were fully restocked. A few loads were taken to Mexico Beach and supplies also were delivered to Fountain. The donations were a switch in roles for Post 392, which has previously donated to other hurricane victims.

"What the people give you to redistribute is astronomical," Keyes said. "Everyone is here to help each other and that's what we do. Just to give back to the members in your community out of this organization, words can't describe that stuff. We've been in this organization now for 11 years but to go through a catastrophe like we did and to have everyone come together, it's a great feeling."

Post 392 also has been busy collecting Christmas toys to distribute to local children and recently hosted a Christmas party. The post will host a Christmas dinner on Christmas Day at 2 p.m. and invites everyone to come out.

The post still is operating as usual and plans to continue helping in the area, though it has \$40,000 in roof damage and about another \$5,000 in damage outside the building. The post has even hosted meetings for other veteran posts whose buildings were damaged.

"One thing I'm proud we've done recently was the whole post family contributed to Wreaths Across America," said Henry Richard, commander of Post 392's Sons of American Legion Squadron. Wreaths Across America events laid wreaths on veterans' graves. "We try to do stuff like that all the time."

Post 392 also plans to have its annual Hotzee motorcycle ride in January to raise money for Covenant Care, a local hospice center.

"We're looking for our new normal but it's been amazing, the support that's come in from everywhere," said Auxiliary Past President Tina Kirchoff.

WANTED!!!

Pennsylvania American Legion Scholarship Endowment Fund

Scholarships support the children and grandchildren of Pennsylvania American Legion members who are in good standing for at least five years, deceased, killed in action, or missing in action.

Joseph P Gavenonis Scholarship

Robert W. Valimont Endowment

**DONATIONS NEEDED TO KEEP THE PROGRAM
GOING FOR YEARS TO COME!**

Please send your donation today to: The PA American Legion,
Attention: Scholarship Secretary, PO BOX 2324,
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2324

Hampton Heroes recognized at school event

The Hampton Township School District recognized and honored veterans at the 19th annual Hampton Heroes event held Nov 13th in the Hampton High School Auditorium.

The Hampton Heroes program has been an ongoing effort by the Hampton Township School District to recognize and honor veterans.

To date, more than 200 men and women who have served in the Armed forces have been inducted into the program.

This year, the district will induct nine new members to its ranks.

The 2018 inductees are: Maj. Brian Hamlin, U.U. air force; Dr. Charles (Tom) Brophy, U.S. Army Reserves; Robert L. Horvat Sr., U.S. Army; Jason Pike, U.S. Army; mark Crump, U.S. navy; Michael Clark, U.S. Army; Steven Rodenhaugh, U.S. Navy; George F. Walts Jr., U.S. Army national Guard; and Stanly A. Jochim, U.S. Navy.

A full breakfast was served to veterans and their guests prior to the event. Following breakfast inductees were honored during a special ceremony featuring guest speaker Maj. Hamlin. Maj. Hamlin served with the 1st Fighter Wing out of Langley Air Force Base from 1998 through 2003.

This past Veteran's Day on November 12, 2018, three of Post 548 members volunteered to participate in a "Veterans in the Classroom Program" hosted by two local high schools.

Bob Pflumm, the Post Finance Officer went to Hampton High School. Harry VanRiper, the Post Chaplain, and Ken Keeley, a new member, went to Freeport High School.



High School Students Raise Money for Veterans

Greencastle-Antrim High School students honored veterans and completed a fundraiser for two veterans' organizations during the last two months of 2018. The annual Veterans Day assembly was held Nov. 12 during school hours. The assembly also launched a fundraising effort that culminated with \$500 collected through the sale of patriotic buttons in support of veterans' groups.



Greencastle-Antrim High School students offered patriotic buttons during Heritage Christmas Fridays in downtown Greencastle, Pa. From left: Megan Bear, Sarah Bubeck, Matt Lunday, Corey Mongan, Emily Barnes, Emma Johnson and Marlee Richards.

A color guard that included local veterans from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6319 and the American Legion presented colors during the assembly, where students presented several musical numbers paying tribute to veterans.

Patriotic songs were performed by the high school's concert choir under the direction of Roz Bingaman.

A trio of students — Kaylynn Leap on clarinet, Jordan Noll on flute and Zack Reynolds on piano — performed "God Bless America."

The school's concert band performed several patriotic selections under the direction of Robert Bennett.

Victor Moon, who served in the U.S. Navy and as a master sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve, was the featured speaker at the assembly.

Winners of the VFW's Voice of Democracy contest were announced during the assembly. Madison Yates placed first, Jarrett Gelsinger finished second and Megan Lynerd garnered third for speeches based on the question "Why is it important to vote?"

As part of the annual Veterans Day assembly, the high school kicked off a fundraising activity by selling patriotic buttons for \$3 during school lunch periods. Students also made the buttons available Nov. 11 during the Veterans Day luncheon sponsored by the Greencastle American Legion.

A group of students braved the cold on the night of Dec. 7 to offer the buttons for sale during the annual Heritage Christmas celebration in Greencastle.

The buttons were designed and produced by Greencastle-Antrim students.

The \$500 raised will benefit two veterans organizations — the Nine Line Foundation, which is dedicated to helping the most severely wounded combat veterans rebuild their lives, and the "22 Until None" organization, which focuses on combating suicide among veterans.

Golden Age Games

The American Legion Family proudly presents our 2018 Golden Age Games Team. The picture below is of the Pennsylvania Proud winners including 19 Gold Medals, 2 Silver Medals, 5 Bronze Medals and multiple 4th, 5th and 6th place winners. They all competed amongst 1400 other disabled veterans in the 2018 games.

For those who are not familiar with The Golden Age Games, it is an event held every year at various locations throughout the USA for our veterans to compete with other veterans from all over the US. It is the equivalent to the US Olympics, except all events are geared for disabled veterans. The team competes in bocce ball, golf, billiards, badminton and horseshoes just to mention a few. All participating veterans must be 55 years or older and be registered at a VA facility. All participating veterans are required to maintain a rigorous practice schedule throughout the year and log all practice hours to qualify to compete. They work

hard all year long, striving to improve their performance and bring home more medals in their sport or expertise.

This event requires VA staffing to meet the medical requirements for the team as well as coaches and other volunteers to help. This dedicated part of the team provides their own funding for the trip to be able to experience the opportunity with the veterans. They are truly dedicated.

Both the team, the staff, coaches and everyone involved in the program would like to send a sincere heartfelt thank you to the American Legion Family for your sponsorship, support and confidence in the team. Without your support they could not participate.



Legion Baseball Team Recognized

The Newtown American Legion Morrell Smith Post 440 Junior Prep baseball team was honored by leaders in Harrisburg for their 2018 Bucks County League and Pennsylvania championships.



State Reps. Perry Warren and Helen Tai honored the local members of the team, which this year won its second consecutive state championship.

After starting the 2018 season with zero wins and three losses and not even scoring one run for its first 19 innings of the season, the team finished the season strong, winning the championship.

"Despite a slow start to the season, Newtown stuck together and put together an improbable championship effort to finish their season on top," said Warren, D-Bucks. "It was an honor to meet with and bring these tenacious young men to the Capitol."

"These young men should be proud of their hard work and dedication to each other and their team," said Tai, D-Bucks. "Their season will not only be remembered for their state championship – but also for the lifelong friendships made and lessons learned together that will serve them both on and off the field."

Team members are Shane Anhalt, Andrew Brown, Ryan Burkett, Quinn Erlandsen, Nick Focella, Tony Godonis, Jack Harar, Ishaan Hardaway, Joe Hughes, Jagger Matera, Lukas Mullen, Nate Rambo, Alex Stempin and Collin Williams. The manager is Joe Anhalt, who is assisted by Steve Brown, Dave Hughes and Sean Mullen.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Chairman Jack Tully

Pennsylvania still holds the honor and distinction of the largest Sons of the American Legion detachment with 60,482 members for 2018 even though this number is 664 members less than reported for 2017.

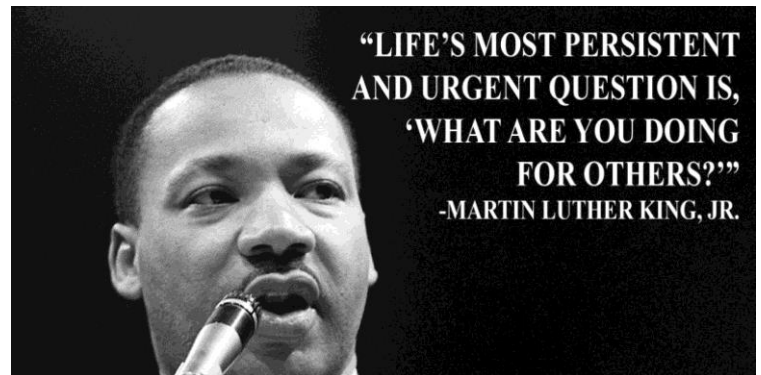
Retention of members is still a key issue that must be addressed by our dedicated officers and SAL members to remain strong in our organization. Recruitment doesn't appear to be a problem. We are just shy of adding 2,200 new members for 2019.

The SAL proposed budget for 2018-2019 was submitted to the Department in late July for review by the Department Finance Committee. Results of this review are not known at the time of this report.

Tax time is here and once again we need to make sure every Post with a SAL squadron includes all funds from the SAL on their IRS form 990. Federal taxes must be filed every year to retain your tax exempt status.

Our SAL squadrons need to be reminded how important their members are in helping the American Legion voice their concerns on issues like Veteran Affairs, Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, and Americanism.

In closing, I would like to thank Commander Vollrath for the opportunity to serve on this committee and I would also like to thank SAL Vice Chairmen for their help during this past year in making this American Legion program so successful.



The Big Field

What is a community?

The Birdsboro area is rich with exceptional athletes. There isn't much better than the baseball field to our past, present and even future players. The smell of the dirt as it gets imbedded on those crisp white pants. The feel of the ball as you slightly grip it before you throw the runner out at home. The sound of the bat as it cracks the ball for your solid run to first base. Your coach depending on you and the feel of being on a team means something to you. The fans consisting of parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors are cheering on their team, your team, their player.

The baseball community is no stranger to players participating at the highest levels applicable to their age. There is something special about playing on the "big field". Many players will tell you they can't wait to play on the big field. But what does that mean? So, if you're an eight or nine year old, it's probably in reference to the Hill Road complex or Texas Field. But is that the big field? The longer you play, essentially getting older, you become more versed in the history of the game, and typically come to the conclusion that it's all about the dimensions. Ahhhh. The big field has a 90' basepath, 60' 6" from home plate to the mound, and the outfield corners are 300'+ extending to 390'+ in centerfield. The dimensions might not fully express the size of the big field but when you see it, you know it.

OK, why all this bantering and what is the message here? Obviously, it's about the big field, our district's largest field. In Birdsboro area our Senior Legion, Junior Legion, and High School Varsity Baseball teams call the Legion 626 Field, previously named Optimist Field, their home. The Legion 626 Field, located on E Main St, in Birdsboro, has tremendous memories hosting ball game for upwards of 40 years. Many feel strongly, particularly our premier backer, American Legion Post 626, that there are still many more years of memories to be made on the Legion 626 Field.

Legion 626 Field deserves and needs our attention. Daniel Boone Athletic Association in conjunction with American Legion Post 626, is excited to announce, the mutual goal of making Legion 626 Field "The Big Field" in Birdsboro. Legion 626 Field will become the beacon of the younger baseball players throughout the district who aspire to showcase their talent. This is a culmination of several years in the making and the work ahead will ultimately feel like the definition of community.



“Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.”

Dalai Lama

Armstrong Cable

Faces and Places host, Larry Berg visits American Legion Post 548 in Gibsonsia to learn about the past, present and future of the American Legion.

The interview aired on Armstrong Cable TV, channel 100, during the Veterans Day weekend in the Pittsburgh/Butler viewing area.

You can watch the full interview on YouTube. The link is <https://youtu.be/W5jZAOEWxGg>.

The TV interview represents a Post 548 initiative to bring to the attention of our local community, the important occasion of the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion.

This was truly a group effort from the post members that met a few times to work for the good of the Legion.



The objective of Post 548 was to look sharp and give a professional interview that would promote The American Legion programs, membership and the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion.

All of the questions asked by Larry Berg were impromptu. Post 548 members interviewed were Bob Schleiden – Commander – “Post Excellence Award” 2018, Bob Purdue – 32nd District “Adjutant of the Year” 2018, Harry VanRiper – “Department Chaplain of the Year” 2018, and Cono Passione – Honor Guard Leader. Others interviewed by Larry Berg were Carl Curtis and 26th District Commander Jeff Olsen.

Post 548 did a great job representing The American Legion and the promotion of working within the community!

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

Chairman Thomas Ross

ALR membership for 2018 – 2019 is currently at 2,906 up from 2,307 at this point last year for a 21% increase from this time last year. Total Chapters stand at 168 up 5 new chapters. Currently, thirty eight chapters have not paid per-capita dues as of this report date of 1/11/19. That is down 4 chapters from a year ago.

An update of the ALR annual ride, Post 493 Homer City will be our base camp. The ride will be held May 16,17,18,19, 2018. Two days of rides and events are still in the planning stage. President Holly Hill informed the ALR program committee she will be requesting support from Posts throughout the state. The Park Inn in Indiana Pa. will be the home base and all are welcome to attend.

Events statewide since September 2018 DEC: Honor Bus escort, Philadelphia Veterans Day Parade, Holiday Hope Drive to provide families Thanksgiving Day meals, Several toy drives for children's' Christmas, Christmas bags delivered to veterans in nursing homes and ALR supported Marines Toys for Tots program.

Wreaths Across America were well attended at the National Cemeteries and supported by the Riders statewide.

New Year's Day Rides went on throughout the state which went to raise money for Veterans at various V.A. medical centers. President Holly Hill stated rides throughout the state are being planned AND Spring is ONLY ABOUT sixty (60) days away.

DuBois to host PA American Legion State Baseball Tournament

Officials from the George Montgomery Post #17 DuBois American Legion, in cooperation and partnering with the City of DuBois, announced that the 2019 Pennsylvania American Legion State Baseball Tournament will be held at Showers Field July 26-31.

The George Montgomery Post #17 DuBois American Legion and the City of DuBois will host the 2019 Pennsylvania American Legion State Baseball Tournament at Showers Field July 26-31. From left are city Manager John “Herm” Suplizio, Barry Abbott, of Post #17, who will serve as chairman of the PAL State Baseball Tournament, PA American Legion Activities Committee Vice Chairman of the West Bob Schleiden, and Richard Coccimiglio, of Post #17, who will serve as co-chairperson of the program committee for the tournament.

“We’re delighted that the department committee has selected DuBois and Post 17 and Showers Field as the site for this year’s American Legion Baseball State Championships,” said PA American Legion Activities Committee Vice Chairman of the West Bob Schleiden.



“This is quite an honor and I can’t think of a better place to celebrate this, on this, the 100th anniversary of the American Legion,” said Schleiden. “This is a special year. We needed a special place to celebrate this game. It’s just the perfect venue — a beautiful field in Showers Field. All of the facilities that this has.”

Schleiden said Post #17 is one of the most respected Posts in the state that has two department commanders.

“It currently has the western section commander. It is just the perfect Post to have this honor bestowed upon,” said Schleiden.

Schleiden said the City of DuBois and its Manager John “Herm” Suplizio have laid out the “red carpet” for the American Legion.

“It’s been extremely easy to work with Mr. Suplizio. He’s been most gracious. He has helped us find information. He is working on getting us some very good rates and prices so that we can be respectful of the Blue Caps,” said Schleiden.

“I just want to thank you, too, Bob,” said Suplizio. “Bob and I have been working on this for some time now and it’s been a pleasure. To see it come to fruition is actually really a great shot in the arm for the entire area.”

“To bring this kind of baseball to the City of DuBois and the surrounding areas, it’s just great,” Suplizio said. “For DuBois to be able to host the 100th year is just really unbelievable.”

Barry Abbott, of Post #17, will serve as chairman of the Pennsylvania American Legion State Baseball Tournament.

“You couldn’t ask for a better person,” said Schleiden. “He has athletic director experience, has all the contacts, has just a total depth of understanding of

American Legion baseball and of kids. It’s important to have a good understanding of kids and community. We are so very fortunate.”

Abbott said the partnership and cooperation between the city and Post #17 is one of the most important things being brought to the table.

“We are going to make this 100th anniversary of the American Legion and the state American Legion Baseball Tournament one of the best that’s ever been held,” said Abbott. “People of our area need to understand that this is a prestigious tournament. And we are going to put on a great show.”

Post #17 members Billie Jo Powers and Richard Coccimiglio will serve as chairpersons of the program committee.

“It’s going to be the most important committee because that is going to be the first thing people will see,” said Abbott.

“This legion’s part of the community,” said Coccimiglio. “And to have the whole community come together to put on this event is going to be unbelievable. The same thing, the coordination that we have with our city manager, Herm, I mean it’s just been outstanding. Actually I don’t think we could have done it without that involvement that comes from the city. It comes from him personally because he knows what’s going on.”

Abbott noted that on Saturday, July 27, which is the premier game of the tournament next to the championship game, the DuBois American Legion will be playing.

“They get to host the premier game,” said Abbott. “Chuck Ferra is our head coach of the DuBois Legion team. We plan on having a big night. We might have some secret people coming in to throw out first balls and get some activities going.”

“I just think it’s going to be a great event night for our legion baseball program and good exposure for our kids, the community and, of course, Showers Field,” said Ferra. “Showers Field has been a crown jewel of the area here for a couple years now. We showed it off throughout the high school season, college season, Little League season and now Legion gets to kind of show it off a little bit. I’m really looking forward to it.”

In addition, the 2019 PA American Legion Sports Hall of Fame banquet will be held Friday, July 26, at DuBois Christian School.

“This is really for the vets, when you really think about it they represent all of the vets,” Suplizio said. “American Legion Baseball is good baseball. We hope the community will come out and support it, but I think this is just really another thing that we keep trying to do is bring these events for our citizens here for people to watch. It’s a little shot in the arm for the economy. People have to stay here. People are going to come watch the games. People are going to eat here, visit here.”

Schleiden said it has been approximately 20 years since the West hosted the tournament.

“We’ve only had 94 American Legion state baseball championships in the history of the state. The last one that was held in the West was held in St. Marys and the commander year was 1999-2000,” said Schleiden.

Others Post #17 members instrumental in making the idea become a reality were Commander Denny Knarr and John Fritz. Jonathan Wiess, PAL activity director, was thanked for signing the contract making the Post and the city the host as 100 years of The American Legion is celebrated.

“Baseball isn’t just a game. It’s life being played out on a field – a field of dreams – on diamonds of green, where players pursuing their dreams try to be the best they can be on the grandest stage of all – where men become boys and boys become men, all speaking one universal language without uttering a single word.”

Tom Tatum

H.J. Heinz III VAMC-Pittsburgh, PA

Ed Connell, VAVS Representative

I would like to give a little history of the ceramic shop and model trains at the Heinz VA (formerly the Aspinwall division) in Pittsburgh.

The resident men and women at Heinz were encouraged to participate in making ceramic houses and buildings as part of their therapy. They responded and many of such buildings were made with care. Jim Cristelli was the therapist in charge of the ceramic shop, and it was his idea to showcase their work in a setting with a model railroad. This concept goes back over 25 years and many pieces of their art work are ready for display.

Jim started a layout on a 4x8 sheet of plywood with donated trains and scenery pieces. Over a few years this grew to 6 sheets! Then with building and remodeling going on, the display went into storage. Sadly through much relocation, some of the items were misplaced or lost.

I have asked many times to have this brought back to show how the ceramic therapy worked for our veterans and their well-being. After much delay, leadership finally agreed and with the help of the Keystone + Mountain + Lakes Regional Council of Carpenters, a new train platform was built and erected in building #71. It goes around a staircase leading to the second floor. Apprentices did the work and a fine structure was the result! Now it falls on me and volunteer rail buffs to set up the platform. The veterans appreciate having their ceramic pieces on display!



We have some train equipment to get started but sadly much is still needed. Therefore, I am requesting donations of rolling stock (027) scenery items and monetary donations to bring the display up to shape to benefit the ceramics done by our hospitalized veterans. If you would like to donate, please send rolling stock or scenery items to me and monetary donations to American Legion VAVS Special Fund and mark in the memo space "TRAINS". This is a small way to honor our hospitalized veterans.

Pictured above is a picture from 2014 at Christmas showing some of the ceramics made by the patients. It is not the current display.

My thanks!

Ed Connell

AL VAVS Representative

H.J. Heinz III VAMC

31 Cobb Avenue

Pgh, PA 15205-2001

412-921-4106

412-897-6391

edandmary1@verizon.net

The American Legion School Award Medal Program

The School Award Medal Program places emphasis on the development of the six core qualities of active citizenship. It encourages the development of those ideals in young Americans in order to promote engaged citizenship. It offers recognition for those youth deemed most dedicated to the high qualities of citizenship and true Americanism.

BASIC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- 1) A committee appointed by a post commander should establish contact and build rapport with local schools.
- 2) Establish a series of talks with students and faculty to highlight the six qualities. Legionnaires should deliver these talks at the students' level of understanding.
- 3) Selection criteria and method should be decided well in advance of actual elections. Voting should be by secret ballot of the students and faculty with the post committee making the final selection.
- 4) The entire school community should be aware of and understand the program. Suitable, local publicity should be arranged to accommodate this. The sole purpose of the program is to promote wholesome ideas in active citizenship among youth. No trace of politics, sectarianism or favoritism should be attached to the program.
- 5) The medal presentation ceremony should take place in conjunction with a school's award or commencement ceremonies. A school-approved speaker from within The American Legion should speak on behalf of the award and lead that portion of the ceremony. Local veterans involved with the program should be enlisted to present the award.

QUALITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT COURAGE

Bravery in the face of opposition and danger; determination and force to do right without public applause regardless of personal advantage. A quality of the intellect.

PATRIOTISM

An ideal of loyal Americanism, religious tolerance, righteous freedom and the willingness to defend the U.S. Constitution against all enemies—foreign and domestic. Perhaps best defined in the American's Creed.

HONOR

Highly-developed moral character; moral excellence; strength and stability of character; high standards of conduct; devotion to duty; adherence to truth; keens sense of what is right; practice of healthy speech and thoughts.

SCHOLARSHIP

Attainments in school studies, quality of school work reflecting the fine traits of industry, perseverance, efficiency and intelligence.

LEADERSHIP

Ability to lead and to accomplish through group action; ability to work in harmony and in unison with other leaders in accomplishing group results; desire and ability to fill the voids in the lives of others caused by timidity, illness or other handicaps.

SERVICE

Kindness; unselfishness; fellowship; protection of the weak; promotion of the interests and the welfare of associates; and constructive aid for the promotion of education and community.

WHY CREATE THE AWARD PROGRAM IN YOUR POST

- Vested interest in America's youth
- Multi-faceted engagement
- Decline of civics, history and humanities
- Make active citizens of local students
- Student's school = natural social environment
- Engaged Legionnaires = topic experts
- Ongoing presence in community schools

Saluting Black Service Members for Black History Month 'We'll be back for you'



Ensign Jesse L. Brown, USN In the cockpit of an F4U-4 Corsair fighter, circa 1940. He was the first African-American Naval Aviator to see combat. Brown was shot down over North Korea.

On Dec. 4, 1950, Navy pilot Jesse Brown was shot down over North Korea.

In a violent crash, his Corsair fighter came to rest on a snowy mountainside behind enemy lines. The impact snapped the nose of his plane, pinning the ensign within the wreckage. Smoke appeared, the telltale sign of a fire. It was about 3 p.m., during one of the coldest winters on record.

Ten minutes earlier, Brown had been flying close air support to try to save U.S. soldiers and Marines who were surrounded at the Chosin Reservoir, outnumbered 10 to one. That's when a lucky shot from a Chinese Communist soldier hit his oil tank.

Now, trapped in his plane, Brown seemed destined to die alone, far from home. So he did the only thing he could: he looked to the sky and waved.

Circling overhead in a flight of Corsairs, Lt. Tom Hudner was tracking Brown's plight.

The two were wingmen in Fighter Squadron 32 and friends, though they hailed from different worlds. Hudner was a white New Englander from the country club scene. Brown was a Mississippi sharecropper who became the Navy's first black carrier pilot. At a time when the United States was still divided by segregation, the two were a model of brothers in arms.

Hudner eyed the trickling gray plume of smoke with horror. A rescue helicopter would never make it in time, so he cued the radio.

"I'm going in," he announced. Silence. The other pilots either didn't understand what Hudner was thinking, or they didn't want to encourage him. Their commander had laid down the law: any man who damaged his plane unnecessarily would face a court-martial.

But this wasn't just a pilot in distress or a faceless shipmate. It was Brown – his friend, a married man and the father of a 2-year-old girl.

Hudner cranked back the canopy, set the throttle and steered for Brown's crash site. What he was about to do had never been tried before and has never been repeated since. He was going to make a carrier landing on a mountainside.

Brown must have heard the navy-blue Corsair come screeching to earth, its

belly skidding against the rocks. He must have seen it plowing through the snow, its propellers bent back. He must have seen it lurch to a stop with a blast of powder. Even if he didn't see the number 205 on the nose, he knew who had come to save him. Above, an awed pilot spoke for everyone when he muttered, "It would be Tom."

"My God, it worked," Hudner thought as he slid off the wing, bound for his friend in a race against time. He found him shivering, obviously suffering from internal injuries.

Brown greeted Hudner with glassy eyes. "We've got to figure a way of getting out of here," he said.

Hudner tried to pull him from the wreck once, twice, but without result. His leg wouldn't budge; he was helplessly pinned. Yet Brown remained calm, an inspiration to Hudner.

Hudner moved to the nose of the plane, got on his hands and knees, and doused the fire by shoveling snow on it. Then he returned to the cockpit, took the scarf from around his neck and used it to wrap Brown's frozen hands. There was nothing more to do.

Side by side, the men waited for rescue.

As darkness stretched across the mountainside, the temperature plummeted. They watched as their squadron mates departed for their carrier, one by one, until the men on the ground were alone.

Brown was fading from his wounds, his eyelids becoming heavy. This can't be happening, Hudner thought. Brown's chin slumped to his chest but Hudner shook him awake. That's when Brown gave a final message to deliver to his wife: "Just tell Daisy how much I love her."

By the time the rescue helicopter flared onto the scene, Brown was gone.

Exhausted and defeated, Hudner headed for the helicopter. But he couldn't leave without a word. He turned and shouted to his departed friend, "We'll be back for you."

As the helicopter whisked Hudner to safety, he rode in silence. Not only had he lost a friend, but Brown had become first black U.S. naval officer to die in the war. Hudner was certain he had failed.

When he stepped onto the deck of his carrier, USS *Leyte*, an officer approached him with a summons to the bridge. In the shadow of Capt. T. U. Sisson, he braced for punishment. Instead, Sisson shook his hand and welcomed him back.

In a press release already wired from the ship, Sisson had praised Hudner's attempt, saying, "There has been no finer act of unselfish heroism in military history." The squadron leader concurred; there would be no court-martial.

Upon his return home, Hudner discovered that his courageous actions had inspired the nation. In April 1951, President Harry Truman awarded him the Medal of Honor, and Hudner used his fame to personally put Brown's widow through college.

Over the decades, closure eluded Hudner. Brown's remains were never repatriated and Hudner was unable to keep his promise to return for his friend. But in the summer of 2013, at 89, Hudner decided to attempt the impossible one last time. Against all advice, he traveled to North Korea, where he met with a senior colonel of the North Korean People's Army. With the cameras of global media rolling, Hudner asked his former enemies to help search for Brown's remains.

At first, the colonel was silent. Then he glanced at his notes, cleared his voice and began to read a prewritten reply from the nation's new 30-year-old supreme leader, Kim Jong-un.

Kim said he was impressed that Hudner had come so far, after so long, to keep a promise to a friend. He granted approval for his army to resume the search for the remains of missing U.S. servicemen, beginning with Jesse Brown.

Today, over 65 years after Brown's death, Hudner waits with renewed hope. He knows it may take years, even decades, for anyone to locate two wrecked Corsairs in those desolate mountains. But someday, it will happen. Tom Hudner will bring his wingman home.

How to start a Junior Shooting Sports Club at your post

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program teaches youth rifle safety and procedure and lets children participate in an Olympic skill sport while fostering healthy competition. All interested youths under 18 years old (or high school seniors no older than 20) are welcome, regardless of gender or physical ability.

Shooters are trained to use a .177 air rifle, and levels vary from beginners learning safety basics to winners of the Legion-affiliated National Championship, which consists of regional champs competing in a shoulder-to-shoulder match.

1. Determine Your Goals

Junior Shooting Sports can be an effective and fun way to get youth and Legionnaires involved with your post. Some of your goals for the program may include:

- Educate young people about firearm safety.
- Introduce the shooting sports to community members and educate them about shooting.
- Harness shooting sports to help young people develop leadership, discipline, concentration, sportsmanship and responsibility.

2. Identify Leaders

Form a committee of Legionnaires dedicated to researching and organizing the activity. Reach out to your Legion Junior Shooting Sports program chairman, who can help guide committee members through the process, and connect your post with other active Junior Shooting Sports groups in your region.

The shooting club adult leader(s) should be qualified and certified to instruct basic rifle safety and marksmanship. (Visit the USA Shooting or the Civilian Marksmanship Program websites for more information on coach certification.)

Other Legionnaire volunteers should take part as assistant instructors.

A manual for adult leaders is at the Junior Shooting Sports Program's website under Resources.

3. Get Insured

Although Legion Junior Shooting Sports Clubs have had zero rifle-related injuries, shooting is a sport with inherent risks. It is imperative that your post have liability coverage for this activity.

While many existing post insurance policies cover these activities, if the club practices at another site you need to check that facility's insurance coverage. If your post coverage is not adequate, you may wish to look into an additional rider to your own policy or specific shooter's coverage.

4. Select Facilities

One of the advantages of using air rifles is that ranges can be set up easily in most facilities.

The major requirement is that a shooter be 10 yards from the target. Some space for pellet traps and backstops should be left behind the targets. Walls should be covered to prevent damage—moving quilts or canvas tarps will suffice. Shooters should have about four feet of space between them.

Each shooter needs a pair of safety glasses, an air rifle, pellets and a target trap. In addition, your post may want to provide spotting scopes or mats for prone firing.

5. Fund Your Program

If you need to raise funds for a program, consider charging a registration fee or club membership dues or requiring participants to bring their own pellets and targets.

Consider visiting or sending out mailers to local businesses, particularly sporting goods stores, which may be interested in sponsoring the program.

Fundraising events, such as an adult shooting competition with entry fees, also are popular ways to boost the program and can gain community goodwill.

6. Recruit Participants

To attract participants, consider making presentations or passing out Legion Junior Shooting Sports brochures at local youth groups, such as Boy and Girl Scouts or 4-H.

7. Promote the Program

Participants' parents need to be on board. Your post could hold an informational meeting for the parents, and encourage them to become involved as volunteers.

Community leaders and school officials can help gain support from the general public. Invite the community to public competitions through radio and television ads, and leverage social media, such as Facebook's events pages.

8. Expand

As your Junior Shooting Sports Club grows, think about going beyond fundamental marksmanship training.

You could offer Qualification Awards programs, host local competitions and even have select participants compete to attend the Legion's National Championships at the Olympic Training Center/USA Shooting Range Facilities in Colorado Springs, Colo

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Kennard Coons

The Internal Organization Committee met at Department Headquarters on August 2018. Committee members were present: Chairman Kennard Coons, Eastern Section Vice Chairmen Craig Kauffman and Western Section Vice Chairmen George Fleming and Richard Zipfel.

The Committee reviewed the current Bylaws and decided to submit amendments to Constitution and Bylaws in regards to the following which were considered and approved at the Department Convention in July.

- Article XI – Home Associations, Section 5: in regards to voting members of the home association and in regards to meeting requirements
- Article III – Department Standing Committees, Section 1: to add the missing Department standing committees Distinguished Service Award Committee and POW/MIA Committee
- Article III – Department Standing Committees, Section 4: in regards to the number of vice chairmen serving on the Legion College East Committee in order to fix a discrepancy
- Article III – Department Standing Committees, Section 6: in regards to the number of vice chairmen serving on the Fundraising Committee in order to fix a discrepancy
- Article III – Department Standing Committees, Section 11: in regards to the number of vice chairmen serving on the Legislative Committee in order to fix a discrepancy

The Committee will continue to review the Bylaws and ensure that current operations remain compliant. Thank you Commander Vollrath for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.



'We had to do something'

The American Legion

On Jan. 25, the longest government shutdown came to an end, stopping what had been more than a three-week gap since 800,000 federal workers had been paid.

Among those were more than 41,000 active-duty members of the U.S. Coast Guard. The American Legion was able to provide more than \$1 million in non-repayable grants to approximately 1,713 Coast Guard families with 3,170 children.

But across the nation, American Legion Family members also did their part to assist local Coast Guardsmen, raising funds, providing free meals and delivery much-needed household items and gift cards to those servicemembers.

Edward C. Headman Post 217 in Wyandotte, Mich., was one of those posts stepping up, purchasing 33 \$100 Visa gift cards to distribute to all the personnel at Coast Guard Sector Detroit. The post also teamed up with Downriver for Veterans to collect enough food and toiletries from the community to fill up a box truck that also was presented to the Coast Guardsmen.

For Post 217 Commander Mike Huber, the cause was very personal. His son-in-law, Boatswain's Mate 1 Gerry Rohrer, is an instructor at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Yorktown, Va.

"It really gets emotional. It's our oldest daughter, and they're struggling," Huber said prior to the end of the government shutdown. "He said his biggest battle every day is he goes in there with a couple hundred kids, young recruits, with no money, no income. They've got car payments. They've got mortgages. This stuff is real. It is difficult as a parent to see one of your kids go through that." In addition to the gift cards, Post 217's American Legion Family also helped provide food, laundry detergent, personal hygiene items, diapers, paper products, juices and other items.

Huber said the fundraising and collection efforts included educating those in the community that Coast Guard members weren't getting paid because they were under the Department of Homeland Security, not the Department of Defense. "No one had a clue. They just presumed they were getting paid," he said. "That's what got the ball going. And it just kept growing."

The following are other examples of American Legion Family members coming to the aid of their Coast Guard brothers and sisters, as well as federal workers, during the shutdown.

California. In Vallejo, **American Legion Post 550** moved quickly to help area Coast Guardsmen. The post presented \$2,000 in \$50 gift cards to members of U.S. Coast Guard Station Vallejo. "We needed to do a little bit to help. We had to do something for these guys," Post 550 member Gary Blackburn told the *Times-Herald*.

Vallejo City Councilmember Hakeem Brown attended the presentation, which was made to a Coast Guard captain representing the Coast Guard station. "He was very thankful," Brown told the *Times-Herald*. "He appreciated the fact that (the Vallejo veterans) were trying to make sure they (the Coast Guard members) were being taken care of."

Post 550 also helped facilitate 50 Coast Guardsmen applying for American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants and plans on collecting items from a wish list provided by the Coast Guard that included items such as diapers and toiletries.

Delaware. In Millsboro, **American Legion Auxiliary Unit 28** purchased approximately \$1,500 in Walmart gift cards for area Coast Guard members. The intention for the gift cards was "so people can get their food there and whatever, and gift cards from Wawa so they will be able to put gas in their cars to go where they need to go," Linda Shelly, president of Unit 28 Auxiliary, told the *Delaware State News*.

Georgia. **American Legion Post 184's Legion Family** in Savannah collected funds and food for Coast Guardsmen, forming collection spots along the street using buckets and boots.

Maine. A breakfast fundraiser hosted by **Charles E. Sherman Jr. Post 36** in Boothbay Harbor raised \$2,000 for members of the Coast Guard. "The community has come together so well to fill the gap," Post 36 Commander David Patch told the *Boothbay Register*. "We recognized that we all had to step up within a couple of weeks after Washington demonstrated their inability to get their act together."

Adam Smart, Officer-in-Charge of Coast Guard Station Boothbay Harbor, told the *Boothbay Register* that "We always knew this was a special community. But we've been taken aback by the outpouring of support. It's overwhelming. A simple 'thank you' is not going to cut it."

Members of **Stewart Morrill American Legion Post 35** in South Portland collected more than \$800 for members of the Coast Guard's Sector Northern New England, which serves Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

And in Camden, **Post 30** donated the proceeds from its pancake breakfast to the Coast Guard despite the shutdown having ended two days earlier.

Post 30 member Jeff Sukeforth told the *Penobscot Bay Pilot* that the effort was "one veteran to another. We want to do what we can for them."



Michigan. In Hancock, **Alfred Erickson Post 186** collected household items for the more than a dozen Coast Guard families in the area impacted by the shutdown. "They're continuing to serve, they're serving our country and they keep going on, and we should at least be able to help them out as much as we possibly can, take a little bit of a strain off of them," Post 186 Commander Ronald Olson told WLUC-6.

In Grand Haven, **American Legion Post 28** provided free meals on Wednesdays and Fridays to personnel from Grand Haven Coast Guard Station. "This community is Coast Guard," Post 28 Adjutant Larry Lambert told WZZM-13. "That's who we are."

In Marysville, **J. Edward Mallore Post 449** collected non-perishable foods and toiletries, and gift cards from Kroger, Meijer and gas stations to distribute to members of the Coast Guard.

"We're veterans. To us, that's our main reason for doing this," Post 449 Adjutant Andie Semrow told the *Times Herald*. "Veterans (are) in need, and we want to help veterans. Whatever we can spare to get them what they need, to get them through the hard times that they have right now."

And in Bay City, **American Legion Post 18** teamed with Bay Veterans Foundation and the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 103 to collect food items, toiletries and gift cards for Coast Guardsmen. Post 18 also offered Coast Guard members and their families a free meal during the post's Friday fish fries.

New York. **Post 1757** in Sackets Harbor collected food and toiletries for those hurt by the shutdown.

Continued on page 13

Four Chaplains Day marks anniversary of heroic chaplains' last sacrifice for others

Four Chaplains' Day is Feb. 3 in honor of the three Army Chaplains who gave their lives to save servicemen aboard the SS Dorchester.

It's been more than 75 years since the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was hit by German submarine U-223 while transporting 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers to Greenland.

On Feb. 3, 1943, four Army chaplains on board gave their lives to save others. "It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," recalled one survivor, quoted in an Army history.

The ship was hit below the water line with a torpedo, initially killing and wounding many men on board.

Lt. George Fox, a Methodist; Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister; and Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest, acted quickly to calm the men and distribute life jackets.

When they ran out of life jackets, the four chaplains removed their own and gave them away as well. As the ship sank, the chaplains could be seen, arms linked, on the deck, and heard, singing hymns and offering prayers.

Each man was determined to serve God and his country, according to the National Museum of the U.S. Army website.

They were among the 672 men who died that day.

Lt. George Fox, Lt. Alexander Goode, Lt. John Washington and Lt. Clark Poling tended to their fellow servicemen when the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was struck by a German submarine, Feb. 3, 1943.

Fox, raised Catholic, fell away from his religion and embraced the Methodist church after serving in World War I, becoming a reverend and then state chaplain of Vermont before serving as an Army chaplain in World War II.

Goode applied first to the Navy, where he was rejected. But after Pearl Harbor, the Army accepted his chaplain application, and he asked repeatedly to be deployed overseas. He finally was, aboard the Dorchester.

Washington, who lost much of his eye sight in a BB gun accident as a child, was turned down by the Navy. He then went to the Army, where he covered his bad eye both times when reading the eye chart. They didn't notice, and he was accepted.

Poling was the seventh generation of his family to become a minister, and he signed up to be an Army chaplain despite his father's concerns.

When the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was struck by a German



submarine, Feb. 3, 1943, four Army chaplains spread out among the Soldiers, calming the frightened, tending the wounded and guiding the disoriented toward safety.

Poling asked his father to pray for him before boarding the Dorchester, according to information from the Army.

"Not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty ... never be a coward ... and have the strength, courage and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate."

Each chaplain was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Cross and a Purple Heart in 1944, but many thought they deserved Medals of Honor. To work around the medal's requirement of heroism under fire, Congress authorized a Special Medal for Heroism.

The Four Chaplains' Medal was awarded to the chaplains' descendants by Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brucker on Jan. 18, 1961.

In 1948, Congress designated Feb. 3 as "Four Chaplains' Day," in honor of the four brave men whose loyalty to both their religions and their country shined bright that day in 1943.

The Field of Four Chaplains on Fort Benning, Ga., is named in honor of the four Army chaplains who lost their lives during the sinking of the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester in 1943.

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We had to do something cont.

"I know if I wasn't getting a paycheck ... you get strapped for cash and you've got to keep a roof over your head," Sons of The American Legion Past National Vice Commander Ray Jarvis, a member of Squadron 1757, told WWNY-7. "Sometimes food seems to come last in the order of processes of keeping a roof over your head, paying your heat, especially this time of the year."

Pennsylvania. Post 903 in Tannersville collected clothing, toiletries, baby diapers and more for members of the Coast Guard in Philadelphia. The post spent approximately \$1,000 to buy the items.

"For people who have kids and everything and with money not coming in, I've got to assume that they need this badly," Post 903 member Bill Hamilton told WNEP-16.

South Carolina. American Legion Post 114 in Georgetown teamed with other veterans service organizations to collect food, gift cards and monetary donations.

Texas. American Legion Post 176 in Presidio worked with the West Texas Food Bank and Big Bend Family Crisis Center to deliver food to federal workers impacted by the shutdown. **District 16 Legionnaires**, including those from **Post 79 in Alpine**, also teamed up to help deliver food to nearly 200 workers in Alpine and at Big Bend National Park.

And in Houston, **American Legion Post 490** hosted a fundraiser put on by USO Houston and the Tejano Veterans Association to help support Coast Guard families impacted by the shutdown. More than 200 families were helped by the event.

Virginia. More than 60 federal workers and their families attended a free meal hosted by **American Legion Post 290** in Stafford County that included smoked turkey with mashed potatoes and green beans, beef tips over rice, homemade macaroni and cheese, and dozens of desserts.

"This was a lovely gesture," federal worker Kristina Hudgins told *The Free Lance-Star*. "It kind of restores your faith in humanity when you're in the midst of something like this, and you know your community is there for you." And though the shutdown was over, **American Legion Post 52's Legion Family** in Newport News still hosted a free homemade meal on Jan. 27 for Coast Guard members and their families. The public also was invited to attend the meal; money raised from their attendance will be used to help the Coast Guardsmen in the future.

"There's still a need to help them. Their hardships are not going to be solved overnight," American Legion Auxiliary Unit 25 President Terry Devlin told WTKR-3. "We're all one big family and that's what you do - you help your family."

Washington. In Port Townsend, **Marvin G. Shields Post 26** hosted a meal for the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Osprey, which is based at Port Townsend's Boat Haven. And they have collected more than \$2,000 to support the Coast Guard.



NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman Carl Curtis

The American Legion's National Security Commission is at the forefront of advocating for a strong national defense, viable foreign policy, homeland security and a global military force to safeguard America. Additionally, we advocate providing support to the men and women in uniform who risk their lives to protect and maintain our freedom.

At the 100th National Convention, 25 new resolutions were introduced that were of concern to the American Legion and relative to our principles and objectives. A few of the more important resolutions addressed the military quality of life standards, national defense funding and the fight against cyber security threats.

During the 58th Annual Washington Conference, speakers provided an in depth presentation on the national security outlook that included; a Selective Service brief, defense budgeting and cyber security. Additionally, a foreign policy summit was conducted to discuss global issues that affect the United States' relations with China, Japan, Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East.

During the Spring Meetings of the National Executive Committee (NEC), five resolutions on topics of national security were considered and three were approved as policy of the organization. The Commission Chairman also provided the NEC with an update on the North Korea denuclearization and discussed the current situation in regards to our relationship with China, Iran, Syria and Russia.

READINESS

Readiness is a continuous challenge. The Department of Defense is facing a strategic choice of whether to focus on modernization for high-tech conflicts with China and Russia or to improve readiness in order to improve the nation's ongoing conflicts and crisis response

In 2013, as a result of sequestration, our military's overall readiness took a major hit. As a result, the services were forced to cut facility maintenance, international exercises and significant training activities and the services have been attempting to catch up ever since.

Our current Administration emphasized readiness in the 2017 and fiscal 2018 budgets. Nonetheless, readiness data continues to be conflicting. Some areas have shown improvement while other areas remain depressed and in need of significant improvements.

High readiness is desirable in forces and equipment. However, readiness is also expensive and highly perishable-it must be renewed constantly! In the new DOD strategy being developed for 2019 and beyond, the services hope to improve all three goals - expand forces, improve readiness and increase modernization but the fiscal future is uncertain and they will likely have to make difficult trade-offs.

In 2018, for the first time since 2005, the US Army fell short of its recruiting goal by approximately 6500 soldiers in spite of pouring an extra \$200 million into bonuses and approving some additional waivers for bad conduct and health issues. The Army National Guard and Army Reserve also fell short of their goals by more than 12,000 and 5,000 respectively. However, the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force all met their recruiting goals.

DEFENSE BUDGETING

.Fiscal 19 NDAA - The 2019 defense budget has been approved by Congress and signed by President Trump in record time, with a 2.6 percent pay increase and a 716 billion dollar national defense budget. This is the earliest the defense budget has been passed in 40 years. Additionally, the military end strength will increase by 16,400 across the active-duty and reserve forces.

MILITARY AND VETERAN QUALITY OF LIFE

Significant changes, in TRICARE, took place in 2018. The National Staff attended monthly meetings with senior defense officials from the Defense Health Agency to discuss a series of major TRICARE changes that were implemented and went into effect in January 1. The changes included; fee changes for almost all beneficiaries, a new plan name, a new regional map and new regional contractors.

Impacts for ALL users

Beneficiaries had the opportunity to enroll in or change their TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select coverage during the "annual open enrollment period" from 12 November - 10 December 2018 for coverage that took effect on January 1, 2019. Failure to enroll in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select during the aforementioned period resulted in the termination of coverage for civilian care. For those who failed to enroll, they can now only receive medical care at a military clinic or hospital on a space-available basis.

TRICARE's annual fee will now operate on a calendar year (1 Jan-31 Dec)...NOT a fiscal year as in the past. Additionally, for those enrolled, on Dec 31, 2018 all dental and vision coverage was replaced with the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) if the beneficiaries enrolled in the plan...it was not automatic!

Active-duty family members who use TRICARE Prime saw no major changes as long as they remained in the aforementioned plan. Also, starting in January 2019, active-duty families and those who retire from active-duty will no longer be able to switch, at will, between plans. Instead, they must wait for the annual fall "open enrollment" period or experience a "qualifying life event" to move their plans. NO list of what a qualifying event has been determined and released by TRICARE yet. In February 2018, TRICARE pharmacy co-payments changed for ALL beneficiaries, except for active-duty service members (ADSMs), dependent survivors of (ADSMs) and medically retired service members and their dependents. More specific details can be found on the TRICARE website.

What is your post doing in the community?

Is your post promoting American Legion Programs?

Did you take pictures at your last event?

Send in your pictures and story to Shannon Kyle at pa_legionpr@msn.com. Get your event published in the Keystone News.

When you send in your pictures *please* include the names of the individuals in the picture. Also make sure you include some information about the pictures including the who, what, where, when, why and how.

Ask yourself some of these questions ...

Who is involved? Who is in the pictures? Who was the event held for? Who planned the event? Who attended the event? Who benefited from the event?

What is the event about? What did you do there? What was raised or accomplished?

Where did you hold the event?

When did you start planning the event?

When was it held?

Why did you decide to have the event?

How did you plan the event sponsored by the post?

The Keystone News wants to share your story.

Post 15 to Rebuild

Representatives of Joe Stickell American Legion Post 15 presented a first attempt at meeting Waynesboro land-development regulations.

The legion gave the Waynesboro Planning Commission land-development plans for a rebuilt post headquarters at 63 E. Main St., where a fire destroyed the earlier structure in December 2017.



The post was required to create a land-development plan because the current proposal would be larger than the earlier building's footprint. The 18,875-square-foot building is planned to be 540 square feet larger than the destroyed building.

Post Commander Don Kauffman Jr. expressed frustration with rebuilding within the insurance company's payout and addressing what he perceives as red tape from the municipality.

"We are kind of at our wits' end. ... It has been an uphill battle," he told the planning commission.

Ray Harbaugh of Callas Contractors said the legion's leadership considered whether to squeeze into the earlier footprint, but worried that operational efficiencies

would be lost in the process. The affected area is the kitchen.

Planning commission members said they will recommend that the Waynesboro Borough Council waive the requirement for a stormwater-management plan.

"It's substantially the same as it was before, with a corner squared off here and a corner squared off there," planning commission member Jon Fleagle said of the new building's design.

Fleagle pointed out the newly created areas of the structure mostly replace asphalt, so the impervious area didn't change. He said stormwater would flow similarly to the manner it did previously.

The Waynesboro Borough Council will be the entity to determine whether the legion must create a stormwater plan showing how water will be collected, routed and managed.

The post has more than 900 members who are veterans and another 1,200-plus social members.

Plans for the \$2.5 million project call for seating for 50 people at the bar, 48 people in a casual dining area and 260 people in the banquet room.

The legion also is seeking a time extension on the one-year requirement to start construction on what is considered a "nonconforming use" in the downtown business district.

Its leaders spoke out against the borough's \$12,000 land-use permit fee, then three businessmen offered to pay it.

"Offering care means being a companion, not a superior. It doesn't matter whether the person we are caring for is experiencing cancer, the flu, dementia, or grief.

If you are a doctor or surgeon, your expertise and knowledge comes from a superior position. But when our role is to be providers of care, we should be there as equals."

— Judy Cornish

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE

Chairman Lawrence Maggi

The Law Enforcement Committee has not met this year. We will be meeting on Wednesday Jan 23, 2019 to select the Police officer and fireman for the 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 2018 camp was held again at York College in York, Pennsylvania from June 10-16, 2019. We have been working on getting more participation in this program. 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 2019 and will again be held at York College in York, Pennsylvania from Sunday, June 9 to Saturday, June 15, 2019.

HOSPITAL & CONVALESCENCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Edward Connell

The Department Hospital Tour went very well this year. It was well received in all our VA and State Home facilities. One thing to consider in the future is our volunteer men and women that are representatives and deputies of all these sites. Our volunteer force is aging, and we need to look to support these people in the form of younger volunteers to bolster the ranks across the state.

Additionally, there are multiple tours occurring simultaneously with the Official Department Tour. Out of respect for our Department leadership, this should not take place. If at all possible, please consider scheduling these other events before, after, or on a different day than ours. It would most appreciated by the Department leadership.

As Chairman of this Committee, I personally would like to thank all those who attended the events and tours in your part of the state. The Department Officials definitely appreciated, and more importantly, the patients in these facilities enjoy so much meeting and greeting new faces. It definitely brightens their day to speak to someone new and share their experiences and opinions.

Furthermore, as Committee Chairman I would also like to thank personally the volunteer representatives and deputies of both the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary for their time, dedication, and commitment to our hospitalized Veteran men and women in the facilities throughout the state. The services they provide to bring comfort and kindness to all our residents is second to none.

Again, I thank everyone involved to brighten the day of our deserving veterans.



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Department Headquarters - PO Box 2324, Harrisburg, PA 17105
Phone: 717-730-9100 Fax: 717-975-2836
email: hq@pa-legion.com www.pa-legion.com

Academic achievements are important to recognize

Research has proven that recognition of one's efforts is more highly valued than money. Imagine the profound effects on an ordinary student who is recognized for simply doing his or her best – an increased level of self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment and respect among the peer group. Such a feeling of accomplishment may carry forward throughout their lives and ultimately improve our world as a whole.



Creating a recognition program to honor students for any number of academic achievements is easy when you have buy in from the school and reach out to the students. Recognition programs are designed to award all types of students (e.g., honor students, student leaders, most-improved students, those who have contributed greatly to the school or community).

The most important element is to create a program that will give the student a platform to be recognized for their accomplishment. You will want the student to fully realize the value of their accomplishment.

If you plan on establishing a recognition program then consider the following: establish rules, criteria and procedures; plan the calendar; determine your budget; allow for the recognition of many; promote the award through the school and local media; invite the students and parents to meetings and events.

On behalf of Post 330 Membership we are proud to present to Greene County Community and The American Legion Family, these fine students and their academic achievements made possible by their devotion to a higher education. Congratulations to the students and their sponsors.

The photo was taken on December 29, 2018 at the The American Legion James Farrell Post 330. Board members and sponsors are standing in the back row: (left to right) Chris Christy, Barry Watson, Michael Desrosiers, Danny Debolt, Michael Belding. Scholarship Student Recipients are sitting in the front row: (left to right) Tyler Christy, Bryanna Mcewen, Matthew Desrosiers, Jesse Belding, William Belding.

Tyler Christy is currently attending West Virginia University, Bryanna Mcewen attending Westmoreland Community College.

Matthew Desrosiers is taking on a dual enrollment both his undergraduate as well as his graduate studies at Waynesburg University. Matthew had a workload of 21 credits and earning a 3.58 GPA. He will be repeating this same semester credits in the spring of 2019.

Jesse Belding is attending Seton Hill University and is a junior. She has been selected for a five year Masters Program for Hospitality and Tourism.

William Belding is attending Penn State Behrend Campus; he will be graduating in May of 2019.

We are very proud of all of our recipients.