Highlights from Department Convention
July 2016

Department Commander Jim Chapman with Americanism Chairman Tom Queck. Shown are winners from each of the six categories.

Department Commander Jim Chapman and Children and Youth Chairman John Kokernak with the recipients of the C&Y Awards.

Department Commander Jim Chapman with VA & R Chairman Willie Ransom with the winners of the department meritorious service awards.

Past Detachment Commander Clint Bolt is shown presenting a scholarship check to Andrew Evans.

Boy Scout Chairman Lowell Badgley is assisting Commander Chapman with the presentation of the Square Knot Award to (L top) Andy Smith, David Wallace and Beth Rowly.

Commander Chapman assisted by Law and Order Chairman Phil Dunn presenting the Department Firefighter of the Year Award to Michael Gilliam.

PDC Chapman is introducing newly elected Commander David Stein and wife Rosalyn to the convention delegates.

Department Chaplain Frank Carr and Department Commander Jim Chapman presenting the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Award.
From the Rostrum
Dave Stein
Department Commander

Playball

As I stand before you here today I am very humbled, honored and very proud. The hardest thing that I have had to do in my 26 year legion career is probably writing this speech. When I talk I speak from the heart. I never imagined that I would be standing up here today accepting this privilege.

There are a few people that I need to thank: First my wife Rosalyn, without her support and love none of this is possible. Remember behind every strong man is a stronger woman. Her love and support has made this journey possible and we are looking for a great year and looking forward to meeting all of the great legionnaires of the Commonwealth.

The next person is Fred Miller, my Father in-law who not only let me marry his daughter (with me being from New York) but introduced me to this great organization. His mentorship is priceless even though we have had our disagreements we both understand the mission.

The members of the Department Honor Guard who have shown time and time again their devotion to the Veterans and their families. Stafford Post 290 ladies auxiliary of unit 290. I cannot say enough of these ladies without their assistance many things would not have been accomplished. Frances Shelton my first president when I was commander showed me how to lead and set the example.

The Past Department Commanders, whenever I had a question they were there to answer it for me. George Lussier and Linden Dixon who traveled with me this past year when I visited various districts. Those long hours on the road enabled me to pick their brains and learn so much about this organization.

You all will find out that my theme this year is Baseball. I played Legion Baseball as young man growing up in New York. My theme “Swinging for the Fences” is how our goals and mind set should be for the upcoming year. We must give a 100% effort no bunting. If at the end of the day you look back and feel that you left everything on the field then it was successful.

We have a few milestones coming up in the near future, The legion is turning 100 years old and we will have another Candidate for National Commander in Brett Reistad. Teamwork is essential, in case some of you did not know T.E.A.M stands for Together Everyone Achieves More. We must work together as a team just like in baseball in order for us to grow and achieve our goals.

As we go forward this year we are going to work on some membership things. Department Commander Jim Chapman and our Membership Chairman Bob Susan have laid out the ground work now it is up to us to pick up the bat and “swing for the fences”.

I am not going to take up anymore of your time. I never could talk in front of a crowd until I went to Recruiters School. My instructors told my wife that they didn’t think that I was going to make it because I was so quiet and shy. As you can see I proved them wrong. To my fellow Marines “Semper Fi”.

We are going to have an exceptional year. We want to make things fun just like the game of baseball remember Comrades let’s “Swing for the Fences”.

Adjutant’s Log
Dale D. Chapman
Department Adjutant

Signs of Decline

As stated in my last column, I promised to continue my column regarding SIGN OF DECLINE in a post.

Relationships fade due to various reasons such as one of your buddies’ moves away and he was one that put some fun into the meeting.

The new people who replaced the old gang aren’t very interesting. I don’t feel like I am included and treated as an outsider.

Here are a few suggestions to promote camaraderie in the post:

Arrive early: Be friendly, shake hands, and learn more about the post members.

Listen: Encourage members to talk about themselves giving them full attention.

Learning Common Interests: Party, picnics, bowling tournaments, and other outings build camaraderie and team spirit. Again, these activities provide a chance for members to get to know each other in a relaxed setting.

Personally Recognize Accomplishments: Congratulations from a friend is as welcome as an impressive trophy. The applause of an appreciative audience, in recognition of a job well done is an act of caring that says Thank You.

Celebrate group accomplishments:

Team victories merit celebration by the whole team. The celebration of a group accomplishment, such as hitting the membership goal, is an excellent opportunity to promote fellowship.

Many of the most successful Legion posts enjoy a strong team spirit and fellowship.

There are other very important factors such as leadership and program quality, and the desire of individual members to succeed.

Lastly, I want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Virginia Legionnaire
Official Publication of The American Legion
Department of Virginia

Department of Virginia Web Page
The membership report is updated every Thursday.
Upcoming events are listed along with registration forms.

www.valegion.org

Contact the staff:

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Greetings Fellow Legionnaires

Happy New Year to all my Legion family members around this great state of Virginia. I pray this year will be your best year ever and lead you to a close walk with God.

Family, this New Year with all the changes in America and around the world that will bring many new changes in our lives, we’ve got to get ready for these changes. Good or bad these changes are coming, but you’ve got to remember, even amid these changes God never changes. All the promises He has given us these changes God never changes. He has given us a clear road map to a life with Him. So, get your road map, the Bible and read it.

My thanks go out to all that support and guide you as you go through this New Year. The Legionnaires, Posts and Districts to come to the Department Conference in Virginia Beach for a Chaplain’s Class. And to pray for this great nation, the American Legion and each family member around this great state of Virginia. I pray this year will be your best year ever and lead you to a closer walk with God, and staying in His light.

I’ve been told if you don’t change the direction you are going in your life, you just might get there. This is telling me, the life you are living is going in the wrong direction. And if you don’t change your direction you’re ending result will be destruction. God has given us a clear road map to a life with Him. So, get your road map, the Bible and read it.

My thanks go out to all that support all the Religious programs around Virginia. I’m inviting all the Chaplains, Posts and Districts to come to the Department Conference in Virginia Beach for a Chaplain’s Class. And to pray for this great nation, the American Legion and each other.

Post Everlasting

COUNTS, PAUL H (0208)  GRANT, JOSEPH R (0021)
COURTNEY, DENNIS (0079) GRASSI, LOUIS (0016)
COX, JESSIE J JR (0083) GRAY, LEO W (0060)
COX, NALBRO L (0240) GREEN, HOWARD T (0130)
CRAIG, TERRANCE “TERRY” C GRIESE, ALFRED C (0354)
(0354) GURNEY, LOUIS A (0068)
CRIST, ROBERT W (0048) HAGGINS, JAMES L (0141)
CROUCH, THOMAS W (0003) HALL, JAMES L (0209)
CROWTHER, LLOYD R (0130) HAMBLETT, NORMAN J (0006)
CRUMP, JAMES H (0325) HAMILTON, CLAIBORNE W (0036)
CULLEN, RONALD J (0290) HAMPTON, ROY D SR (0245)
DALLY, JAMES C JR (0035) HANBY, JOSEPH P (0105)
DALTON, DENNIS L (0036) HANSEN, ROBERT G (0330)
DALTON, GARNET (0018) HARNER, ROGER T (0327)
DAMULIS, NORMAN J (0177) HARP, RONALD W JR (0177)
DANIEL, GEORGE H (0043) HARRELL, HORACE W (0264)
DART, THOMAS L (0072) HARRIS, C B (0280)
DAUGHERTY, BETTY P (0014) HARRIS, EVERETT V (0068)
DAVIES, BRUCE T (0021) HARRIS, FRANCIS B (0120)
DAVIS, JAMES R (0241) HARRIS, JUNE (0013)
DAVIS, W G (0166) HARRIS, RUSSELL C JR (0125)
DEEL, JACk G (0164) HARRISON, FRANKLIN R (0120)
DEHAVEN, LESTER L (0021) HARTSOOK, DAVID H (0004)
DELANO, RAYMOND G (0248) HARTWICK, DANIEL E (0141)
DICKIE, JOHN N (0139) HARVEY, BERT J (0009)
DIETZ, DONALD L (0176) HAWKINS, LARRY J (0141)
DIGGES, JOHN J (0083) HEDRICK, RICHARD L (0148)
DILLARD, CLYDE O (0078) HEFLIN, WILLIAM (0141)
DIXON, CLAIBORNE B (0008) HELM, WAYNE C (0016)
DIXON, JOE A (0029) HELYER, GEORGE W (0188)
DODD, JOHN R (0156) HENDERSON, RODERICK J (0325)
DONAHUE, PAUL J (0156) HESS, DANIEL L (0141)
DONALD, JAMES W (0016) HESTER, ANDREW JR (0325)
DORIS, JAMES P (0006) HING, JOHN JR (0147)
DREWERY, ROBERT C SR (0016) HINTON, CHARLES R (0210)
EARLY, ROBERT B (0079) HOGGE, DANIEL W (0075)
FARKAS, ROBERT A SR (0072) HOLMES, CHARLES (0128)
FARMER, DON R (0243) HOLT, JAMES D (0260)
FEATHERSTON, W.B. (0125) HOLT, JAMES L (0368)
FLEMING, ROGER LEE (0227) HOPKINS, JOHN C (0073)
FLETCHER, GEORGE H JR (0164) HOWELL, EDWARD L (0127)
FLETCHER, LEONARD (0208) HUFF, HARRY C (0013)
FORTIN, ARTHUR (0075) HUFF, WILLIAM E SR (0330)
FOSTER, DERISE V (0006) HUFFMAN, EMERSON O (0126)
FOX, AL (0186) HUMPHREYS, ROBERT H (0327)
FOX, ARTHUR D (0401) HUTCISON, FREDERICK L (0295)
FOX, EDWARD D (0401) IRESON, JACOB (0245)
FU, richard R (0054) IVIE, CLOYOS J (0021)
FUNK, CHARLES V (0166) JACKIE, THEODORE J (0130)
GAINES, DORIS JR (0141) JAKOLA, CHARLES L (0364)
GARDNER, ALFRED J (0006) JAMES, WILEY S JR (0009)
GARREN, CATHERINE (0003) JAMISON, ROY W (0141)
GASKELL, ANDREW (0104) JESSEE, JOHN D (0046)
GASH, ALBERT (0016) JOHNSON, ROBERT C (0364)
GAY, GEORGE (0037) JONES, CLAIBORNE W (0036)
GEBHARDT, JOHN (0037) JONES, JAMES (0073)
GEIGER, HARRY (0209) JONES, SAMUEL Y (0120)
GIBB, ALFRED (0003) JONES, TRUELY M (0079)
GIBLIN, JAMES (0141) KARNECKI, SUSAN (1799)
GILBERT, ALBERT (0007) KEDDELL, PAUL M (0283)
GILBERT, EMERSON (0130) KENNEDY, RONALD (0141)
GILBERT, HARRY (0104) KING, ELBERT S (0020)
GILBERT, ROBERT (0072) KIRK, WALTER D (0068)
GILBERT, WALTER (0007) KLKA, DONALD SR (0021)
GILLY, ALBERT (0176) KODENSKI, WILLIAM R (0105)
GILLY, EDWARD (0020) KOGER, MOIR R (0078)
GILLESPIE, BILL H (0020) LARSEN, DALE P JR (0130)
GILLESPIE, BILL H (0020) LARSON, JAMES (0003)
GILLESPIE, BILL (0020) LEE, CLAIDE G (0080)
GILLESPIE, BILL H (0020) LENCO, RAYMOND B (0062)

Post Everlasting

From the Pulpit
Frank Carr
Department Chaplain

Virginia Legonnaire     December 2016 3
World War II Veterans Honored

‘Their example of citizenship, in both war and peace, is their legacy to us’

The Leon A. Harper American Legion Post 50 in Crewe was part of a joint team involving Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 and the Town of Crewe in a sometimes emotional service recognizing surviving Nottoway County World War II veterans.

Eight local World War II veterans, between 89 and 95 years of age, were honored in a Town of Crewe ‘Service of Remembrance and Gratitude’ at Crewe United Methodist Church on the 75th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. The hour long service, which had moments of emotion, consisted of readings of scripture, poetry and vignettes of local veterans killed in action and, as Crewe Mayor and American Legion Post 50 member Greg Eanes noted, “those who came home and turned their swords into ploughshares to rebuild their families and their communities.”

Mayor Eanes said, “All of them, men and women, black and white, Jewish or Christian, sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. Time does not permit us to tell all their stories. We can shed light on a few in order to illustrate the service of them all.”

Mayor Eanes said, “The examples many of these veterans set in civilian life are as worthy of emulation as the example they set in military life. Their example, in war and peace, exemplifies the Judeo-Christian principles upon which our republic was founded and is a proud part of our American heritage. Their example of citizenship, in both war and peace, is their legacy to us. As long as we remember their sacrifice and emulate their examples, our Republic will survive.”

Certificate and Medals Presented

The veterans in attendance were presented with World War II Victory Medals and Certificates “from the citizens of the Town of Crewe in remembrance and gratitude” for their service “between 7 December 1941 and 31 December 1946.” Town Manager Wade Walker presented the certificates as Mayor Eanes narrated. Each veteran’s certificate noted “your personal example of service and sacrifice during our nation’s greatest 20th Century crisis represents the highest form of citizenship, patriotism, self-sacrifice and devotion to the principles of American Liberty as embodied in the Constitution of the United States.”

Among those present were Navy veterans Joseph K. Baldwin, Richard H. Ragan, Cecil Yeatts; Air Force veterans Jimmy Jones, Jr., Amos Bowen and Leonard Hughes; and Army veterans Carleton Abernathy, Sr. and Walter Wilson. Mr. Hughes was unable to attend but was present, just not on the front pew with the other veterans.

Following individual ovations, the veterans were collectively received with a warm standing ovation by approximately 200 in attendance including many young people.
The meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by the Department Commander Jim Chapman at 11:00 a.m. The invocation was given by Dr. Frank Carr prior to the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution. Sergeant at Arms John Hess conducted the POW/MIA ceremony. Adjutant Dale D. Chapman called the roll. Those present:

**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS:**
Jim Chapman, Department Commander; Gerald Rhoads, Immediate Past Department Commander; Dale D. Chapman, Department Adjutant; Mike Mitrione, Alternate National Executive Committee; Brian Mulligan, Department Service Officer; Dr. Frank Carr, Department Chaplain; Ron Fanning, Department Sergeant-at-Arms; Sam Ramseur, Department Historian; Tommy Lee, Department Treasurer.

**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS:**
Bob Brady; Jim Flint; Earl Pierce

**DISTRICT COMMANDERS:**

Absent:
Thomas Saunders, National Executive Committee; Joe Vaccaro, Department Judge Advocate

Commander Chapman welcomed all attendees and reminded them of the Rules of Order of Business of the Department Executive Committee meeting.

Commander Chapman then recognized Past Department Commanders in attendance:
Dale Chapman; George Lussier; Brett Reistad; Ron Miluszewski; Doug Ramos; Mike Mitrione; Linden Dixon; Dan Dellinger; Andy Robertson; Les Clevinger; Gerald Rhoads

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

The local Convention Committee was recognized by Commander Chapman for their hard work.

Commander Chapman then presented National Commander Dale Barnett’s Post Excellence Award to Post 1.

Commander Chapman then presented two posts with “All Time High” in post membership. They were Posts 88 and Post 1.

**REPORT OF DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
No Report.

**DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE**
No report.

**DEPARTMENT TREASURER**
Tommy Lee reported that the budget for the year 2017 will be presented during the convention meeting for approval. He stated that the department is within budget and is following the direction of the Department Finance Committee and the Department Executive Committee.

**DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN**
No Report.

**DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER**
No Report.

**DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN**
Sam Ramseur reported that 2 books were turned in and he was extending the due date until Saturday at 9 a.m. for the history contest.

**DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT**
Dale D. Chapman mentioned thanks to committee chairmen and district commanders for their hard work. He commended the office staff for hard work and dedication. He spoke on the response (closing the loop) on TFA’s from headquarters. Each District Commander needs to complete the circle with a follow up email or phone call to department on the status of the request.

**AMERICANISM COMMITTEE**
Tom Queck turned in a written report that stated all of his sub committees gave reports. The national Americanism report was turned in by the deadline. He reported that Consolidated Reports must be completed (25 present)

**JROTC DRILL TEAM**
Robert Cardwell turned in a written report that stated there has become an issue with schools not allowing weapons on the premises. Schools are not replying to requests to participate. He reported that the lack of communication is a big problem. The Competition will be held at Little Creek during the Spring Conference. (8 present)

**ATHLETIC COMMITTEE**
Tommy Whitlow turned in a written report that stated a bowling tournament is back on track. A successful tournament was held in February and they are actively looking for a host for 2017. The Golf Tournament was a success at Goodyear Golf Course, Danville, VA on June 3-5, 2016. The fall tournament was held in Virginia at Inglewood Golf Course. The Softball subcommittee had no report. Baseball Subcommittee Chairman Jim Grenier reported that on the new tournament process, discussed registration issues and discussed tournament cost. He is actively looking for a host for the 2017 Junior and Senior Tournaments. The Junior Tournament for 2016 will be played August 3-7, 2016 hosted by Stafford Post 290; Senior Tournament will be July 25-30, 2016 hosted by Danville Post 525. Leesburg Post 34 will host the Mid-Atlantic Region Tournament August 3-7, 2016 and the World Series will be played August 11-16, 2016 in Shelby, NC (20 present)

**BOYS STATE COMMITTEE**
Bill Stramm turned in a written report that stated a recap was given of 13 no shows, 30 alternates attended, 3 left sick, 1 sent home for discipline issues with a total of 683 completing the program. The Samsung Scholarship had 128 applicants and for the first time ever the winner had a perfect score. The attendance level needs to be at 800. Stressed the need for placement forms. They will arrange transportation or pick up sick boy leaving Boys State the rate being $115/night. He asked for a motion to approve this contact, seconded, approved. The second contract was for the Centennial State Convention in Roanoke at the Holiday Inn and Sheraton with the rate being $129/night plus 13.3% tax for a total of $146.16/night. Committee felt rate was too high plus consensus was not to split Auxiliary and Legion at 100th Anniversary Convention. A discussion was held to initiate guidelines for conferences and conventions to see if amount of space needed could be reduced. Nancy Harting to replace Ginny James to represent Auxiliary on Committee. A motion was made, seconded and passed to make sure department supply laynards for conventions and conventions so they are available when needed. (10 present)

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**
Doug Ramos stated that the budget will be up for approval during the finance meeting. He also stated that the budget meeting was in May and it is difficult to prepare a budget when budget requests do not come in.

**INTERNAL AFFAIRS**
Vice Chairman Brett Reistad reported on the meeting that was held at Department Headquarters June 10th. He reported on the post issues with Post 368 and Post 225. An adhoc committee was created for the prison posts. A discussion was held on the Legion Riders Constitution and Bylaws. The Lucian Butler Scholarship was discussed with some minor changes. Dave Wallace from Post 162 was chosen to attend National Leadership College. The Yearbook project fundraiser was approved. Sons of the American Legion dues to be increase effective July 1, 2016 by $1 per member.

Brett made a motion that all actions of the Internal Affairs Committee become part of the Department Executive Committee; seconded; approved.

**CONVENTION & CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**
Joe Vaccaro turned in a written report that stated the briefing that was given by Dr. Frank Carr prior to the JROTC Drill Team. The convention given to the New Officers Conference on Thursday was restated. Handouts on information of the Assistance received this year James to represent Auxiliary on Committee and the Department Executive Committee.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE**
John Kokernak turned in a written report that stated the briefing that was given to the New Officers Conference on Thursday was restated. Handouts on information of the Assistance received.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**
Rick Oertel turned in a written report that stated a discussion was held to those in attendance that might wish the General Assembly to consider any legislation for the 2017 session. Issues discussed: potential liability of claims officers. Dale Chapman Department Adjutant reported that accredited claims officers have liability coverage;
Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting

MINUTES from page 5

Rick was asked to speak with Brian Mulligan, DSO to ascertain what legislation might assist in getting claims through Roanoke and a disconnect in communication/coordination between the state DVS and the USDVA in regards to homeless veterans was noted. (13 present)

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
No Report

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE
Dorothy Toddman turned in a written report that stated a discussion was held on Legion concerns that were mentioned in the American Legion brochures by Commander Barnett. Some key issues were Veterans healthcare, Veteran job, Education and Flag protection. A discussion was held on the battle of immigration and there are still problems. The blood drive report from Maudie Price stated that Post 176 had a blood drive and received 55 pints. (9 present)

FOREIGN RELATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE
Al Steward turned in a written report that stated a discussion was held on not having a strong nation show. Reports on what activities they are doing. (10 present)

LAW & ORDER/YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE
Phil Dunn turned in a written report that stated a discussion was held on the upcoming Youth Enforcement program July 17-22, 2016 at the Police Academy. There were three LEO applications and one Firefighter/EMS application for review. (8 present)

ORATORICAL COMMITTEE
Greg Mueller turned in a written report that stated a discussion was held on Tim Park’s participation at the National level. Input was taken on ways to get word out to students about the contest. Suggestions included contacting those who attend Boys and Girls State, local newspapers, word of mouth, interaction with youth organizations including Boy and Girl Scout troops and 4H. Find judges for your local contests with school officials, police, and military, state and local government officials are all good sources. Every two weeks or so the Department Oratorical Chairman will pass to District Commanders and Oratorical Chairs contact information on students interested in the contest. (10 present)

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
Buck Owen turned in a written report that stated a presentation on the 100th anniversary of the American Legion was shown. A DVD on American Legion Post 104 was presented and a discussion followed. Facebook is a great way to promote but it must be kept updated. Media and history go hand in hand; keep records of events at your post. (18 present)

VETERAN AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE
Willie Ransom turned in a written report that stated Resolution #2 Defibrillators was discussed and then approved. (30 present)

AWARDS & RECOGNITION
No Report

AMERICAN LEGION RIDER’S SUB COMMITTEE
J. J. Jones turned in a written report that stated the Legacy Run and Legacy Fund were discussed. This year there are over 2000 ALR chapters with estimated 110k-150k members. Reports were given from each Regional Director. J J stated that many other states are following VA ALR’s lead in several areas. It was reported that many posts have had various rides that all have great outcomes.

S.A.L. SUB COMMITTEE
Les Clevinger turned in a written report that stated several questions were answered by the subcommittee in forming new squadrons and several questions were answered about their eligibility in becoming a member. (12 present)

VA’S COMMITTEE
Margaret Fields turned in a written report that stated the hospitals gave reports on what activities they are doing. (16 present)

NEW POST & REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
Lewis Field stated that there was an addition of one new post this year and there have been ten revitalizations.

BOY SCOUTS SUB COMMITTEE
No Report

WOMEN’S OUTREACH SUB COMMITTEE
No Report

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE
No Report

RESOLUTIONS ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE
Thomas Saunders turned in a written report that stated Resolution #1 Membership Eligibility was referred to the Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Resolution #2 Defibrillators was referred to Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. (2 present)

DIVERSITY TRAINING COMMITTEE
Rita Chandler turned in a written report that stated the significance of both women and men respecting one another in the workplace; and how we perceive each other. Diversity will change significantly in the workplace soon. There has been a variety of misunderstandings. A good leader will encourage his staff to stop and think about how you set your invisible boundaries. Attitudes start at the top and filter down; involve and foster an attitude of openness. Grow by communication, showing advancement and broaden community network. (21 present)

Commander Chapman then recognized the three vice commanders and the district commanders and thanked them for their year of service.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
None

NEW BUSINESS
None

CLOSING
In closing, Jim Chapman expressed his sincere appreciation to everyone that had helped him during his year as Department Commander expressing special thanks to certain PDC’s, Committee Chairmen, Department Vice Commanders, District Commanders and Department Staff.

The Memorial Prayer was given by Dr. Frank Carr.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

VA Claims Clinic at American Legion Post 134 and VFW Post 8446 in Buckingham

The meeting of the new Executive Committee was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by the Department Commander Dave Stein. The Department Chaplain Dr. Frank Carr gave the invocation.

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

**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS**

Dave Stein, Department Commander; Jim Chapman, Past Department Commander; Thomas Saunders, National Executive Committeeman; Mike Mitrione, Alternate National Executive Committeeman; Ron Hesson, Department Sergeant-at-Arms; Sam Ramsre, Department Historian; Dr. Frank Carr, Department Chaplain

**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS**

Frank Hillyard; Ray Barbour; Greg Mueller

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Dale D. Chapman, Department Adjutant; Tommy Lee, Department Treasurer; Joe Vaccaro, Department Judge Advocate

**DISTRICT COMMANDERS**


Absent:

Brian Mullican, Department Service Officer

Commander Chapman asked all the Past Department Commanders to rise and be recognized. Those present:

Linden Dixon; Dale Chapman; Tom Saunders; Doug Ramos; Mike Mitrione; Bob Hannon; Les Clevenger; Jim Chapman

This being the first meeting of the new Executive Committee there was no old or unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The first order of business was the confirmation of Dale D. Chapman as Department Adjutant and the headquarters staff salary 2016-2017 at $263,760 per annum.

The Department Officers listed below were also confirmed:

Tommy Lee, Department Treasurer; Joe Vaccaro, Department Judge Advocate; Sam Ramsre, Department Historian; Brian Mullican, Department Service Officer; Linden Dixon, Boys State President, and Department Brian Mullican, Department Service Officer

The new Department Officers were given the oath of office.

Linden Dixon, Boys State President, gave a report on the recent Boys State program. The next Boys State will be June 18-24, 2017 at $400 per attendee.

Dan Dellinge, Chairman of Internal Affairs stated that on July 9, 2016 the American Legion Riders rules and procedures were reviewed. He also stated that an ad-hoc committee was created with Jim Chapman as Chairman. A motion was made to accept the above, seconded and approved.

Next, Dale D. Chapman read the following list of Committee Chairmen for confirmation by the Board:

- Thomas Queck, Americanism
- Tommy Powell, Athletic
- Thomas Saunders, Awards and Recognition
- Bill Stramm, Boys State
- A. B. Brown, Children and Youth
- Jon Mierzewski, Convention and Conference
- Doug Ramos, Finance
- Dan Dellinge, Internal Affairs
- Rick Oertel, Legislative
- Bob Brady, Membership
- Deloris Todman, National Security
- Al Stewart, New Post and DMS
- Greg Mueller, Oratorical
- Buck Owen, Media and Communications
- Willie Ransom, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

A motion was made that any errors in this listing of committee members be corrected and any vacancies occurring in any appointed office or standing committee may be filled by the Commander with the advice and counsel of the Internal Affairs Committee. This motion carried.

Dale D. Chapman then explained to the travel and officers expense allowance for District Commanders and Department vice Commanders as well as travel for the Department Executive Committee.

Department Adjutant Dale D. Chapman reminded District Commanders in attendance that they needed to provide the names, addresses and post numbers of all those they appointed to committees for Department Headquarters inclusion in the Department Directory.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

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**First Vice Commander’s “Gung Ho” Column**

Brother and Sister Legionnaires, families, and friends,

How many of us remember the words “train as you would fight?” Those words came to mind as I was sitting in class at the Department of Virginia’s Leadership College. Truthfully, I had a billion other things to do on my Saturday to include working on my son’s Eagle Scout project. However, our Commander (like all good Commanders) encouraged his Vice Commanders to attend so I felt obligated to go (just like all those early morning runs with the Battalion CO).

After the third session of the day, I came to realize that American Legion training is invaluable and more importantly, our Legion must be well trained if we are to win the many fights we face in the coming years. What fights you ask? The fights are protecting our Veterans and their benefits, defense of our great Nation, teaching Americanism and God, and lastly, protecting our youth and children. Could I enter any of these fights and win without proper training? The answer is doubtful. Instead, I left the Leadership College with a renewed belief that EVERY member (old and new) should be trained. Just like in combat, our Legion and Post members must be trained in order to be ready for combat.

The best sport teams, Olympians, companies, colleges, and military all train to be the best...so why shouldn’t we? I encourage all Post members to seek training on-line, at our American Legion colleges/conventions, and/or through our Commander. The training I received at the Leadership College was superb, meaningful, and made me a better Legionnaire. I also wish to thank those Legionnaires who provided the outstanding instruction. So next time there are training opportunities at our Post please join me so we can strive to make our Post even better.

Proudly serving,

Semper Fi,

First Vice Commander, Post 162

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**Legionnaire Special License Plate Project**

The License Plate Project is at 100% of the goal of 450 inquiry applications. Department HQ has emailed or mailed the DMV application to all of the members who participated in the pre-application process. The DMV form must be completed and mailed back to Department with the $10.00 fee.

Once we receive all 450 DMV applications and fees at Department we will transfer them to DMV.

On arrival at DMV of the 450 applications, Virginia Delegate Ander son will introduce a bill in the legislature so it becomes law. The Legion plate will then be produced and sent to the applicant via mail.

The above sequence to obtain a special plate is required by the Virginia State Legislators and DMV.

It normally takes about 2 years to get a special plate approved in Virginia. We were well ahead of that schedule at the inquiry stage. Having said that, it is important for all of our members to promote the project so we can stay on our fast track. We can be ready by the time the legislators go back into session in the Fall! Success time is totally dependent on the response of our members.

NOTE: If your license plate comes due before we have the Legion plate issued, renew your plate(s) as you normally would. DMV will mail your Legion plate to you when it becomes available.

Right now we are at about 52.4% of our goal. (It is a lot more difficult to get the $10.00 from our members than the free pre-application form.)

We get an update on our stats once a month from Department. You can check those stats by clicking on the Department Web page. You can also download an application – questions to 540-337-4305 or legioncon.hess@ yahoo.com

DEPARTMENT WEB PAGE: http://valegion.org/ Media-Communications Committee
Lani Burnett was elected the new Post Commander of Post 290 for the year 2016-2017. Lani is the first female Commander in the Post long 70th year history. She is a retired Master Sergeant of the United States Air Force. Pictured with Lani (Front) rear, left John Hill and right John Cox.

Installation of Officers of Post 55 by Ron Miluszewski Past Department Commander

Lani Burnett was elected the new Post Commander of Post 290 for the year 2016-2017. Lani is the first female Commander in the Post long 70th year history. She is a retired Master Sergeant of the United States Air Force. Pictured with Lani (Front) rear, left John Hill and right John Cox.

Installation of Officers of Post 55 by Ron Miluszewski Past Department Commander

American Legion Post 325 recently honored Bill Stevens as a charter member and 70 year member of the post. Stevens joined the Marines during WWII and after Parris Island volunteered for sea school and served on many ships during the war. Shown are: Post 325 Commander Don Mitchell, Richard Gunn, Kenny Fitzgerald, Stevens, Linwood Phelps, Ken Powell, Joe Darnell, Rob Phelps and Dale Roberson.

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American Legion riders, Last Capital Chapter, recently prepared to ride to Dan River High School for a 9/11 remembrance ceremony. Shown left: Joe Darnell, Danny Coleman, Van Elliott, Kenny Fitzgerald, Roy Craft Jr., Brandy Heath, Freddy Hill and Gary Knick.

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Packs for the Military

The veterans of American Legion Post 39 Williamsburg have launched a new initiative names: “Operation: Military Overseas Morale”. The program is designed to help bolster the morale of those active duty military serving in far-away places.

Commander White, Post Commander, explains: “We’re sending packages of comfort food and necessities to two forward outposts right now. We want them to know they are not forgotten by those of us at home.”

“Operation MOM, as it is affectionately known, consists of collecting from Post 39 members, such items as: packaged candy, granola bars, beef jerky, lip balm, travel size packages of Kleenex, shampoo, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, crossword puzzles, Sudoku books, Readers Digests, gum and mints, etc. Post 39 is also self-funding purchases of these materials as well.

Commander White reports: We’ve had a great response from the troops: Katie Weissbacher aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard LHD 6 and Captain Kathryn Yates, USN, and LTC Jesse Cruz, USA, in Afghanistan. As Captain Yates relayed: “I never realized how Spartan conditions were, and how much care packages meant to the troops. I know now from personal experience that the packages are a high boost to morale.”

Post 55 Commander Tommy Lee presented a Honorary Life Membership to Ed Mercer during a recent meeting. Looking on is Department Adjutant Dale Chapman.

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American Legion Baseball 2016: From the Baseball Chairman

Congratulations for another great baseball season. It was over it seemed as soon as it began. The Department of Virginia restructured 36 Senior Teams and 26 Junior teams into 6 leagues. The league structure was created to balance the number of teams played across the leagues and to set a path for earning a spot in the Department tournament. Tournament bid selection now follows a more standard qualification process.

With funding for the baseball program coming almost solely from the team fees (fees have been unchanged over perhaps a decade) and with significant decline in the number of teams over the last 4 years, this places significant financial burden on a Host Post. The Department Baseball Committee will soon consider strategic initiatives to ensure funding of the tournaments with the goal of continuing to provide a memorable experience for the players and teams. The Committee previously committed to not raising per team fees, will develop ways for Posts to host a baseball tournament as an opportunity for Post revitalization.

Scholarship Award

Congratulations to Department of Virginia and Colonial Heights Post 294 Adam Conway for being named as team captain for the annual All-Academic Team. The team is sponsored by Diamond Sports, a leading manufacturer in baseball merchandise and the official baseball used during Legion national tournaments. Each player on the team receives a $2,500 scholarship. Adam was named as an overall top academic player and named the team captain and awarded a $5,000 scholarship.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Baseball Champion

Post 34 Leesburg (tournament host)

Leesburg Post 34 Rangers won the American Legion Mid-Atlantic regional baseball tournament title as the host team.

The tournament was held at Fireman’s Field in Purcellville, featured eight-team double-elimination regional tournament. Post 34 met challenges from the state champion squads of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Leesburg tasted defeat for the only time when Virginia champion Danville Post 325 upended the local boys 11-9 on Aug. 6. The Rangers tallied five runs in the ninth to tie it at 9-9 before succumbing in extra innings.

Rangers infielder and pitcher Kurtis Meyer, was awarded the tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Meyer was named MVP owing to his seven innings of one-run relief work, saving two Leesburg victories and earning the win in the title-clincher. He reached base nine times, scoring six times.

It was a multi-Post team effort. Many thanks to Post 34 Leesburg, Post 293 Purcellville, Post 150 Sterling, and Post 2001 Ashburn for bringing this tournament to the Loudoun County community. Additional thanks to 16th District financial contributions and member participation, the Loudoun County Posts provided a memorable experience for Championship teams across the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The Rangers represented the Department of Virginia in the American Legion World Series, Aug. 11-16 in Shelby, N.C.

Department Baseball Champion Post 325

Danville (tournament host)

Post 325 Danville hosted the Department of Virginia Senior Division tournament at American Legion Field in Danville VA. Many thanks to Doug Heptinstall, Tournament Director, and Post 325 Danville membership for hosting the tournament.

Tournament Sportsmanship award winner was Nathan Davis from Post 2001 Ashburn and the most valuable player was Corbin Watson, Post 325.

Post 325 advanced undefeated through the tournament with wins over Post 2001 Ashburn, Post 21 Winchester, Post 280 Chesapeake, and Post 13 Staunton; they then defeated Post 280 Chesapeake in the championship game.

Post 325 Danville advanced to the Mid-Atlantic Regional tournament in Purcellville VA. Post 325 lost their first game then picked up 3 consecutive wins to play Post 159 Flemington NJ for the right to play Post 34 Leesburg in the Championship game. NJ advanced to the championship game.

ALB Department of Virginia Junior Division Tournament

Congratulations to Post 16 Lynchburg Cardinals for winning the Department of Virginia Junior Division Champion.

Post 16 Lynchburg defeated Post 284 Buccaneers 15-3 in the final game of the tournament. The rain didn’t cooperate but, we finished the tournament. Many thanks to Bill Gilmore and Fred Miller and from Post 290 Stafford for hosting the tournament.

Tournament Sportsmanship award winner is Stafford Post 290 team and the most valuable player is from Post 16, Jakes Seldon.
Medicare Supplement Insurance

It’s no secret that while it gives basic protection against health care costs, Medicare may not cover all your medical expenses. To help cover some of the out of pocket costs, many members, just like you, have chosen the group Medicare Supplement Insurance Plan endorsed by your Department of The American Legion.

Other great reasons for choosing the Legionnaire Insurance Trust plans:

- Legionnaire Insurance Trust regularly monitors the program.
- The excellent value the plans provide for the price—the competitive group Medicare Supplement Insurance Plans are not available to the general public.
- The convenience and exceptional service whenever you need it—whether you’re preparing to enroll or have questions about your benefits—get answers to your questions over the phone.

Where can you get more information on selecting a Medicare Supplement Insurance plan? You will receive prompt, personal and responsive service from courteous customer service representatives ready to answer your questions.

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Legion outlines veterans’ priorities to Trump Transition Team

The American Legion hosted a meeting with President-elect Donald Trump’s transition team to address concerns and lay out top priorities leading into the new administration.

The veteran-focused meeting was the first of its kind held between Trump’s team and any outside organization. American Legion Executive Director Verna Jones, affirmed the commitment of veteran service organizations to advocate for those who have “borne the battle” – veterans from all eras.

The American Legion co-authored a three-point position paper along with executive leadership of the Big Six Congressionally chartered service organizations, supporting the Trump administration’s efforts to strengthen, reform and sustain the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System, remove budget constraints that negatively impact veteran-centered programs, and reform the VA’s claims and appeals process.

“The American Legion would like the Trump administration to know that we value our Department of Veterans Affairs,” said Jones. “Dollar-for-dollar, there is no better care or value available anywhere in the United States – period. While we will always support strong and expeditious accountability measures for bad actors, the institution of the Department that was designed to care for those who have borne the battle is sacrosanct, and it belongs to the more than 22 million veterans who risked their lives in defense of this country, many of whom left significant pieces of themselves on the battlefield.”

Additionally, The American Legion initiated a call-to-action on fairly new Legion priorities – support of research related to the impacts of medical marijuana and the Drug Enforcement Administration’s reclassification of cannabis from a Schedule I drug to Schedule III. Reclassification of the drug would allow easier access to pure strains of the substance to cultivate quantifiable research and statistics regarding marijuana’s medical benefits.

Each VSO in attendance had the opportunity to address the transition team and briefly lay out their main concerns. Other issues addressed during the meeting included:

- The delivery of high quality, accessible, comprehensive and veteran-centric health care
- A properly funded 21st century Department of Veterans Affairs
- Sustainment and strengthening of specialized and integrative services for veterans seeking spinal cord injury/disease care, treatment for blindness and poly-trauma care
- Timely and accurate delivery of all earned benefits to veterans and their eligible dependents and survivors
- Including disability compensation, pensions, education, housing assistance and other necessary support.

Although the 114th Congress focused a great deal of attention on reforming key elements of the delivery of veterans health care and benefits, VSOs urged the Trump administration to consider recommendations outlined in their three-point letter to:

- Take the necessary steps to end sequestration
- Sufficiently appropriate funds to increase physician and nurse staffing within the VA especially for amputee care, mental health care and other specialized services
- Provide adequate resources to adequately expand VA infrastructure

Thomas J. Snee, National Executive Director of the fleet Reserve Association echoed the sentiments of fellow VSO representatives while they addressed transition team members as a united front. Snee stated that he was encouraged and hopeful about President-elect Trump’s 10-point plan (to reform VA), and looks forward to future conversations with the president-elect’s team.

The transition team stated their willingness to keep the lines of communication open with VSOs and committed to continue to advocate for all veterans.

“The American Legion greatly appreciates the priority and focus the transition team has shown by making this their first step in a critical transition process,” Jones added. “We are encouraged that the incoming administration chose veterans and they did a great job of setting the tone for a very productive meeting.”

Legion Supports Efforts to Assist Veterans Impacted by ITT Closures

The American Legion is supporting federal efforts to assist student veterans impacted by the closure of ITT Technical Institute (ITT Tech) by providing educational counseling through its service officer network.

ITT Tech announced it was permanently closing all its campuses nationwide Sept. 6, citing actions by the U.S. Department of Education to ban the for-profit institution from enrolling new students using federal financial aid over concerns of financial mismanagement. This announcement directly affects more than 6,000 military veterans expected to attend fall 2016 classes using GI Bill funds.

Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, which is free to all veterans and their families. While the majority of a service officer’s work involves application for VA disability benefits, these professionals also provide information, referrals and resources on education.

Recently, service officers have received information to specifically counsel veterans affected by the ITT Tech closings.

“We are deeply troubled by ITT Tech’s abrupt closing and the blockade it has placed in front of veterans seeking higher education,” said American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt. “Since its inception, The American Legion has honored its commitment to veterans and their families in readjusting to civilian life. Today, our service officers assist veterans with understanding their benefits, solving VA’s health-care maze and finding educational opportunities that match their interests. We are honored to serve as the nation’s vanguard for veterans’ education benefits by counseling these veterans through our service officer network.”

To contact your nearest department service officer for ITT Tech information or questions on your VA benefits, visit www.legion.org/serviceofficers.

American Legion Post 325 recently held their annual Christmas Dinner sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 325. Delicious food and fellowship was followed by a performance by Christ the King Lutheran Church. “The Naughty Boys” of Post 325 presented their renditon of “All I want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth.” Shown l-r: Lee Mayberry, Kenny Fitzgerald, Linwood Phelps, Steve Walker and Rob Phelps.
The American Legion Dept. of VA 6th District recently held their fall conference at Post 42 in Martinsville. Representatives of area posts discussed the recent Dept. of VA conference in VA Beach and discussions of how to reach out to veterans was on the agenda. Front row: 6th District Commander Walter Davis from Post 29 and Adjutant Charlie Price Post 29, and back row: Dept. Vice Commander, Western Zone, Ray Barbour and 6th District Vice Commander Reginald Bennett Post 1097.

Post 10 Bugler Mark Meier sounds colors as a final salute is rendered. To most veterans the flag of the United States of America holds a special place in our hearts. From our first day as a service member we salute the flag and follow it into battle until the day it covers us in our death. Americans often miss an important aspect of displaying the flag; that is what to do with the flag when it becomes worn or otherwise unserviceable. One only has to drive down the streets of any community to see faded and frayed flags flying from homes and businesses.

Seated is Mr. Hill Felton who was presented a Certificate honoring him for 70 years of continuous membership in the American Legion Post 8 in South Boston. The award was presented by (standing-R) Jimmy Gulley Post 8 historian and Mickey Conner Post 8 adjutant.

American Legion Post 232 Gretna recently held a Purple Heart Monument dedication at the Post home. The monument dedication coincided with Purple Heart Day – a day to remember Purple Heart recipients. In attendance were 6th District Commander Walter Davis, Department Vice Commander Western Zone Ray Barbour and Ann Barbour Post 1097 Auxiliary.