Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons gathered for the Saturday Banquet at the Fall Conference.

Department Commander Rhoads assisting Immediate PDC Linden Dixon with the presentation of the National Daniel J. O’Connor Americanism Trophy to chairman Bill Feasemyer. This is the highest recognition by National to one department that has the best Americanism program in the nation.

Department Commander Rhoads and Legion College Director John Kokernak presenting Ron Hesson the “Spirit” shirt awarded for his dedication to the last legion college.

Department President Nancy Harting enjoying dinner with Terry during the fall conference.

Past National Presidents Anna Gear and Peggy Thomas enjoying a lighter moment with Auxiliary Membership Chair, Cheryl Shine.

Department Commander Gerald Rhoads addressing the Legionnaires at the membership meeting.
Who We Are, What We Do

I sincerely hope you had an enjoyable, happy and safe holiday season.

We are currently 6 months into our 2015 membership campaign and I extend my congratulations to every Post that continues to obtain the required number of members for each award date and especially to each post that has already achieved 100%.

At the July convention, I alluded to the premise that every Legionnaire knew at least one veteran that was not a member of the American Legion and asked that everyone recruit at least one member. Many of you have done just that and I thank you. I also requested that every Post conduct at least one program which promoted Patriotism and Honor.

The four pillars on which our organization was founded and continues to support are: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, A Strong National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth.

During the months since our department convention, Virginia Legionnaires have been active in various programs which provide tribute to those veterans who previously served and programs which support and honor current and former veterans. These programs include: Post 24 hosting a reception for a recipient of the Medal of Honor; Post’s holding ceremonies on Veterans Day and Post’s participating in Wreaths Across America. The service officers in the Department of Virginia are diligently working to assist veterans with their claims.

The American Legion believes in a strong military and believes that Congress should fully fund our Armed Forces.

We are well into the current school year and several Post are actively working with the schools regarding: High school Oratorical and JROTC Drill Teams, preparing for the Department competition which will be held during the Spring Conference. Middle School students are submitting “I like living in America because...essays”. Boy Scout day, sponsored by Post 164, Grundy, Virginia was an event vastly enjoyed by numerous Boy Scouts.

The American Legion Riders were instrumental in raising over One Million dollars for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Many families, with minor children in the home, have received grants for temporary family assistance (TFA). Thanks to the Legionnaires who investigated these requests.

These are just a few of the many things we do as an organization, within the four pillars on which we stand: VA&R, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

We truly are an organization of Veterans’ who continue to serve!

“That’s why I’m a Legionnaire For God and country, To serve and care That’s why I’m a Legionnaire.

To make my country A better place, And meet my neighbor Face to face, To help the distressed, Their cross to bear, That’s why I’m a Legionnaire.

To face with courage The coming day, And teach my children How to pray, To make my flag A symbol rare, That’s why I’m a Legionnaire.

And when our Great Commander Calls And taps are sounded For each and all, Forget not to breathe a prayer, And thank the Lord, I’m a Legionnaire.

—Author Unknown

If you have not renewed your membership for “2015”, please do so today. You truly are a value to The American Legion.

Halfway Through

As we start a new calendar year, we are already in the second half of our American Legion year. Now is when the rubber has to hit the road and we get our posts ready for our year end.

Membership is on the radar screen and I am encouraging each of you to go out and renew members and bring new ones in to our organization.

Commander Rhoads is doing an excellent job of representing you in all of his endeavors. I am asking you to do likewise and support him with your attention to membership renewals, new ones and reinstatements.

As spring approaches, the posts will be looking forward to doing their annual reports. Now would be a good time to start organizing the activities you have participated in, whether it is Children and Youth, National Security, funeral details, baseball, Veterans Day and Memorial Day activities just to name a few. This makes it easier for you when the reports are received and then it is time to fill them out.

With the issues we have with our VA Healthcare systems and National Security issues, the information you supply is what gives us a booming voice in Washington, D.C. We were heard last year with the debacle at our VA hospitals and the gross mismanagement that was going on. This fight is not over yet and we need you to keep it in the front of our elected Congressman and Senators. These problems were not created in a day and cannot be fixed in a day. Again, keep these issues out front!

We are in need of contributors to our Legionnaire newspaper. When you conduct a program or a special event please send a photo and short write up to Erica or myself. I have a couple of posts who send articles in religiously. I have been asked why they get so much press. My response is they send the information in to me.

On another note, I am always willing to attend your functions if you would like for me to attend, please contact me and I’ll try to make it happen.

VA & R

In 1919 The American Legion was founded on four pillars. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation being number one. Since then the American Legion has maintained an ongoing concern and commitment to veterans and their families. The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of the US Veteran Bureau now known as the Department of Veterans Affairs, and has continued to be an advocate for veterans rights. The American’s VA & R program provides a network of American Legion service officers at the department district and post level to help veterans, their dependents and survivors apply for any federal or state benefits to which they may be entitled. These are the individuals who should be consulted when any question arises regarding veterans benefits or claims for these benefits.

For God And Country
—Willie D Ransom
VA&R Chairman Department of Virginia

Adjutant’s Log

Dale D. Chapman
Department Adjutant

From the Rostrum

Gerald Rhoads
Department Commander
Greetings Legions

Greetings my Legion brothers and sisters in the name of the one true and living God. Our National Chaplain has set forth a theme for us to follow this year. The theme is “Back to God”.

From the beginning the American Legion family has pledged service to God and country. This pledge has continually emphasized the spiritual foundation of our freedom.

I believe that a spiritual awakening of the people of this nation is needed in order to preserve a right of reading. Live a life of love, for God is love and we should live a life more and more like Him every day.

Malachi 3:12 says “And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. Legionnaires, this will only happen when we turn back to God and follow in His light.

The Bible tells us, God is at the door knocking; if any man hear His voice and open the door, He will come in unto you, and will dine with you and you with Him.

I’m asking all Post, and Districts Chaplains to attend Legion College Chaplains class this year.

My thanks go out to Post 79 South Hill, and Post 74 Charlottesville for their generous donation to the Chapel of Four Chaplains.

If your post wish to make a donation to this worthy cause, please bring it to our Spring Conference. Look to see you there.

Post Everlasting

ACKERMAN, ADRIAN J (86)
ACKES, BOYD S (3)
ALLEN, LLOYD W (21)
ASBURY, FRANKLIN E (14)
ASHBERRY, JOHN E SR (83)
ASHLEY, ROBERT S (21)
BAILEY, CLARENCE A (8)
BEAUFORD, TRENT N (7)
BEGG, JACOB (21)
BOONE, MELVIN D SR (21)
BOOTH, JAMES A (141)
BOUNDS, JOEL S (90)
BOUNDS, JOHN E (240)
BOWMAN, FRANK B (139)
BRADBERRY, LISA J (9)
BRYANT, MALHON S (274)
BURNS, ANDREW D (43)
BUTCHER, JERRY G (128)
BYRD, JAMES R (149)
CAMPBELL, CLARENCE (329)
CAMPBELL, EDWARD F (252)
CANNON, CARROLL (73)
CAPP, DENNIS D (327)
CASE, RAYMOND (180)
CHAMBERS, WILLIE E (190)
CHANEY, LEWIS A (8)
CHUMBLEY, EUGENE W (7)
CLARK, HERMAN M SR (194)
CLEARY, BEN C (84)
CLINTON, MAURICE R (190)
COFFEY, JERRY L (126)
CONNOR, M C (182)
DAVENPORT, ERNEST P (141)
DEAN, DELEON W (200)
DELL, LADDIE G (227)
DUPTT, ROBERT F (146)
DOWDY, ROBERT M (90)
DOZIER, WILLIAM J (190)
DRISKILL, WYATT D (16)
DUFFEY, JOSEPH S (290)
DUNCAN, DAVID R (72)
DUNCAN, THURMAN A (42)
DUNN, WILLIAM H (46)
EALY, MAURICE L (110)
ELDRIDGE, THOMAS R SR (42)
ELLER, JOSEPH C (245)
ENGLAND, DONALD (182)
EVANS, HUDDNALL D (86)
EVANS, ROBERT T (340)
EVANS, WILLIAM T JR (120)
FARHOLT, ALVIN P (39)
FINCHOLM, ALBERT L SR (327)
FITZGERALD, MARVIN D (29)
FLANNAGAN, ALLEN W JR (146)
FLEMMING, WILLIAM R (12)
FRASIER, HOBART H (265)
FREEMAN, WILLIE L (190)
FULLER, RALPH L (3)
GOFF, GEORGE B (327)
GORDON, ANDREW J (3)
GORMAN, JAMES P (141)
GOUGH, WILLIAM P JR (233)
GRAY, GEORGE H (35)
GREENE, NELSON E SR (129)
GREENE, RALEIGH JR (67)
GREGORY, JAMES E (105)
GROVE, FRANK T (84)
GUICE, STANLEY (210)
GUNTER, CARL R (42)
HAMILTON, LEVI B (99)
HARRIGAN, RAYMOND F JR (162)
HARRIS, BENJAMIN T (72)
HARRIS, WILLIE B (284)
HARRISON, MILTON T (54)
HASKINS, JOHNNIE J (31)
HICKMAN, JOHN (260)
HOGGARD, WILLIAM E (25)
HUDGINS, PAUL O (248)
HUFFER, JOHN L (340)
HUFFER, W B (125)
IRVIN, ROBERT W (62)
JENKINS, NELSON B (177)
JENNINGS, MARY LENNIE (22)
JOHNSON, GERALD (60)
JOHNSON, JAMES (110)
JOHNSON, JOHNNIE J JR (260)
JOHNSON, JOSEPH E (67)
JONES, TROY L (120)
JONES, WILLIAM W (57)
KANTLIS, JAMES T (361)
KIEDERLING, IRA R (280)
KNIGHTON, GUY W JR (141)
KOPKO, JOHN R (304)
KUYKENDALL, JUNIOR R (340)
KYLE, WILLIAM H (9)
LACERDA, EDMUNDO J (1776)
LANTZ, KENNETH (84)
LARGE, JONATHAN R (1097)
LAYMAN, BENJAMIN S (92)
LEAZER, HUGH F (247)
LESTER, JACKSON (164)
LIGON, OVERTON L (215)
LINDSEY, ORVILLE (16)
LITTLEJOHN, MAX C (325)
LONG, JOHN T (166)
LOWERY, LUTHER JR W (21)
LUMB, JAMES C (320)
LYTHE, MARSHALL H (340)
MAGNO, WILLIAM (67)
MAYS, CARROLL A SR (325)
MCCALLISTER, WILLIAM R SR (126)
MCCLELLAND, CECIL (265)
MCADDEN, WALTER W (25)
MCFAREWALL, GEORGE R (7)
MEADOR, CLAY (85)
MEADE, CLAY (85)
MEALER, JERRY N (325)
MILLIGAN, DONALD C (125)
MILLER, HARRY W (14)
MINTER, ROBERT (141)
MONMIRTH, DAYMOND E (327)
MOORE, JOHN D (12)
MORT, DONALD C (21)
MUESSIG, ECK (123)
MUSGROVE, COLEMAN (54)
NEWELL, ROBERT S (128)
NEWKIRK, DANIEL F (8)
NIPP, SIDNEY F (141)
NOUR, JOHN S (135)
ORTON, RICHARD C (320)
OWEN, JOE A (105)
PARKER, HERMAN W (325)
PARKER, JERRY L (67)
PARKISH, CARROLL A (215)
PETERS, CLARA V (118)
PENN, DUDLEY T (78)
PHILLIPS, CRONGIE M (58)
PORTER, JOSEPH D (141)
POTTIER, FREDERICK A (55)
POTTER, GROVER (164)
PRESTON, BUFORD A (28)
QUICK, FLOREN (123)
RAND, CHARLES E (245)
RAY, CURTIS L (8)
RECKENBEIL, ARTHUR (1)
REED, CHARLES R (135)
RICK, GEORGE E (148)
RICKERT, ROBERT K (327)
RIDGEWAY, ROY T JR (8)
ROBERTS, ALLEN G (99)
ROCK, HARRY J SR (314)
RUSMISEL, RAYMOND L (3)
SALVIO, THOMAS H JR (141)
SANDRIDGE, LEONARD G (3)
SANFORD, DAVID (190)
SASS, ARTHUR H (39)
SAUNDERS, CLYDE L (68)
SCHLOEMER, J F (84)
SCRUGGS, ED W (36)
SEARLE, MARV (162)
SERIO, STEVEN M (195)
SHIFFLETT, HOWARD C (128)
SHINN, WILLIAM M (75)
SIMMONS, MARVIN A (73)
SLUSHER, MARVIN M (127)
SLUSS, GRAT (14)
SMITH, ALTON (1)
SMITH, ELLIS E (79)
SMITH, RALPH H (104)
SORELL, LAWRENCE W (126)
SOUTHER, BOBBY O (128)
STARGARDT, KENNETH H (137)
STEIN, ALFRED A (49)
STEINRUCK, WILLIAM K (354)
STEVENS, FRANK (8)
STEVENS, JULIA A (177)
TAYLOR, ROBERT J (166)
THOMPSON, JAMES S (155)
THOMPSON, LEE W JR (7)
THORNE, HAROLD E (340)
TURPIN, PHILLIP W (3)
ULTOH, LARRY J (215)
UMBEL, KENNETH E (85)
VANZANT, DAVID P (110)
WALKER, STANLEY M (134)
WALL, DONALD C (78)
WATTS, JOHN W (327)

Continued on page 6
The meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by Department Commander Gerald Rhoads at 2:02 p.m. The invocation was made Department Chaplain Frank Carr prior to the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preliminary to the American Legion Constitution.

John Hess conducted the POW/MIA service.

Adjutant Dale D. Chapman called the roll. Those present:

**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS:**
- Gerald Rhoads, Department Commander
- Linden Dixon, Immediate Past Department Commander
- Thomas Saunders, National Executive Committee
- Mike Mitron, Alternate NEC
- E. B. Reese, Sergeant-At-Arms

**EX-OFICIO MEMBERS:**
- Dale D. Chapman, Department Adjutant
- Tommy Lee, Department Treasurer
- Jim Chapman, Department Judge Advocate
- Robert Sussan, Department Historian
- Brian Mullican, Department Service Officer

**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS:**
- A. B. Brown, Alfred Steward

**DISTRICT COMMANDERS:**
- 1st Dist. – Ralph Orzo; 2nd Dist. – Rodney Drummond; 3rd Dist. – Floyd Brown; 4th Dist. – James Rovin; 5th Dist. – Tom Hart; 6th Dist. – Rob Phillips; 7th Dist. – Arsenius Terrill; 8th Dist. – Leslie Clevering, Acting; 9th Dist. – Garland Linkous; 11th Dist. – Chuck Talley; 12th Dist. – Ron Curlings; 13th Dist. – Joseph Dudley; 14th Dist. – Edwin Humes; 15th Dist. – Franklin Hillyard; 16th Dist. – Robert Yowell; 17th Dist. – Cordell Credit

**Absent:**
- Robert Cardwell, Vice Commander
- Excused; Joe Vacaro, Deputy Judge Advocate; Charles Payne, IL, 10th District Commander

Department Rhoads welcomed all attendees and reminded them of the Rules of Order of Business of the Department Executive Committee Meeting.

Department Rhoads then recognized Past Department Commanders as follows: Linden Dixon, Dale Chapman, Tom Saunders, Brett Reisad, Mike Mitron, Ron Miluszewski, Ike Kelley, Andy Robertson, Les Clevinger, Dan Dellinger, Robert Hannon and Doug Ramos.

The Minutes of the last meeting, having been mailed previously, were approved without reading.

Department Commander Rhoads and Department Historian Sussan and Immediate Past Department Historian Sam Ramseur presented Historian awards as follows:
- Angela Hall (120) – 1st place in “Narrative History” and received a check for $40.
- Amber Robinson (284) – 2nd place in “Narrative History” and received a check for $30.
- Larry Rosenberger (201) – 3rd place in “Narrative History” and received a check for $20.
- Christine Reynolds (180) – 1st place in “The Yearbook” contest and received a check for $40.
- Victor Graulau (162) – 2nd place in “The Yearbook” contest and received a check for $30.
- Edward Mercer (55) – 3rd place in “The Yearbook” contest and received a check for $20.
- Brett Reisad (270) – honorable mention in the yearbook contest and received a certificate.
- Amber Robinson (284) – honorable mention in the yearbook contest and received a certificate.
- Harold Filippo (175) - honorable mention in the yearbook contest and received a certificate.

Commander Rhoads then asked immediate Past Department Commander Dixon and Bill Feasenmyer, immediate past Americanism Chairman to the podium. They presented the department with the Daniel J. O’Connor Trophy for having the best Americanism Program in the nation.

**DEPARTMENT OFFICER/COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

**REPORTS**

Commander Rhoads then called upon Department Officers and Chairmen for their reports.

**DEPARTMENT NEC Thomas Saunders** reported there would be no dues increase this year but will be in the next few years. Adjustments to background checks have been made and a further study on the resolution is being done. The Communication Marketing Committee is now Marketing Commission.

**Department Treasurer Tommy Lee** stated the department audit has not been completed but is currently being worked on. The department is in excellent financial condition.

**Department Deputy Judge Advocate Jim Chapman** reported on the IRS ruling regarding DD214s. He reported that as long as posts have the membership cards, applications, active duty dates or the minutes where a member was approved this is sufficient for the IRS. He stated that all those posts who were under suspension due to no Constitution and By-laws on file at convention were still the same. He stated that Post 368 is progressing.

Department Chaplain Frank Carr reported that he has sent many cards to sick and deceased members and their families. He has visited Salem VAMC.

**Department Service Officer Brian Mullican** reported online training, claims clinics and a program in Loudon County were discussed.

**Department Historian Robert Susan** reported that National History are being judged with results to follow.

**Department Adjutant Dale D. Chapman** mentioned that District Commanders have to contact Department Headquarters with the dates of their District Conventions so that Headquarters can send the credential report to them. He also stated that Department Commander, Vice and District Commanders must fill out expense forms completely and with proper receipts.

**Department Awards and Recognition Thomas Saunders** reported that plaques were discussed for JROTC Drill Team Competition at Little Creek for Base Commander and support staff. Plaques will be given to Radford University President and staff. Plaques of appreciation will be presented to Brian Mullican, Rita Chandler and Norma Jean Newman at the spring conference. (5 in attendance)

**Department New Post/DMS Robert Renner** turned in a written report that stated the committee met with the membership committee.

**Department Conventions and Conference Ronald Miluszewski** No meeting was held due to no contracts from any hotels to be presented.

**Department National Security Chairman Deloris Tadmor** turned in a written report that stated National Security Policy was discussed including National Defense, Heroes to Hometown, Foreign Relations, Full Accounting of American POW/MIA’s, Events of National Disaster, Military Qualify of Life, Homeland Security and Immigration Enforcement. (19 present)

**Department Americanism Committee Chairman David Stein** turned in a written report that stated Healing Waters was discussed. He had each subcommittee chairman do a report on their committee. (36 in attendance)

**Department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Chairman Willie Ranson** turned in a written report that stated reports were given on the various subcommittees. (41 in attendance)

**Department Membership Committee Chairman Lewis Field** turned in a written report that stated the Department of Virginia’s plan was discussed. Post 141 contacts were pushed as well as ask a neighbor. Revitalization was discussed as well. (80 in attendance)

**Department Children & Youth Committee Chairman Rick Oertel** turned in a written report that stated the change in status of the National Committee on Children & Youth now falls under Americanism Commission but remains one of the Four Pillars was discussed. The Temporary Financial Assistance Program and Children and Youth Narrative report were also discussed in detail. (19 in attendance)

**Department Athletic Committee Chairman Tommy Whittow** reported that the Department Bowling subcommittee is seeking a host for the Department Tournament and no date has been set. The Department Fall Golf tournament was held October 17-19 at Danville and hosted by Post 1097. The Department Baseball subcommittee has rule changes for 2015. There will be a $10.00 increase in insurance for 2015. A host is needed for both the Junior and Senior Tournaments. The Sr. Tournament will be July 27-31, 2015. (17 in attendance)

**Department Boys State Committee Chairman Bill Stramm** stated that there will be an increase in citizens and counselors this year. Tuition was raised to $400 for 2015. (44 in attendance)

**Department Legislative Committee Chairman Brett Reisad** reported on the legislative progress. He stated that the 113th Congress is concluding. There will be two primary legislative objectives for the “Lame Duck” congress between November – December, 2014: 1) Senate Bill 995 and House Resolution 503, both entitled “The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield War Memorial Act.” The second is 2) “The Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2013.” The 114th Congress will convene in January 2015. During the meeting Chairman Reisad reviewed the six adopted legislative initiatives of the Joint Leadership Council for the 2015 General Assembly. (25 in attendance)

Continued on page 5
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Continued from page 4

Department Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Tom Queck turned in a written report that stated the purpose of the Foreign Relations subcommittee was discussed. A discussion was also held on POW/MIA by the chairman. (4 in attendance)

Department Internal Affairs Committee Chairman Dan Dellinger reported that the committee met at Headquarters on October 3rd. The following posts were discussed: 368, 25, 53, 102, 185 and 314. A discussion was held on reinstating the license plates with the Legion emblem. Ron Hesson was appointed ad-hoc chairman for the starting stages of this project. An update was given on the Boys State Articles of Incorporation. Clint Bolt may be a possible candidate for National S.A.L. Commander. Brett Reistad is a possible candidate for National Commander. The committee voted to revoke Post 102 charter. Dan made a motion that the actions of the Internal Affairs Committee become actions of the Department Executive Committee. Seconded, approved.

Department Leadership College Director John Kokernak presented Ron Hesson with the Spirit Award shirt. His written report stated that department headquarters has signed the contract for 2016 college. The committee reviewed and discussed the 2014 leadership college lessons learned and other ways to improve the college. (8 in attendance)

Department Legion Riders Sub Committee Chairman Jimmy Jones turned in a written report that stated the chapters should give the posts a monthly finance report; maintain a record of hours, events and donations for the post consolidated report. The chairman reminded everyone that all motorcycle clubs recognize the Legion Riders as an association and treat as such. The 2015 Legion Rider Rally will be hosted by Post 325 and Post 8. (15 in attendance)

Department Law & Order Chairman Phil Dunn stated that Junior Law Cadet program is now Law & Order/National Cadet Law Enforcement program. Discussions were held on getting submissions for the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year Awards. (19 in attendance)

Department Oratorical Committee Chairman Theresa Wahl turned in a written report that stated the Regional Contest dates are East – February 21; West – February 21; and North – February 7. The Department contest is March 13 at 7:00 p.m. at Virginia Beach. Various discussions were held regarding how each district could do better with communication and obtaining materials from the national website. (27 in attendance)

Department Media & Communications Committee Vice Chairman Harv Ayers turned in a written report that stated a power point presentation was given, material from “Membership Public Relations Guide”, Preview of Post/District PowerPoint Presentation from 100th anniversary and review of Posters for 100th anniversary. (17 in attendance)

Department VAVS Committee Chairman Margaret Fields turned in a written report that stated she asked all posts to pick up a program at their local VAMC. Also go to your local cleaners and ask for unclaimed clothing and turn in to hospitals. Washington, DC reported new parking garage; McGuire reported hours volunteering is down. (15 in attendance)

Junior Shooting Sports Program Chairman Rod Henderson turned in a report stated the NRA is a good way to get grants, CMP is a good place to go with getting rifles, get parents involved and spread awards out to all shooters. (12 in attendance)

Department Boy Scouts Sub Committee Chairman Lowell Badgley turned in a written report that stated there are 42 scouting units for a total of 1,067 youth. He wants a big push on Eagle Scout Scholarship. (9 in attendance)

Department JROTC Sub Committee Chairman Robert Cardwell turned in a written report that stated topics discussed were the status of the different school program operations, the vice commander communication with the district commander for schedule of competition dates at the schools or designated areas. (11 in attendance)

Department S.A.L. Committee Chairman Leslie Clevinger turned in a report that stated members of the committee were given an opportunity to discuss Detachment matters, concerning membership, personnel. January 31, 2015 a mid-winter meeting will be held at Danville Squadron 1097. (13 present)

Department Women’s Outreach Sub Committee Chairman Rita Chandler reported that she has assisted 92 women since July and filed 27 claims. Volunteer workers at any VAMC should have badges.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Commander Rhoads presented his final remarks. A memorial prayer was led by Chaplain Carr. The Executive Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Lucian Butler Scholarship Deadline Rapidly Approaching

1 March is the deadline for submission of applications for this year’s Lucian Butler scholarship awards. Last year the Department had in excess of $23,000 to be awarded, but only two applications were submitted. These two applicants were awarded $2,000 each. This year we have in excess of $30,000 to be awarded, however as of this date only one application has been received at Department Headquarters. To be eligible the applicant has to be the son/grandson, daughter/granddaughter of an active member of the Virginia American Legion Family. Online applications are available on the Department’s website www.vale legion.org. To find full details of what is required and to download the application, simply go to the Community Service section, select Scholarship and one will find the link to the Lucian Butler American Legion Scholarship page. While you are there you might also want to check out the requirements for other scholarship programs sponsored by the American Legion. One interesting feature of the Lucian Butler Scholarship program that is unique is that an individual may be eligible for awards past Freshman year. If eligible, we urge you to not let this opportunity pass.

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NEW BUSINESS

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1 March is the deadline for submission of applications for this year’s Lucian Butler scholarship awards. Last year the Department had in excess of $23,000 to be awarded, but only two applications were submitted. These two applicants were awarded $2,000 each. This year we have in excess of $30,000 to be awarded, however as of this date only one application has been received at Department Headquarters. To be eligible the applicant has to be the son/grandson, daughter/granddaughter of an active member of the Virginia American Legion Family. Online applications are available on the Department’s website www.vale legion.org. To find full details of what is required and to download the application, simply go to the Community Service section, select Scholarship and one will find the link to the Lucian Butler American Legion Scholarship page. While you are there you might also want to check out the requirements for other scholarship programs sponsored by the American Legion. One interesting feature of the Lucian Butler Scholarship program that is unique is that an individual may be eligible for awards past Freshman year. If eligible, we urge you to not let this opportunity pass.
Our Future

Our children are our future and the future strength of this nation. That is why one of the four pillars of The American Legion is Children and Youth. Children and Youth at the national level now falls under the Americanism Commission and this makes sense as both deal primarily with our nation’s youth. Under the Americanism pillar are such youth programs as American Legion Baseball, Boys State, Oratorical, Scholarships, Scouting, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement, and others. All these programs deal with fostering citizenship and sportsmanship as well as building character promoting American ideals. Children and Youth programs under that pillar concentrate more on the physical and mental welfare of our children and their families. The Child Welfare Foundation provides grants each year to non-profits who have programs that support physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children over the age of 6 and economic area. Children and Youth also provides family assistance through several major programs to include the Family Support Network (FSN), Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW), and Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA). Most Legionnaires are somewhat familiar with OCW and may have received and acted on requests for assistance through the FSN but experience has shown that few have an understanding of the TFA program.

The TFA program is a grant program, funded by National, to help those service members and veterans (eligible for Legion membership), with minor children in the home, to obtain financial assistance to ensure that the basic needs of their children are met and a stable home environment is established and maintained. Basic needs are defined as shelter, food, clothing, utilities, and health necessities. As the name implies it is expected that this assistance will be temporary in nature and that such assistance, normally limited to a one-time grant, will allow the family to become self sustaining in the future. Requests for assistance normally are transmitted through the Department (but may be generated at the local level) to the District Commander in the area where the family resides and the District Commander will assign the case to a local Post. All requests for assistance must be fully investigated by a local Legion member and the family situation (both personal and financial) and their requests for other assistance fully documented by the investigating officer on the application form. This properly completed application form, the Investigating Officer’s report to include a recommendation, and all required documentation are then submitted to the Department Children and Youth Chairman (normally through the Department) for review. If approved, the application is forwarded with a Department recommendation to National for review and if approved, a check or checks (normally two-party payable to the veteran and creditor) are sent to the Department Adjutant for disbursal.

This program provides local Posts a way to help deserving veteran families when the Post does not have the financial assets to do so and caring and immediate responses to these requests by all concerned is vital to maintaining a positive image of The American Legion. The application, a list of “Do’s and Don’ts”, and the current National brochure on the program are available on the Department website along with a link to the information on the National site. I will be happy to attend District meetings or special sessions to more fully discuss this program and I am also available to assist individual Investigating Officers (preferably before they start their investigation). You may contact me for assistance via E-mail at adj.post284@verizon.net or by phone at (804) 520-2338.

-Richard C. “Rick” Oertel, Chairman, Children and Youth.

Post Everlasting

Continued from page 3
WEAVER, WELDON D (177) WEBB, WILLIAM M (6) WEEKS, KEITH A (85) WEINSTEIN, HARRY (1) WELLS, JOSEPH J (325) WHEELER, COLEMAN (83) WHEELER, PAUL (16) WHITBECK, BOB (1992) WHITESSELL, FRED A (25) WHITMER, GLENN R (30) WHITMORE, JOE L (284) WILEY, AARON C (14) WILLIAMS, BEN J (43) WILLIAMS, DENNIE O (125) WILLIAMS, JAMES (151) WILLIAMS, LARRY C (30) WILLIS, WILLIAM C SR (325) WILSON, DOUGLAS W (7) WILSON, RUSSELL F (137) WOODCOCK, EDWARD L (125) WOODS, ONZIE (265) WOOTEN, WILLIAM A (25) WORLEY, CALVIN R (4) WYNE, PHILIP W (73)

View These Legionnaire's Stories and Tell us Yours

Daniel's Story

US Air Force

Gail Galich (IN) US Army

Snap the QR Code To Watch On Your Phone or Visit www.TheLIT.com/LITforLife

From the Track Announcer Box

The hooves are thundering with the final straight in sight. Great movement among the mass of Jockeys and Trainers is seen. And the Stable race is tighter all the time. It has been a great contest so far with major changes occurring each week. Can’t ask for more than that just as we offer thanks to all those membership teams pushing so hard getting renewals and new members into the fold to maintain and expand our great programs.

Doesn’t say that we can’t continue our push. If you need assistance in your area, just ask. Same as Just Ask your neighbor if they have been offered a chance to join The American Legion. Recheck lists to see who has not had a personal visit by this time and make sure they know what the Legion has done for them at any level – Virginia is becoming very friendly for vets and military; new GI Bill; shakeup in VA processes and leadership; local Americanism programs such as Baseball, Oratorical and Boys State. These are the items that help drive renewals and keep new members coming but it doesn’t work if you don’t tell them about it.

Spring is coming as are all those great local fairs. Make sure you look around and look to them whether as a Post or some combined District or cross District attendance. Bring the program info so it’s not purely a recruiting event - Something to attract attention to start the conversation. If have a great event coming and can’t provide all the manpower, talk to your District/Regional Commanders, they likely can find some assistance to cover the full event. Keep Preserving in your efforts to bring back all your former members and we’ll see you in Winner’s Circle.

–Lewis Field, Membership Chairman
Why is your Post’s History Important?

“History is a kind of introduction to more interesting people than we can possibly meet in our restricted lives; let us not neglect the opportunity.” ~ Dexter Perkins

As we approach The American Legion Centennial Celebration (1919 – 2019) we would like to highlight the many amazing accomplishments of the American Legion.

Over the years, the Legion has influenced considerable social change in America, won hundreds of benefits for veterans and produced many important programs for children and youth. A Chronology of the significant dates in the Legion History can be found at www.centennial legion.org/history

We all know that sometimes we become so involved in the multitude of programs, community events, projects for veterans, and children and youth projects that we simply do not record and “tell the story” of the good work that each and every Post does on a daily basis. Admittedly, we need to get better at recording the details of the things we do and tell the story to those not involved in or familiar with the good work of our great organization.

Acknowledging this, Our National organization has established a Centennial Celebration website that will tell the story of The American Legion and its history over the past 100 years. A facility has been engineered into this website to allow Posts to “tell their story,” and showcase events, add photo galleries and interesting stories of Post history.

Currently, only nine posts in the Department of Virginia have started entering information on their Posts. My goal is to have this number significantly increased this year, with all Posts represented by next year.

Tools are available to offer guidance and formats to submit your Post’s legacies and visions, either on line or in a hard-copy format. Should you choose to enter your Post information online, simply go to www.centennial legion.org/history and share using the tools available there. If you would like to submit your Post’s information in a hard copy format, please contact me and I will get your Post’s information in a hard copy format, please contact me and I will get your Post’s information in a hard copy format, please contact me and I will get your Post’s information in a hard copy format, please contact me and I will get your Post’s information in a hard copy format.

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New Posts and Revitalization

Post development and revitalization (PD&R) is a way for The American Legion to reassert itself into the local community. If there are communities that do not have a post within it, post development is a great way for The American Legion to become an asset in the local community. There are times when membership in a local post has declined and interest in the programs is non-existent. A revitalization effort can help reenergize and breathe life back into a post so the post can become viable once again.

Did you ever stop to think what an active American Legion Post means to a community or a neighborhood? Or how much veterans and young people are being shortchanged if there isn’t one? No service officer to help with claims, or hospitalization, or death benefits. No high school students at Boys State or participating in the Oratorical Contest. No distribution of “Need a Lift” to high schools and libraries. No American Legion Baseball teams. Most importantly, no place for veterans to make themselves heard.

The membership staff at our National Headquarters, with the assistance of our Department leadership can assist with any post development and revitalization efforts. Whether it is providing timelines and material or actually being on the ground to train and conduct the development and revitalization effort, we are here in the Department to assist in those endeavors. If you feel there are communities that would benefit from a post development or your post needs help with revitalization, we are here in the Department to discuss ways to accomplish this task with your Region, District or Post leadership.

Should you have any questions regarding these matters, please feel free to contact me, Bob Renner, Chairman, New Posts and DMS at Renbro2@mns.com or phone me at 703-625-5633 and I would be happy to discuss.
From the National Vice Commander

Jim Chapman

First, I want to thank all of the Posts that have submitted their Constitution and Bylaws (C&B) as required by the DEC. Only a very few inactive Posts have not complied and are still suspended.

In reviewing the Constitutions and Bylaws (C&B), I noted that a significant number of the submitted C&Bs provide for inappropriate powers of the Post Executive Committees. For example, many Posts C&Bs state that the Executive Committee has the power to remove officers if they believe those officers are not performing in the positions to which they were elected. Since the membership elects the officers, this power is reserved to the membership, if such action becomes necessary. The Executive Committee may recommend action to the membership, but the decision rests with the membership. Please review your C&B to make sure they properly reflect that the membership is the ultimate authority in the Post.

Another example for review is how your C&B addresses authorization to expend Post funds. Some C&Bs ascribe this authority to the Executive Committee. In reality, the Post membership must approve the proposed annual budget, and the membership must also approve any unplanned expenses outside the approved budget. Specific provisions may be made to address an emergency expenditure, but this should also be clearly defined with appropriate limitations. In no circumstance should the Post Commander have unilateral authority to expend Post funds.

A second issue we are encountering is Post incorporation. The Department C&B requires Posts to be incorporated. In most cases, however, we are finding that the Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws of the Corporation, have never been filed with the State Corporation Commission, or if these documents were filed, they are seriously outdated and/or poorly written such that they take all property of property ownership out of the hands of the Post membership; do not comply with state Laws; would allow a corporate board to dispose of the Post and/or other member owned property without membership approval; and/or do not comply with National or Department C&B. We have noted additional issues as well.

Poorly constructed Post incorporation documents can cause significant issues at the Department level. We have recently had the example of a Post that, although its charter had been revoked by the DEC, had conflicting language that prevented all Post assets from reverting to the Department as is required by Department C&B. In this case, the Department has had to incur the significant costs of legal counsel to assist in properly taking possession for the protection of those assets, and to prevent a single individual from improperly transferring them to another entity.

These types of issues are resolved at great expense to the Department membership, unfortunately. In an effort to provide standardized documents that appropriately establish roles, responsibilities and authorities, Department has developed both Articles of Incorporation and Corporate Bylaws that place power in the hands of the Post membership, and that prohibit unauthorized actions by individuals in any capacity or by corporate boards exclusively.

I will be recommending to Internal Affairs and ultimately to the DEC that all Posts revise and update their incorporation documents to comply with these new standard documents. Proof of proper filing with the State Corporation Commission will be required, and information copies will be required to be submitted to Department. As with the C&B, an appropriate time period will be allowed to accomplish these requirements before action will be taken by the DEC.

If you have questions or would like copies of the new standard documents, feel free to e-mail or phone me. My contact information is on the web site and in the directory.

Thank You for all you do, Legionnaires are simply great people.

Sincerely,

—William R. “Bill” Bryant,
National Vice Commander 2014-2015

From the Judge Advocate

To: The Virginia American Legion Family

The time since the National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina has been a “whirl wind” of activity for Bert and I. With over forty years of experience with the American Legion and having been personal friends with many Past National Vice Commanders, I had no idea of the magnitude of what I was undertaking. However, I found out very quickly; it was going to be a very trying, interesting and busy year.

I have been in Indianapolis, Indiana at the National Headquarters for the Membership Workshop (4 days), National Vice Commander Orientation (6 days), and the National Commander’s Homecoming and Fall Meetings (6 days). I was at the National Headquarters’ Office in Washington, DC for 3 days for Orientation and training. That is a lot of information and training for an “old mind” to retain and use, in a very short time period.

I was privileged to be one of several guest speakers at “A Salute to Military Veterans & Families;” held on September 27, 2014 in Ashburn, Virginia and hosted by American Legion Post 2001 and the Loudoun County Government’s Board of Supervisors. It was a “first of its kind” event, held in that area, and holds much potential for the future in meeting the needs of our veteran population.

I was honored to represent the National Commander at the Veterans Day Ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, the White House and at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, where National Headquarters Director Verna Jones and I laid the wreath for the American Legion.

I have visited the Department of Kentucky and participated in their Fall Conference; the Department of Illinois and participated in their “Egyptian Past Commanders Club Jamboree,” and the Department of Indiana’s Mid-Winter Conference. I am scheduled to visit Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Michigan prior to the Washington Conference and participate in their Winter Conferences.

Commander Helm’s theme for the year is “Stay the Course.” “Stay the Course” means continuing to live and honor the great traditions and values of the “Four Pillars” of our great organization. Those traditions and values are what got us to the point we are today and they will continue to guide us forward; however, we need to improve on what we have done in the past and find ways to make more of a positive difference in our Communities, our Posts, Units and Squadrons. We need to address these issues as “the American Legion Family” and not as separate units.

I must remind you of Commander Helm’s favorite number – “FOUR.” We’re talking about Four Million Dollars, for programs that benefit our Four Pillars, in all American Legion family programs and charities. And we do this by using a Four-by-Four approach. That is the concerted effort by the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion and our American Legion Riders.

It has been a very rewarding experience so far and I thank all of those members in the Department of Virginia; that made it possible for me to hold this position. Your support is greatly appreciated and I will do my best to represent you and the Department of Virginia with honor and integrity.

On behalf of National Commander Helm, I thank you for your service to America and to our great organization. We will “Stay the Course.”

May God Bless each of you, the American Legion and the United States of America.

Sincerely,

—Erica

Virginia American Legion Family
Your Department of Virginia Service Officer Program has been busy for the first half of this Legion Year. At present we have eleven service officers in the Department that are accredited by The Department of Veteran Affairs with a goal of having 16 to 20 accredited by this time next year.

To give all a idea of what we have accomplished so far this Legion Year the accredited service officers have been in contact either in person, on the phone or by email with over 3000 veterans. They have filed in excess of 700 claims and done 26 interviews for TFA applicants. They have over 3000 hours worked so far this year.

By the time you read this we will have had six veteran programs or claims clinics so far this year. The first event this year was put on by several posts in the 16th and 17th District and was held in Louden County. The program had a number of dignitaries to include the Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey from the Department of Veteran Affairs. The program lasted about two hours and was followed by a claims clinic. This program and clinic had more than 100 veterans in attendance. I want to thank Robert O’Such from Post 2001 and his committee for putting this program together. They said that they are working to have it again next year and I would hope that each District in the Department could put a program like this on each year and the Service Officers would support them.

We have had successful clinics for training Post Service Officers in Vienna, Lynchburg, Colonial Heights and Norfolk. By the time you read this we will have had a clinic in South Hill on January 17. Through these clinics we have assisted in excess of 100 veterans file a claim, 71 of which were done in Colonial Heights, and have been able to get about forty Post Service Officers Certified so that they can assist veterans in filing a claim. We also have three more clinics scheduled for April and May.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the ladies from Post 16 in Lynchburg who work with Sarah Maddox one of our accredited service officers. They gather together every Tuesday at Post 16 and have a claims clinic at the Post and they are assisting between fifteen and twenty-five veterans every week. Not only do they do this at Post 16 but I know that they do outreach to other Posts in the 10th District at least one day a month. I know that Sarah started this with six ladies and I now believe that they have added a couple of gentlemen and they number about 10 volunteers now and continue to grow.

I, also, would be remiss if it failed to thank Alonzo Scott and Eric Isaksen and the members of Post 327 who on a daily basis are at the Post assisting veterans with claims and answering questions about benefits. This group has filed in excess of 100 claims and has been open for business like this for at least the last two years.

And now I come to two longtime workers in this program. Norma Jean Newman and Rita Chandler. These two ladies are assisting veterans daily to the extent that on occasion they have to be told to sit down and rest because they have so much going on. They travel to the Regional Office in Roanoke to sit in on hearing of appeals. They have been to Halifax twice and done a large number of Dependents Indemnity Claims for veterans spouses. Over the years they have each filed on average between 300 and 400 claims each year and they are looking to be at those numbers again this year. They will travel anywhere if asked and they spend much of their time training Legionnaires to be Service Officers.

We have trained many Post Service Officers this year. They have taken the on line class from the Department Website and then worked at a claims clinic and have been certified as a Post Service Officer. We hope that they will put this training to good use by assisting veterans file claims. Additionally, we would like to see each District sponsor one claims clinic a year using the Post Service Officers in the District to do claims. If each District will do that we can have several of the Accredited Service Officers attend as information resources and answer the difficult questions.

As a Department we have had a very successful first half of the year. However, let me say that the success we have had is not because of me but because of the dedicated accredited service officer committee that works with me and those Post Service Officers throughout the Department that have been helping Veterans. When you see Norma Newman of Post 120, Buck Owen of Post 104, Phil Dunn of Post 180, Rita Chandler of Post 55, Debra Thomas of Post 89, Alonzo Scott and Eric Isaksen of Post 327, Kristin Weaver of Post 28, Lou Vallette of Post 284 and Sarah Maddox of Post 16 please stop and thank them for all of the hard work and time that they put in helping our veterans. In fact when you see your Post Service Officer say thank you to him or her for all that they do for our veterans.

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**APPLICATION INFO**

The Department of Virginia is in the process of obtaining an American Legion Virginia License plate. To accomplish this we must obtain 450 applications.

First; it is necessary to establish how many Legionnaires will apply for the new license plate. An exploratory questionnaire is available to Virginia Legionnaires. The brief form asks for NAME, ADDRESS and EMAIL ADDRESS so we can contact you once we have reached the 450 interested members.

The special plate showing our American Legion Emblem is available for all of your non-commercial cars, trucks and motorcycles and can be personalized or you can use your existing personalization and .

The special license plate costs $10.00 a year without personalization. That is less than 2 combo meals at McDonalds! NO money right now.....we must meet our DMV requirements first.

This is an inquiry form to determine how many Virginia Legionnaires want a special plate. When the 450 required participants are reached, we will contact you to obtain a DMV license plate form and fee. Questions? Contact Ron Hesson at legioncom.hesson@yahoo.com or 540-337-4305.

The American Legion License Plate will be a rolling billboard advertising our organization, 24 hours a day seven days a week. It will also be a tribute to you as a Veteran since you cannot be a legion member with being a veteran.

Please fill out the pre-application NOW and send it to Department Headquarters or email all of the information:

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**YES! I AM INTERESTED IN A VIRGINIA LEGION LICENSE PLATE**

NAME: __________________________

ADDRESS: __________________________

CITY: ___________ VA ZIP ___

EMAIL ADDRESS: __________________________

POST: __________________________

DISTRICT __________________________

TOTAL NUMBER OF LICENSE PLATES YOU WANT __________________________

(Car, truck, motorcycle, memorandum)
Legion: Privatizing VA is ‘shortsighted’ concept

The American Legion testified to Congress at a Jan. 28 hearing that health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs is more cost-effective than outsourcing it to the private sector. The Legion’s stance was in response to a December 2014 report by the Congressional Budget Office that compared VA health-care costs with those of private practitioners.

The CBO report, requested by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., stated that VA “has provided limited data to Congress and the public about its costs and operational performance. The overarching theme of the study is clear – CBO needs more data in order to make recommendations or be able to come to any credible conclusion.”

Linda Celli, director of The American Legion’s Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, presented the Legion’s testimony before the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health.

Celli said much discussion over the years has suggested that veterans “might be better off if we privatized some or all of VA. The American Legion believes that this concept is shortsighted, prohibitive-ly expensive, and fails to take into consideration the specialized care that veterans receive – and deserve – at VA.”

According to the Legion’s written testimony, most of the evidence cited in the CBO report “supports the assertion that VA is less expensive than both Medicare and private health-care solutions ... The analysis indicates that VHA (Veterans Hospital Administration) represents a cost savings when comparing physician care, and pharmaceuticals, but was unable to compare ‘other medical goods and services.’” For example, based on 1999 data:

- VHA’s full range of services would have cost about 21 percent more via the private sector (at Medicare rates).
- Medicare would have charged 16 percent more for inpatient care (excluding costs for nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities).
- Outpatient services would have cost Medicare about 11 percent more than VHA.
- Prescription drug costs would have run 70 percent higher, using a combination of Medicaid’s and Medicare’s payment methods.

“In addition to saving taxpayer money and having one of the highest patient satisfaction rates in the industry, VA is a driving factor in innovative technology, and serves as a teaching hospital for hundreds of doctors every year,” Celli said. “No commercial health-care system in the United States can say the same.”

Despite its lack of data, the CBO report asserted, “Even if VHA currently provided care at a lower cost than the private sector, expanding the VHA system might not be cheaper in the longer term than increasing the use of private-sector providers.”

Noting that VHA services have been cost-effective for several decades, the Legion stated “there is no reason to believe that VHA services would now reverse its trend and somehow end up costing taxpayers more for care than the rising costs associated with private-sector care.”

Removal of Social Security Numbers from ID Cards

To protect your privacy and personal identity information, the Department of Defense (DoD) is removing Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all ID cards.

A DoD Identification number and a unique DoD Benefits Number (DBN) will be printed on the cards.

You’ll get the new ID card with your unique DBN when your current ID card expires.

Current cards will not be replaced until your card is within 30 days of expiration. If your ID card has an “IN-DEF” expiration date, schedule an appointment if you want it replaced.

 Until your card is replaced, your provider or pharmacist can use either the SSN or the DBN to verify eligibility and process claims.

By National Commander Michael D. Helm - February 1, 2015 –

4x4: A time for Legion Family values

America needs The American Legion Family.

If you don’t believe me, ask the veteran who finally received our help about her long-overdue disability claim and could finally buy her son a hot meal, move out of their car and get into an apartment.

Ask the veteran at a VA medical center who was shocked by the number of patients whose only visitors were members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

Talk to men and women recovering from wounds and illnesses at military hospitals and transition units to see what it means when Operation Comfort Warriors shows up with tickets – purchased through American Legion Family donations, 100 percent of which go directly to help people the fund was established to serve – to feed and treat them and their children to a Six Flags amusement park for a day.

If you are still not convinced, consider visiting Arlington National Cemetery at Christmas time, when Legion Family members place wreaths at the headstones of military men and women generations removed from anyone who personally knew them. Or talk to the doctor whose involvement in the Auxiliary’s Girls State helped her earn a Samsung Scholarship, which launched a career in medicine that allows her to treat sick veterans at the VA hospital in her community.

If you like, try to add up the hours of effort that go into the many Legion Riders fundraisers that pay for college educations for children of servicemembers who lost their lives on active duty after 9/11.

If you’re still unsure, stop by a district area where Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, Riders and Sons prepare food and load cases of bottled water onto trucks for displaced victims and relief workers, all while taking applications for National Emergency Fund grants.

Our family is everywhere because we need to be everywhere.

That’s why this year’s 4x4 is a call to support any or all American Legion Family funds, and to keep our organizations growing strong. Thus the 4x4 Program, a campaign to raise at least $4 million and exceed 4 million members. To help now or learn more, visit www legion org /4x4, call (800) 433-3318 or mail a contribution to American Legion 4x4, P.O. Box 361623, Indianapolis, IN 46236-1626.

The second “4” in my program is about increasing Legion Family membership to 4 million so our organizations can remain as influential and powerful as they are today. (See more on membership on Page 52 and Legion Family membership applications on Page 53.)

Compared to others, we do not devote much time and resources to promotion; we are generally too busy doing. But we have something no ad blitz can buy: the collective power of a caring, loving family that numbers in the millions, built on shared values of mutual helpfulness.

Donations to Legion Family funds this year do not simply push us toward a monetary goal; they allow us to continue serving an increasing number of people who need us, from veterans seeking help with claims to wounded troops trying to restart their lives. Every new member and every dollar raised multiplies our ability to keep serving at a time when Legion Family values are needed most.
Most of these are in the early stages but wanted to provide for your information and planning as necessary. We are excited about the below opportunities so stay tuned as we progress to Baltimore, MD and our 97th National Convention.

Friday, August 28, 2015 – Color Guard Competition at 5:00PM. Rules and applications forthcoming.

Saturday, August 29, 2015 – Competitive Concert Band Contests will return along with the new Exhibition Concert Band class. Contests will start at 1:00PM. Rules and applications forthcoming.

Sunday, August 30, 2015 – Patriotic Memorial Service featuring The Texas Tenors. Service starts at 11:00AM.

Tuesday, August 31, 2015 – American Legion Family Night at Camden Yards Ballpark with the Baltimore Orioles vs. Tampa Bay Rays. Game time is 7:05PM. More to follow.

Tuesday, September 1, 2015 – National Commander’s Banquet. The Swing Dolls have been selected by National Commander Helm as the entertainment. The Swing Dolls perform a Musical USO Tribute and music made popular by The Andrews Sisters, The McGuire Sisters, female groups of the 1960’s and Mamma Mia.

Tickets are $45.00 per person and tickets will be in limited quantity again this year due to venue size.

We are confident our American Legion Family members will enjoy the events we have planned for them as well as the business sessions of The American Legion and other aspects of our 97th National Convention. We should have shuttle transportation, off-site bus transportation as well as tour options to you.

Sincerely,

–Your Convention & Meetings Team
American Legion Post 325 sponsored the annual 4 Chaplains service at Central Blvd. Church of God. The service shows the compassion and service of the military’s 4 chaplains who gave up their life jackets so others could live. Shown are: from Post 325 Royce Agee, Rob Phelps, Don Mitchell, Post 325 Commander Kenny Fitzgerald, Lee Mayberry, Shaun Fitzgerald, Steve Walker, Daryl Mills and Ray Turner from Post 1097.

American Legion Post 325, Auxiliary Unit 325 and Sons of the American Legion Squadron 325 joined together to make Christmas boxes for needy people in the community. This Christmas tradition has been done for over 45 years and is part of the American Legion’s commitment to serve others. Shown are: Paul Cody (325), Faith Cody (Unit 325), Robert Scearce (325), Joe Darnell (325), Annette Scearce (Unit 325), Hazel Mills (Unit 325), Pat Meadows (325), Jerry Mason (Unit 325), Jimmy Powell (Squadron 325 Commander) and Joyce Harper (Unit 325).

Legion Post 79 honors disabled vets. On Wednesday, 19 November, Post 79 of South Hill held their annual disabled vets dinner. Paralyzed veterans from McGuire VA Hospital are hosted to a night of poker, live entertainment and a steak dinner. Members of the Legion, Sons of the Legion and Auxiliary all pitched in to create a memorable and relaxing evening to honor 7 vets who gave significantly and selflessly for our freedom. Besides the guests of honor, the event was attended by the Virginia Department Commander, the Virginia Sons of the American Legion (SAL) State Commander and Danville Post Commander, Post 79 hosts included Post Commander, SAL Squadron Commander, Auxiliary President and numerous Legion SAL and Auxiliary members. (Photo and text: Paul Doucette, Post 79)

Department Commander Rhoads visiting his delegate Chris Jones of Suffolk during our Day on the Hill. (L-R) Adjutant Chapman, Tamara Parks, Diane McCoy, Delegate Jones, Auxiliary President Nancy Harting, Commander Rhoads and Steve Sopko.

American Legion Post 325, Auxiliary Unit 325 and Sons of the American Legion Squadron 325 joined together to make Christmas boxes for needy people in the community. This Christmas tradition has been done for over 45 years and is part of the American Legion’s commitment to serve others. Shown are: Paul Cody (325), Faith Cody (Unit 325), Robert Scearce (325), Joe Darnell (325), Annette Scearce (Unit 325), Hazel Mills (Unit 325), Pat Meadows (325), Jerry Mason (Unit 325), Jimmy Powell (Squadron 325 Commander) and Joyce Harper (Unit 325).

Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 325, recently rang bells in support of the Salvation Army. Squadron 325 is always ready to help Post 325 in all their activities and the annual bell ringing is one of those joint activities. Shown are: Membership chairman, Phillip Wells and Squadron 325 Commander Jimmy Powell.

Post 340 of East Augusta County was the Color Guard for the Grave Marker Dedication. Held by The Madison of Montpelier Chapter National Society United States Daughters of 1812. This dedication was held at Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery in Crimora, VA on 4 November 2014.

American Legion Post 252, Montross, held its annual Christmas dinner on December 11. In past years, legion members participated in a gift exchange, but this year we collected gifts for veterans seeking care at the Hunter McGuire Veteran Medical Center in Richmond. With the assistance of Peoples Community Bank, Montross Branch, and Boy Scout Troop 252, the organization collected personal and hygienic items that are desperately need at VA.