COMMANDER’S MESSAGE

Legion Family:

Legionnaires, Auxiliary and SAL, here we are almost four months since I became your Department Commander. It is hard to believe how quickly time is passing by due to the events that are scheduled through Lois, commander’s agenda specialist. Thank you, Lois, for keeping me focused and on schedule, and to Tricia, who is doing a great job on the 2019-2020 membership team alongside our Department Membership Chairman/Department Vice Commander Rich Godfrey. The dept. is feeling good about our members going to our national organization. The next membership target is 65 percent on Nov. 8. The “Life Blood” of The American Legion is our membership. With the passing of the Legion Act, signed by President Trump on July 30, 2019, the opportunity exists for up to four million new members into The American Legion. It is our duty and obligation to reach out to these veterans who weren’t previously allowed to join our ranks due to Congressional mandates. We need to find these veterans and encourage them to join our ranks as Legionnaires. This isn’t just the post, county or Department Membership chairperson’s duty, it’s everyone’s responsibility to sign up new members. Let’s strive to reach and “Go Over the Top” this year in membership.

With your help, the goal of 40,939 members is attainable.

We recently completed the 101st American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis from August 23 – 29. We had a large contingent of Legionnaires, Auxiliary and SAL in attendance at the convention. Senior leadership in The American Legion, Department of NJ, was on hand when Employment, Homeless and Education Chairman Bob Looby received the National Guty Award for the third time in four years. Keep up the good work Bob and Jim Scanlon. PDC Ray Miller made presentations totaling $22,000 from the Dept. of NJ (Operation Comfort Warrior, NEF, TFA and Children and Youth). PDC Ray also donated $5,000 to my Department Project at the August DEC meeting, and the purchase of two tents was recently approved for use by the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL. Thank you PDC Ray. The dept. also participated in The American Legion National Parade on Sunday, August 25. James William “Bill” Oxford of North Carolina was elected the 101st National Commander on Thursday, August 29. The Legion Family from NJ was also present to witness the installation of Gary Nelson as National Vice Commander East of the Sons of The American Legion. Congratulations, Gary!

Continued on page 2

NJ at the 101st National Convention

When it comes to memorials honoring our nation’s fallen, Indianapolis devotes more acreage than any other U.S. city, and is second only to Washington, D.C. in number of war memorials. From the enormously impressive Soldiers and Sailors Monument in the center of downtown to the two block American Legion Mall, one could not walk far in Indy without seeing an expression of pride and appreciation for those who served, which made the parade route on Sunday, Aug. 25 for the 101st National Convention, much more interesting than marching through city streets. The American Legion Parade of States kicked off in front of the national headquarters of The American Legion, proceeding south down Pennsylvania Ave. past American Legion Mall, Veterans Memorial Plaza, the Indiana War Memorial and University Park, before turning north onto Meridian, to pass by the reviewing stand before ending past the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Following the march on that sunny, warm afternoon, the NJ Centennial Committee and the Sons of the American Legion hosted an after-parade party for the delegation at the Hilton Downtown. It featured great food and close-knit camaraderie and honored Gary P. Nelson, of the NJ SAL, on being elected National Vice Commander East of the organization.

The New Jersey Caucus met Monday, Aug. 26, at 7:30 a.m., in the Hilton Downtown Corydon Room. The 48-member delegation heard from Ken Mueller, AENC Texas, promoting the leading candidate for national commander from Texas, Paul E. Dillard, for 2020-2021, and heard reports from the various committee representatives on resolutions presented at their committee meetings. At the Committee on Legislation meeting, Joe Gigliuzza, PDC and chair of the Legislative Committee for the Dept. of NJ, was elected secretary. That afternoon, it was on to Post 64 to spend that rainy Monday at the annual Four Corners Party (see photo on page 5).

Although the convention center was just a few blocks away, as rain continued to fall, the contingent boarded buses on Tuesday morning to attend the opening of the 101st Convention. After calling the convention to order, Commander Brett Reistad opened the convention with appropriate ceremony, which was followed by a troupe of talented Legionnaires recounting the history

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Adjutant’s Column

John D. Baker
Department Adjutant
Tel. 609-695-5418

October 14, while in Indianapolis for the National Fall Conferences, will mark four months since your 2019-2020 leaders took office. I can say that they have been working very hard on your behalf. This will be Commander Newell’s third trip to Indianapolis (membership workshop, National Convention, Commanders & Adjutants Conference, aka, Fall Conference) since his term began. He has been all over the state, not only for dept. functions, but for county and post functions, as well. Your NEC and ANEC maintain contact with our national organization and keep NJ informed.

It is an exciting time to be a Legionnaire, especially in NJ. The LEGION Act, which expanded eligibility, will be a great enhancement to our array of membership tools. We are forming two Ad Hoc Committees, “NJ Moving Forward” and “National Commander”, in order to look towards the future. Our Employment, Homeless, and Education Committee continues to do great things for our veterans. More committee chairmen are attending national conferences throughout the year, which will benefit our dept. and our veterans. This year we will send two NJ Legionnaires to National Legion College, and we hope to continue this in the future. New Jersey has been recognized in the national magazine a number of times, with plans to add to this number. Please continue to donate to our NJ fundraisers. Your donations stay in NJ and continue to help your fellow veterans within our state. New Jersey Proud.

Speaking of proud, I am proud of your NJ staff, both here at Trenton Headquarters and in our Newark Service Office. Your staff does a tremendous job year-round. Besides Department Service Officer Ken Connors and Assistant Department Service Officer Judith Morales, the Newark office has a new administrative assistant, Andria Colombo, who started July 1. Trenton staff information is noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>DAYS 2019 / 2020</th>
<th>HOURS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John D. Baker</td>
<td>Department Adjutant</td>
<td>Off Friday / Friday</td>
<td>7:30-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tricia Grunewald</td>
<td>Membership Specialist</td>
<td>Off Thursday / Mon</td>
<td>7:30-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lois McNulty</td>
<td>Cmdr’s Agenda Specialist</td>
<td>Off Tuesday / Thurs</td>
<td>7:30-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tammie Abdabou</td>
<td>Dept. Programs Specialist</td>
<td>Five Day Workweek</td>
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<td>Daniel Lurie</td>
<td>General Info. Specialist</td>
<td>Five Day Workweek</td>
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<td>Keith Black</td>
<td>Financial Specialist</td>
<td>Five Day Workweek</td>
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I would like to thank all of our members for their assistance throughout the year. Our Blue Cap Legionnaires are the heart and soul of this organization. As always, I encourage you to visit your Department Headquarters, located at 171 Jersey Street, Building 5, 2nd Floor, Trenton 08611, and meet your hard-working staff.

Commanders column continued

As we go into the fall/winter, I hope that everyone has a safe and happy Thanksgiving and a merry Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanza. Be safe if you are traveling in/out of the state when visiting friends and relatives during the holiday season. I look forward to seeing everyone in the new year. I know that I will be as busy in 2020 as I was during the beginning of the year.

May the Lord be with our men and women in the uniformed services here and overseas. God bless The American Legion and most importantly may God continue to shine on these United States of America.

Girl Scout Project Spruces Up Post 249

Lauren Smith, center, of Girl Scout Troop #96229, along with her sister Emily, of Troop #96713, and parents, Colleen and John, were honored at American Legion Post 249 in Lake Hiawatha. They received a certificate of appreciation signed by Legion Commander Bruce Michels (right in photo) and Adjutant Michael Poplowski. Lauren, while volunteering to serve at the post fish & chips dinner, noticed the hall was badly in need of a paint job. She asked the post’s permission to paint the hall as her Girl Scout Silver project, a Girl Scout’s second highest honor. Since the hall is quite large, she did receive assistance from her family members. The hall looks great and all Legion members were very appreciative.

New Jersey Legionnaire
The American Legion, Department of New Jersey 171 Jersey Street, Building #5, Second Floor, Trenton, NJ 08611 Phone: 609-695-5418 FAX: 609-394-1532 WEBSITE: www.NJAmericanLegion.org

New Jersey Legionnaire is an official publication of The American Legion, Department of New Jersey. It is published quarterly and has a circulation of 40,000.

Managing Editor: Gary Cooper (Post 401, South Brunswick)
SEND ALL NEWS ARTICLES in Word Format & DIGITAL PHOTOS TO: njlegionnaire@gmail.com, include phone number.

**Do not send anything in pdf format**

For submission guidelines refer to the Press Release 101 booklet on the department website in the Public Relations Forms section.

Statements contributed by individual writers may not agree with the endorsed position of the department or editor and will reflect the opinion of the contributor only.

Articles submitted may be edited for space and/or clarity.
National Convention continued

of The Legion through song and dance, interspersed with commentary by Theodore Roosevelt IV, honorary chairman of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, Denise Rohan, past national commander, discussing the importance of American Legion programs, and Reistad, who said that “Team 100 means we believe in the future of The American Legion. The American Legion has a bright century ahead.”

Throughout the convention, Jeric and Lorna, Legionnaires from Hollywood, CA Post 43, were featured in a series of short films: Journey to Discover the Legacy of The American Legion, during which they explored the beginnings of the organization and the current day accomplishments and initiatives.

David Reibin, past national commander, read letters that were in a time capsule sealed in 1969 from the then national commander and William F. Hauck, national adjutant, at the 100th National Convention. The commander’s letter was written by Brigadier General William C. Doyle, New Jersey’s only national commander. It read:

May 10, 1969
To the National Commander
The American Legion
On Our 100th Anniversary

My Dear Commander:

The fact that this letter has been delivered to you gives evidence that The American Legion always has been correct in having faith in the future of America.

On May 10, 1919, the founders of this great American Legion met here in St. Louis and demonstrated their faith in the future by dedicating our organization to continued service in peacetime to the country they had served in war.

Here and now, as we observe the 50th Anniversary of our founding, we have remained true to the principles set out by the founders. Through our National Security program, we have championed the cause of peace and the preservation of freedom through preparedness. Through our Rehabilitation program, we have made the American veteran the best cared-for in the world. We have helped America’s children over many of the pitfalls of childhood, pitfalls of both physical and social disorder, through our multi-faceted Americanism and Child Welfare programs.

We expect that these four basic programs are continuing in your day in some form and perhaps under some name more in keeping with the times, providing The American Legion still is functional. It would, of course, be our hope that as you read this message, our organization might no longer be functional, for this would mean that wars would have ceased long enough ago, and the numbers and vitality of membership would be on the decline. Even if this has happened, there should still be an American Legion of sorts, for vibrant young men are joining our ranks today as they become eligible upon honorable separation from service in the Vietnam era. We don’t know what your world will be like, but we know it will be different from ours. Just last December, and over the period including Christmas Day of 1968, man first left the earth’s atmosphere and orbited the moon. Those men were Americans. This summer, if all goes well, the first men will land on the moon. Those men, it is expected, will also be Americans.

As we place this capsule, we are just beginning to probe the mystery of space. As you open it, we expect you will have gone far beyond.

We wish you well, and we are confident that if in your era there is an American Legion of substance, and if there is a need for the type of service The American Legion was founded to provide, you will be providing it then, just as we are now.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM C. DOYLE
National Commander—1968-1969

Commander Reistad and National Adjutant Daniel S. Wheeler read letters they wrote, which went into a time capsule to be opened at the Legion’s 150th convention. In his letter, Reistad acknowledged the advances in space, specifically President Trump’s recent authorization of a U.S. Space Force. “I have no doubt that if the Space Force becomes a reality, your American Legion is leading the way as fierce advocates for the needs of the space veteran, just as we have been doing since the doughboys returned from World War I,” Reistad read.

He added that some aspects of The American Legion are certain to remain important in a half-century. “I can only imagine the talent and resourcefulness that the United States military of 2069 must offer, but we know only of what occurred over the first 100 years of American Legion history, it has become obvious to us that the patriotism and willingness to sacrifice life and limb for country bonds all veterans regardless of what period they served. I have a firm belief that this devotion to a greater cause has continued during the 50-year period from 1920 to 2069.”

Reibin, chairman of the organization’s 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, took all the letters and one of Commander Reistad’s challenge coins, and sealed them in a canister, to be held at American Legion National Headquarters until 2069.

Following presentations to The American Legion Youth Champions and Spirit of Service Awards, by Commander Reistad and Jim McClooughan, Medal of Honor recipient, Admiral Charlie Ray, vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, addressed the assembly. Ray, who when 10 years old served as a batboy for an Arkansas American Legion baseball team, said “you made a difference during the government shutdown. The American Legion was the first to step up. American Legion posts distinguished themselves giving $1 million to Coast Guard families. I want to thank you for your tremendous generosity.”

Jim McClooughan, Medal of Honor recipient, pictured above with Commander Reistad, then addressed his fellow Legionnaires.

“As you go home to your Legion posts and to represent your state, I urge you to follow the advice my father gave to me: you never do anything halfway, you do it to the best of your ability and make sure you do it until the job is finished.”

“I’d like to share three things with you. Number one, we did not lose the war in Vietnam.” He quoted historian of the war, Dr. Douglas Pike: “We did not lose a battle of any significance, it was almost an unprecedented performance of our fighting men. The war was a major defeat for the NVA and VC.”
“To those here who fought in Vietnam, I want to say thank you for your service and welcome home,” McCloughan added. “I’d also like to thank those who support our service personnel who fights in every war.

“The Vietnam veteran stopped communism from spreading to all the countries from Singapore to the Philippines. I’m sorry it took 50 years to recognize you all. We stopped the spread of communism because they didn’t want to mess with the American fighting man. They knew that if they tried to make those countries communist, too, we would be right there fighting against any dictator in the world.

“Two point five million were deployed to Vietnam and now 14 million ‘wannabes’ say they fought in Vietnam and were never in the service. I’m going to tell you why they want to be you. If the media and the protesters portrayed you as the bad guy, why do 14 million want to be like you? Because you are not the bad guy. You are an ABA — an America Bad Ass.

“Here’s why you are an ABA. Because when it was your turn to serve you didn’t run and hide, you joined and took your place among others to fight. You confirmed your commitment to America and its ideals. You signed your family’s name on a line with 9.7 million others. You agreed to die for your country, its people and our way of life, if it came to that.

“You worked your butt off in basic and advanced training so that you could do your duty to the best of your ability. You became a member of the biggest team you will ever be a part of no matter what your job or branch of service. You stepped onto a plane or ship and headed to a land you probably never heard of. You fought for a group of human beings who could not defend themselves. You were part of the toughest military force in the world — the most intelligent and compassionate. You were part of the big brothers or big sisters of the United States of America.

“You didn’t tell your family and friends back home what was going on because you didn’t want to worry them. You saw those you grew to love get wounded or lose their lives. At times, you felt helpless because you couldn’t save them. You gave and you gave and then you kept right on giving.

“You saw and experienced things you had never, ever seen before and will never see again. You didn’t know at the moment what you had accomplished, but as a teacher and a coach for 40 years, I’m here to tell you, you took the biggest test of your life and you aced it. You played in the toughest game of your life and you won. You had officially become an ABA.

“Don’t expect those who haven’t walked a mile in your boots to know and understand what you have done, just know in your heart and in your soul that you are a savior of man, even those yet to be born.

“Those of you who are members of a group called Vietnam veterans did something that no one else has ever done — it’s unprecedented. No one in any other war has done this: 98 percent of you were honorably discharged. And you continue that remarkable character as you serve your family, community, church, your state and this great nation.

“It’s sad that there are a few people who disrespect our national symbol during the national anthem. The only reason they can do that is because you won for them the choice for them to be able to do it. I would like to point out, that there are thousands of people standing and saluting our national symbol — the same flag that draped your brothers’ and sisters’ caskets and accompanied them home. Know this, my fellow Legionnaires, you are in every wave, every wrinkle of that flag. As the wind whips it across the sky, it is you that has given it wings to fly. You are the epitome of an ABA hero and I am proud to be called one of your brothers in arms.”

Next, Donald M. Benton, director of the U.S. Selective Service System, asked Legionnaires to spread the word about registering for the Selective Service System. “If young men do not register by the time they are 26, they are not eligible for many things, such as federal jobs; jobs in 31 states and other counties and cities; no federal education assistance. In some states, registration is 70 percent; we can’t have that,” he said.

Following Benton, Commander Reistad presented the Distinguished Service Medal posthumously to Senator John S. McCain, a 38-year member of Post 2, Tempe, AZ. Mike DeWine, governor of Ohio, accepted on behalf of McCain’s family.

Michael R. Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State, a member of Post 4, Wichita, KS, began his remarks citing a line from The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion: “To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism,” and discussed what Americanism means: “Americanism is something we must be proud of, every day. We served because America is great. We are not apologizing for America anymore in our foreign policy. Americanism means standing up for our principles. Americanism means taking care of our own.”

That afternoon, Commander Reistad, accepted donations to the Legacy Fund.

Pictured below, from right, NIPDC Gene O’Grady, Ray Miller, commander of the Dept. of NJ, and John Baker dept. adjutant, presented a $2500 donation from the state of NJ to Reistad. In total, $590,152 in donations was presented on stage, bringing the total for the year to $975,288. Later that day, the trio presented a $10,000 donation the National Emergency Fund and $7000 to the Temporary Financial Assistance Fund.

Day two began with Captain Louis Cavaliere, chairman of the board of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Foundation, a member of Post 405, Philadelphia, discussing the services of the foundation and presenting the Legion of Honor Bronze Medalion to Commander Reistad and national vice commanders James Pisa, Paul Spedaliere, John Milburn, James Wallace and Steve Sweet.

The assembly next heard from Robert Wilkie, secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs. “Republicans and democrats can agree on our veterans,” he began. “There is a reason for that — this Legion. Suicide prevention is the number one clinical priority for the president. We will not get anywhere on suicide until the nation has a conversation about life.

“On opioid addiction the VA is leading the way. We have reduced opioid prescriptions by 50 percent, and are using alternative treatments such as yoga and acupuncture. The VA fits the needs of our veterans, not the veteran fitting to the VA.

“Some worry we are on a path to privatization. I was ordered not to cut my $220 million budget or my 390,000 employees; not an indicator of going private. We are now transitioning to electronic health records, launching that initiative in the north-
getting the care and respect they deserve every single day. President Trump has signed into law the largest increase in our national defense since Ronald Reagan, and he signed a budget deal that gives our military personnel the biggest pay increase they’ve had in the last 10 years. Very soon we will have a sixth branch of our armed forces. The U.S. Space Command will be here soon.

“We have taken care of those serving today, just like The American Legion. Our administration is equally committed to taking care of every warrior who returns home. Let me be clear, in this White House, this president this administration, know veterans' benefits are not entitlements. They are the ongoing compensation that was earned in the uniform of the United States of America.”

Pence talked about the legislation signed by President Trump and the ways the administration has improved the VA system to meet the healthcare needs of veterans, expanded the GI Bill, eliminating student debt of permanently disabled veterans and improving the economy to increase employment of veterans to the best in 20 years.

“We are making America strong, we are making America secure, we are making America great again. It is an honor to be with you today. All of you did your part, through your work in The American Legion you are still doing it. Ours is the land of the free because it’s always been the home of the brave. You are the brave. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your courage. God bless our men and women in the service and God bless America.”

Before the election of new officers for 2019-2020 on Thursday, Aug. 29, Commander Reistad accepted donations for Operation Comfort Warriors. On behalf of the Dept. of NJ, John Baker, adjutant, and Jack Dunne, Hudson County commander, presented a check for $2500.

James W. “Bill” Oxford was elected national commander of The American Legion later that afternoon. He has been a member of the nation’s largest veterans organization since 1986. A native of Lenoir, N.C., Oxford as adjutant commander of the North Carolina American Legion from 2010 to 2011.

Read more about the convention at www.legion.org.
Membership

Membership Chair

Membership: The Key to Our Success

With the American Legion now signed into law, thousands of honorably discharged veterans who have served since Dec. 7, 1941, may now join. The American Legion, originally created to do the things that other federal agencies couldn’t, has now become a key player in the nation’s service to veterans.

Questions: What’s the impact on veterans who were not eligible for Legion membership?

Answer: Veterans who are not eligible for Legion membership will be able to join. Those who are eligible will still be able to join.

Questions: What’s new about the American Legion?

Answer: The American Legion is now signed into law, which allows more veterans to join. The organization has also pledged to improve their services for veterans.

Questions: How does this affect membership?

Answer: The American Legion is not expanding its membership, but rather offering more opportunities for veterans to join.

Questions: How can I join?

Answer: You can join by going to www.legion.org and following the instructions on the site. You can also join by contacting your local American Legion post.

Cops the new application form from the back of this magazine, or see your county officers for new membership materials.

Employment, Homeless & Education

Bob Loddy, Chair

Employment, Homeless & Education Committee

We continue to "serve" all veterans and their families in our communities. We are committed to helping veterans and their families find employment, housing, and access to healthcare.

Questions: What’s the impact on veterans who were not eligible for Legion membership?

Answer: The impact on veterans who were not eligible for Legion membership is that they will now be able to join. Those who are eligible will still be able to join.

Questions: What’s new about the American Legion?

Answer: The American Legion has pledged to improve its services for veterans, including employment and homeless assistance.

Questions: How does this affect membership?

Answer: The American Legion is not expanding its membership, but rather offering more opportunities for veterans to join.

Questions: How can I join?

Answer: You can join by going to www.legion.org and following the instructions on the site. You can also join by contacting your local American Legion post.

We are also the project manager for another major event in the fall of 2021, the American Legion Convention. With our limited current resources, we are committed to providing the best possible event for our members and their families.

We appreciate the efforts of our partners, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Salvation Army, the Salvation Army of Central New Jersey, and the New Jersey American Legion Auxiliary. Without their support, this event would not be possible.

The American Legion Heroes of Summer

Bob Loddy, Chair

Employment, Homeless & Education Committee

These heroes ended their military service and embraced home life, for both new and young veterans. The American Legion was proud to sponsor and be a part of this event.

Philip D. Cesta, a member of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, was the grand marshal of the parade. He served in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

We are grateful to the New Jersey American Legion Auxiliary and the New Jersey American Legion for their support in making this event a success.

Sue Sullivan and Joe Hagen of the New Jersey American Legion Auxiliary

This is a great opportunity for our members to support and celebrate our heroes.

We are also grateful to our partners, including the Salvation Army, the Salvation Army of Central New Jersey, and the New Jersey American Legion Auxiliary, for their support in making this event a success.

Salute to those who served...
Legislative Report
Joseph M. Gugliuzza, Legislative Chairman

Now that the Congress has gone back to work, maybe some things will get done (LOL). Let’s re-cap what has been accomplished and what still needs to be accomplished:

The LEGION Act, which you have heard so much about, is now fully implemented. The National organization has updated the membership application so that new members merely have to attest that they served at least one day of active duty since Dec. 7, 1941 and were honorably discharged. Remember, when signing up a new member be sure and ask for his/her DD Form 214 or in the case of Guardsmen; women or Reservists they must possess orders under Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301, which was created following Desert Storm to replace 672, which are orders from the Secretary of Defense and are federal orders and will appear on the “Authority Line”.

The Mission Act is up and running and will allow veterans the opportunity to visit a local doctor, providing they receive prior approval and that the doctor is approved by the VA. It is also important to note, in the event of a true medical emergency, go to your nearest emergency room and get immediate medical assistance. Worry about payment later. In addition, only give the emergency room personnel you Medicare card, not your VA card. Showing both cards will only complicate things.

The Blue Water Navy legislation will be fully implemented by Jan. 1, 2020, however, if you feel you have an illness related to Vietnam, while serving in the Navy, file a claim now. While full adjudication will not commence until after the first of the year, your claim will be on file, and you won’t be on the bottom of the pile.

In New Jersey, we have sent letters to the members of the NJ Senate and General Assembly who have prior military service to promote the creation of a veteran’s caucus that would work in conjunction with the Veterans Executive Legislative Action Council (VELAC) to promote legislation vital to the military and veterans’ community. It seems at this time, that nothing will happen on this until after the November elections. Surprise!


A3841/S2447 – Requires landlords to count federal military service member and veteran housing allowances as income for purposes of qualifying for rental housing; designated as Securing Electronic Records for Veterans Easy Act. 08-05-2019, P.L.2019,c.206.

A4022/S2525 – Directs the NJ Adjutant General to enter into agreements with legal services organizations to provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness. 08-05-2019, P.L.2019,c.207.

A4095/S3529 – Grants veterans discharged under honorable conditions the right to peddler’s license. 8-05-2019, c.211.


It has come to my attention, that there seems to be some difficulty for posts to obtain their residential rates for utilities under the law passed last year. That law was P.L.2018,c.77, which was signed into law in Aug. 2018, but was delayed for implementation due to the companies not getting their act together. If you are having problems with your utility company, contact Stacey Peterson at Stacy.peterson@bbspu.nj.gov or Cindy.Bianco@bbspu.nj.gov

We have been contacted by State Senator Vitale’s office with regard to a proposal to expand the $250 Veterans Property Tax Deduction to all veterans, that Laurie McCabe, of his office is working on, thanks to Danny Dunn, DEC, Middlesex County. The proposal outlines two avenues, one to gradually implement the exemption in increments over a period of time, or to go for the whole thing immediately. The proposal looks promising and we will keep you up to date and keep in touch with McCabe and the senator.

We have begun the process of getting our agenda ready for the Washington Conference which will be held March 8 - 11, 2020. I urge as many as possible to make this trip to D.C. Over the past several years, our numbers have grown smaller. It is important to go on the Hill with as many Legionnaires as possible. So, I ask you to make a real effort to start your planning now and get to Washington in March. Your voice and presence are important to the dep. and the organization. Save the Date: March 8 -11, 2020.

The American Legion Knocks Army’s Plan to Limit Arlington National Cemetery Burials. The American Legion acknowledged difficult decisions have to be made to lengthen Arlington National Cemetery’s life span, but the Legion, the nation’s largest veterans organization, called on the army to do more.

National Commander Bill Oxford issued the following statement with regard to “new” rules to limit burial in Arlington. “Simple restrictions are not the only answer, and we also call on the army to incorporate ways to maximize existing space while considering expansion of the cemetery to allow for more veterans to rest on this hallowed ground.”

This was in response to the army’s plan to ensure that America’s heroes will continue to be buried at Arlington for the next 150 years by instituting stricter eligibility requirements for interment at this national landmark. More than 400,000 people are buried in the cemetery and only 95,000 burial plots remain, though a planned expansion will add 37 acres of burial space and more than 10 years of life to the cemetery under existing rules.

The army plan calls for reserving burial sites for the remains of Medal of Honor recipients, former prisoners of war, personnel killed in action, recipients of awards for valor, veterans who matriculate to high-ranking government posts, presidents and vice presidents. The cremated remains of other veterans could rest at Arlington in above ground urns.

Currently, service members who retire from active duty and are eligible for retirement pay automatically are eligible for burial at Arlington. About 22 million living service members and veterans are eligible for interment at Arlington, the army said. (Source: Washington Times)

On another front, caregivers for veterans of conflicts before the 9/11 terrorist attacks won’t receive congressionally mandated benefits until summer of 2020 at the earliest, the VA announced Sep. 25.

The VA will miss its Oct. 1 deadline to establish the information technology needed to extend caregiver benefits to families of pre-9/11 veterans, a task that was to be completed last year. The missed deadline pushes back other target dates, delaying enrollment into the program until at least next summer. Enrollment will begin “in the summer of 2020 or once the secretary has certified that the new system is fully implemented,” according to a statement from the VA.

In a statement issued by the executive director of the DAV, “The continued delays in expanding the program demonstrates that these veterans and caregivers are simply not a priority. The VA has now spent several years and millions of taxpayer dollars, abandoning potential solutions along the way, attempting to address IT deficiencies, but has nothing to show but more excuses.” (Source, Stars and Stripes)
Service Officer’s Report
Ken Connors
Department Service Officer

As we move ahead into the change of the seasons and progress though the Legion year, I hope that everyone had a great summer.

Proceeding forward, as with the change of the season, VA continues to change the way it does business for both health care and benefits.

As mentioned in previous articles, make sure you understand any new program that you may be looking to utilize. If you are looking to enter into the programs that are part of the VA Mission Act to allow the veteran health care from other sources outside the VA Health Care, make sure that you discuss this with your primary health care provider in VA to make sure that any outside records are associated with your VA health records. This is very important, especially if you are receiving a prescription. When using an outside medical source make sure you have a list of what you are using through VA.

On the benefits portion, VA continues to address and process claims with the use of the national Work Que, which allows the VA to send claims to other VA regional offices for development and decisions, which, at the present time, is a work in progress that appears to be improving a little at a time.

On the matter of appeals, VA has hired a number of new law judges to assist with holding more requested hearings to address the backlog of legacy appeals (appeals prior to 2/14/2019).

On the issue of filing an appeal of a recent decision, the VA has started with the new process that was signed into law in Jan. 2017. The requirements have changed as there are various options for requesting to change the decision. It is highly suggested that you contact the Department Service Office.

This year, as we plan for the post service officers training that is held in the Dept. of NJ American Legion Leadership College (date to be announced), we are hoping that the local post will send a member. All the new changes within the VA on benefits and health care has led to a major change on how and what the post service officer can and can not do. It is important that this point of contact has the information needed to provide good service.

Celebrating 100 Years
Raritan Post 23

On July 17, 1919, Post 23 was granted a charter by the American Legion National Headquarters and became the first post in Monmouth County. Almost 100 years to the day, on July 13, 2019, Post 23 celebrated its 100th anniversary with a gala dinner at the post with over 110 guests in attendance.

State Commander Robert Newell and several past state commanders. Also, in attendance was State Senator Vin Gopal (left in photo), chair of the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, who presented Post 23 Commander Ed Poplaski with a proclamation from the NJ State Legislature.

VFW Commander Chuck Raferty presented the post with a plaque. Keyport Mayor Collette Kennedy, who presented the post with a proclamation from the town at a regular meeting, and other local and Legion officials were in attendance.

The event was topped off by a water salute from a NYC Fire Department fire boat.

Bergen County

The Bergen County American Legion (BCAL) Centennial Committee hosted a sold-out gala on Sunday, Sep. 29. County Commander Francis “Fran” Carrasco and Committee Chair Mickey Burhurt hosted the celebration to bring recognition to the 23 American Legion posts in the county that were chartered in 1919.

Four hundred guests were on hand to hear keynote speaker, Theodore “Ted” Roosevelt, IV, chairman of the American Legion National Honorary Centennial Committee, and enjoy entertainment from The American Bombshells. The once-in-a-lifetime event saw Past Department Commander Frank Calandrillo, Jr., as the master of ceremonies. In-person greetings were offered by National Executive Committee member Chuck Robbins and Department Commander Robert Newell. The committee was fortunate to secure video greetings from National Commander Bill Oxford. Messaging focused on the future of The American Legion. A portion of the profits from the gala and the ad journal will be donated to The American Legion National Emergency Fund and the Children’s Organ Transplant Association.

Congressmen Bill Pascrell (D-9-NJ) and Josh Gottheimer (D-5-NJ) were both in attendance. Pascrell had entered comments into the Congressional Record to congratulate the BCAL on its centennial gala, and Gottheimer presented the organization with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to commemorate the occasion. Post 58 member and Bronze Star Medal recipient Assemblyman Gordon Johnson (D-37-NJ) presented a ceremonial joint resolution from the NJ State Senate and Assembly. Twenty municipal governing bodies, along with the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders presented the Centennial Committee with congratulatory resolutions or proclamations during the centennial year.

The BCAL is the second largest organization in the state.

CUTTING THE BIRTHDAY CAKE, from left: The American Bombshells flank Department Commander Robert Newell, Past Department Commander and Master of Ceremonies Frank Calandrillo, Jr., Bergen County Centennial Committee Chair Mickey Burhurt, Centennial Committee member Val Nicholas, National Executive Committee member Chuck Robbins and Bergen County Commander Francis Carrasco.
AMERICAN LEGION
BASEBALL
Frank Calandrillo
Baseball Chair

The 2019 American Legion baseball season opened with a big challenge; namely, the continuing loss of teams due to lack of sponsorship; players pursuing other sports; or, perhaps, something else. The Dept. of NJ went from 300 teams 14 years ago, down to just 40, and we are not the only dept. feeling the pinch. The biggest takeaway is that we still have a successful program, even if it’s quality over quantity.

As a result of fewer teams, the executive committee retooled the beginning of the 2019 State Tournament, using four districts of four teams in a double-elimination format beginning July 19.

District 1 - Bergen County - Kennedy Field, Lodi - Cresskill Post 21, Whitehouse Post 284, Wood-Ridge Blue Devils and Broad Street Park Post 313. A late entry into the baseball program was Wood-Ridge Blue Devils, managed by mayor and State Senator Paul Sarlo, a former ALBB player. Tired of outside leagues charging too much for his town residents to play baseball, he inquired about American Legion Baseball and was in at the registration deadline. Impressive start for this young team. Winner: Whitehouse Post 284; Runner-Up: Broad Street Park Post 313.


District 3 - Gilder Park, Bordentown - Washington Township Post 521, Brick Post 348, Bordentown Post 26 and Lawrence Post 414. Winner: Bordentown Post 26; Runner-Up: Lawrence Post 414.

District 4 - Camden Community College, Blackwood - Allentown, Brooklawn Post 72, West Deptford Post 100 and North Hamilton. Winner: West Deptford Post 100; Runner-Up: Brooklawn Post 72.

STATE FINALS:
The district winners and runners-up advanced to the State Final Eight at a new venue this year, begin-

ning Friday, July 26, and concluding on Wednesday, July 31. Our State Finals were held at Jim Hynes Stadium at Kean University, Union. We inspected the facility last fall when we realized we lost a lot of playing time due to field conditions and rain at Moody Park, Ewing. As chairman, I also need to be aware of national deadlines for completing tournaments and declaring a state champion. Kean has a turf field and stadium seating in a campus setting. Our games were completed on time and sometimes early. We almost made it without any rain, which was predicted for the championship game on July 31. We moved the game up three hours to 4 p.m., but a torrential downpour started at that time. At least all the players were on site and not driving in that downpour. Although we had a three-hour rain delay, it proved how quickly the field drained and we were ready to play at 7 p.m. Kean also provided live streaming of the championship game.

Major League Baseball was represented by the MLB Scouting Bureau, as well as scouts from the Philadelphia Phillies, New York Yankees and Cleveland Indians. College scouts were present from Kean, Binghamton and Rutgers.

The Championship Game was between Broad Street Park Post 313 and Brooklawn Post 72. Brooklawn emerged the state champion - their 30th in its 65-year history. They proceeded to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Tournament in Asheboro, NC, beginning Aug. 6. The state tournament MVP trophy was presented to Logan James Manuela, right fielder for Brooklawn Post 72, pictured below with, from left, Dave Kobrick, Commander Bob Newell and me. Congratulations!

I would like to thank committee Vice Chairman Dave Kobrick for attending the games to assist in running the tournament, as well as PDVC/PCC Doug Herrin from Hightstown Post 148 (Mercer). Your help was greatly appreciated. Special thanks to the unnamed Whitehouse parents who loaned their tent to Brenda for two days at the gate.

My thanks to Department Commander Robert Newell, who threw out the first pitch in Game 1. After sitting through the three-hour rain delay, Commander Bob and Vice Chairman Dave Kobrick assisted me during the awards presentation at the championship game. Diamond Sports provided each player on the championship and runner-up teams with new bat bags, and they also supplied the dept. with sixty dozen baseballs for the tournaments.

The 2019-20 Baseball Committee will be reorganized at the Oct. 2019 DEC meeting. I am requesting that DEC’s recommend representatives that will attend committee meetings and work the tournaments. Tournament play is a vital part of the committee, regardless of whether the county has a baseball league. On that last note, we hope to increase our participation in every county and grow the program again.

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL ACTION:
The next stop before the National World Series was the Mid-Atlantic Regional held in Asheboro, NC. On Wednesday, Aug. 7, Day One of the tournament, Brooklawn Post 72 faced Vienna (VA) Post 180. Vienna scored six runs early and held off a valiant run by Brooklawn Post 72. Brooklawn recorded an 8-7 loss to Virginia.

On Thursday, Day Two, Brooklawn put up eight runs in the first three innings to take care of Hamburg (NY) Post 527, by a score of 9-3. Brooklawn now had a 1-1 record heading into Day Three, which becomes a "Win or Go Home" day for Brooklawn. Seeking a 16th American Legion World Series appearance, Brooklawn got off to a bad start with a loss on Wednesday, but they have been nearly perfect since.

Another win on Friday kept Brooklawn's hopes alive, eliminating Wilmington (NC) Post 10 by a score of 8-3. Joe Rappaport pitched a strong four innings in relief of Joe Gatta. Nick Nocella helped power Brooklawn Post 72 with a two-run homer, while Chase Conklin and Zachery Cerveny each had doubles.

Day Four was another mismatch-up between Brooklawn and undefeated Vienna Post 180. Vienna scored first and kept adding to its lead and ultimately held off a late rally to eliminate Brooklawn, the team which won every Region 2 title from 2011 to
2015, by a score of 6-2. Congratulations to the Brooklawn Post 72 team for their continued success throughout The American Legion Baseball program. The Mid-Atlantic Region winner was Randolph County Post 45, NC, who proceeded to the World Series after defeating Vienna Post 180 in both games of a double-header on Sunday.

**WORLD SERIES ACTION:**


Championship Tuesday became Championship Wednesday due to a game suspension because of rain. Idaho Falls Post 56 faced Fargo Post 2 in a nationally-televised American Legion World Series championship game on ESPNNews. These two teams squared off in their first game of the tournament. Idaho Falls, known as the Bandits, was 4-0 in the tournament, so far. The state of Idaho has sent representatives to the American Legion World Series in three straight years and nine times overall, never winning a championship.

North Dakota came into the World Series as the fourth Post 2 team to ever make it to the event, the first in 27 years (1969, 1989, 1992) and one of just five appearances from the state of North Dakota. Fargo’s only loss in the series was to Idaho in the opener.

Idaho Post 56 defeated Fargo Post 2, 5-3, and are the 2019 American Legion World Series Champions with a 5-0 Series record. Congratulations to the Department of Idaho!

**NATIONAL DIAMOND BASEBALL SCHOLARSHIP**

Diamond Sports is the official sponsor of American Legion Baseball and offers scholarships to players. Each department selects a winner, who then competes within each region (New Jersey is in the Mid-Atlantic Region) for consideration of additional scholarships. Eight players, one from each region, are selected at The American Legion World Series to win an additional $2,500. A ninth player, selected as the most outstanding member of the All-Academic Team, will be awarded an additional $5,000 scholarship. This year’s Mid-Atlantic Region winner represented West Virginia.

The Dept. of New Jersey winner of the Diamond Sports’ National Baseball scholarship is Connor Quigley, who will receive a $500 scholarship from Diamond. Connor graduated from Pascack Hills High School. While at Pascack Hills, he was president of the Debate Team, played baseball, was a 2018 state champion at Jersey Boys State and played for the Cliffside Park Post 126 Wolverines. He plans to study political science at Loyola University and is a recipient of the Loyola Maryland Presidential Scholarship. Congratulations, Connor!

**Post 331 Charitable Giving**

The Stephen C. Ludlam Post 331 and the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 331, serving the communities of Avalon and Stone Harbor, co-hosted the annual spaghetti dinner at the Yacht Club of Stone Harbor on Sep. 15. The co-chairs of this event were Jon Ready, of the post, and Joe Filacheck, SAL member. In the past, the proceeds of this fund-raiser were divided among multiple veteran and community organizations. This year, for the first time, the membership of both organizations voted to donate the money raised as a lump sum to a specific veterans organization, the Del Haven Chapter 44 of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). This organization provides transportation for Cape May County veterans to VA hospitals in Wilmington, DE, and Philadelphia, and to local clinics and hospitals for non-emergency care.

The number of guests served at the dinner between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. exceeded 300 people with total funds raised for the DAV of $5,135. At the end of the dinner, Post 331 Commander Tom McCullough, Post 331 Trustee Jon Ready, and S.A.L. Squadron 331 member Joe Filacheck presented the DAV Chapter Commander, Mike Houck, with a check for $3,500 as an interim payment of the donation. An additional check for $1,635 will be presented at the DAV chapter’s meeting. Several members of the DAV chapter were present at the dinner and their van was parked by the club’s entrance so guests could see it and be reminded as to where the fund-raising proceeds were going.

On Sunday, Sep. 29, Robyn McCrossin, on behalf of the Philadelphia Flyers Charitable Foundation, presented a check for $6,835 to Tom McCullough, commander of the Stephen C. Ludlam Post 331, to be given to the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home. The presentation was made in a private ceremony held at Post 331’s building in Stone Harbor. Also present for the presentation were Lisa Williams, supervisor of Recreation and Volunteer Coordinator at the Vineland Veterans Home, McCrossin’s son, Luke, and Post 331 members Jim Fleischman, Spence Jones and Jon Ready.

The Flyers Charitable Foundation of the Comcast Company has been a supporter of the Vineland Home for several years. This donation was from the proceeds of the Flyers Trial on the isle in June at Stone Harbor, as supported by Post 331. The donation, with a supplemental donation from Post 331, will be used to meet the veterans home’s need for an upgraded media and Wi-Fi system. Additionally, some of the funds will also be used to support Dept. Commander Robert Newell’s project of replacing fountains, waterfall, and landscaping at the home to provide a more relaxing environment for the home’s residents.

Presentation of Flyers Charities donation to American Legion Post 331. From left: Jim Fleischmann, trustee of Post 331, Spence Jones, 1st vice commander Post 331, Tom McCullough, commander of Post 331, Robyn McCrossin, Flyers Charities, and son Luke, Lisa Williams, supervisor of Recreation and Volunteer Coordinator at the Vineland Veterans Home, and Jon Ready. Trustee Post 331.

**Legionnaire Strikes Gold**

At its 2019 ASTRA Awards dinner, the NJ Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association awarded a gold award in print media to NJ Legionnaire. The American Legion, Dept. of NJ, was the only non-profit to receive an award.
2019 State Baseball Champions

Brooklawn Post 72 won another NJ state baseball championship - their 30th in its 65-year history. Pictured with the team, in blue shirts, are Dave Kobrick (left), Baseball Committee vice chair, Department Commander Robert Newell, and PDC Frank Calandrillo, chairman of the NJ Baseball Committee.

Read the full baseball recap on page 10.

Deadline for winter issue is January 3, 2020