National Commander Bill Oxford, Bo Durham and Jim Zajc at 2019 National Legion College in Indianapolis

National Legion College Attendees’ Week of Learning

The American Legion National College enhances knowledge and appreciation of The American Legion, and teaches the core values and contributions of the organization, its Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and many subordinate programs. The National Legion College prepares Legionnaires for leadership positions in posts, districts, counties, and departments through education, development, and motivation. The curriculum challenges student leaders to think critically and creatively about issues confronting the Legion.

The curriculum centers on self-taught, small-group sessions supervised by graduate facilitators, staff members, contracted professional speakers and national officers. Students review The American Legion’s core values, develop new ideas and consider the future. An emphasis is placed on programs, management techniques and leadership skills necessary to increase visibility of programs, growth in membership, and public awareness of the Legion and its corresponding organizations.

National leaders launch the week with sessions and lectures focusing on mentoring, recognizing and building leadership traits, and putting good leadership practices to use. These skills and techniques are practiced and reinforced throughout the week in a small-group environment and in student-led meetings and presentations. Small-group workshops provide students basic leadership training in a volunteer environment. Core subjects include mentoring, leadership styles and opportunities, time management, conflict resolution and legal issues.

Throughout the week, students learn the basics of developing communication strategies to promote American Legion programs, combined with the workshops and hands-on exercises. Topics include public outreach, media relations, “Reconnect” with today’s active-duty and reserve personnel, schools and community relations. Salesmanship and Marketing Developed skills make students more valuable to their posts and departments. Students’ employers also directly benefit from students’ increased effectiveness and productivity. Teachings include community networking strategies, public-relations techniques, marketing and salesmanship programs, and image-building techniques.
It was another successful Washington trip for the American Legion! Members from across the country gathered to “storm the hill” 8-11 March in our nation’s capital. Some twenty-five North Carolinians joined the thousands of Legionsmen and women to advocate for veteran’s issues. After touching on a series of historical accomplishments that defined the first century of American Legion legislative successes, North Carolina’s James W. “Bill” Oxford, National Commander of the American Legion, presented a three-step mission to lawmakers during a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs March 11. North Carolina’s National Legislative Director, Commander Oxford laid out the legislative agenda and lobbied for veteran’s causes.

“Reading today’s testimony, it is clear that we share many of the same priorities,” Chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., said. “We must address the national crisis of veteran suicide. Veterans must receive high-quality healthcare. We must understand the full impacts of future wars, and make sure that another generation of veterans don’t have to wait for the benefits and care they need and deserve.” Earlier in the week, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie purchased a packed house at the Washington Hilton.

Congratulations are in order for Robert G. Scruggs of Post 77 Henders- onville. Bob was awarded the VA Voluntary Service Volunteer of the year for his dedicated service to the Charles George VA Medical Center, Asheville, NC. During the past 47 years, he has logged over 27,000 voluntary hours at the facility. Starting in 1998, he served as Depu- ty VAVS and then in 2000, he began his service as the American Legion Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Representative (VAVS). He is a 52-year member of life. Bill Oxford at the Hubert M. Smith Post 77 in Hender- sonville, NC. He is held in the highest esteem for his hard work, dedication, and the genuine concern he conveys toward all fellow veterans. National Commander Oxford presented the award to Bob at the conference.

During the week, concerns about the coronavirus escalated. In front of Veteran Affairs’ Richard Stone chose his address to The American Legion’s Veterans Affairs & Reha- bilitation Commission to focus on this very topic. Stone said that in- cluded among VA’s missions is “to be the safety net for the American health-care system, should it be overwhelmed.” And frankly, the last

The American Legion News
James D. Moore, Jr.
Department Commander

The Chaplain’s Message
Michael Ramsey
Department Chaplain

Building A Foundation
It’s not just about the membership. National Commander Bill Oxford’s mission is about building a Foun- dation for the Future. We get so wrapped up in making goals that we forget that membership comes from forgetting Post Activity. It all starts at the Post. A Post that stays active, works with their community and keeps involved will grow their membership. Mem- bers keep the Post vibrant and alive. Buddy Checks can be done through- out the year not just in March or November. Check on your members, what they need and keep them in- formed on your Post activities. Every Post no matter the size always needs more helping hands. Visit your local Post and see where they need help.

The North Carolina Legion News
James D. Moore, Jr.
Department Commander

Tierian Randy Cash
Department Adjutant

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Articles May Be Submitted For Consideration To Be Published In The North Carolina Legion News, PO Box 26057, Raleigh NC 27611-6657.

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Email: tcash@nclegion.org

The North Carolina Legion News (Usps 309-812) is Published Four Times A Year, In A Private Postal Facility By The American Legion Department Of North Carolina, 2840 Fairfield Rd., Raleigh, NC 27610. Periodicals Postage Paid At Raleigh, NC. Postmaster: Send Address Changes To The North Carolina Legion News, PO Box 26057, Raleigh NC 27611-6657.
American Legion Names Winner In Speech Contest

Dudley, N.C. Saturday, January 11, 2020. A Dudley resident won the annual American Legion District 7 Oratorical Contest. Ethan Anderson won the contest held at the American Legion Post 11, Dudley, NC. Ethan, a 12th grader at Spring Creek High School, earned a Gold Medal and other awards and will now compete at the Division Level against winners of contests in other communities. Each contestant delivered a prepared oration as well as an oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. Ethan impressed the judges with a speech on 20th Amendment. Since 1938, The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program has encouraged the national high school students to study the U.S. Constitution and to hone their public speaking skills. For more information, please visit www.legion.org/oratorical.

Mid Winter Conference

The Mid-Winter Conference, held February 14-15, 2020 at the Hilton Raleigh North Hills, was well attended. We had National Vice Commander David King in attendance as our special VIP guest. The Auxiliary’s VIP guest was National President Nicole Clapp. The committee meetings held on Friday, accomplished the work of the Legion, and the Department Executive meeting was very informative with speakers Terry Snyder, founder of Operation North State informed the audience on the Christmas boxes sent to deployed military as well as the fishing festivals and other events they hold for veterans. Commander King spoke about National Commander Bill Oxford’s Foundation for the Future, and gave some history on The American Legion. The Legion was honored to have Secretary Larry Hall of NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs present to award checks to American Legion Posts severely damaged in the hurricanes this past year. His office partnered with The Legion to assist with construction and grants for Post 64 in Pollocksville and Post 154 in Trenton, NC. The Friday evening event was a 60’s themed dance complete with some dressed in their 60’s finest! The next meeting will be the Annual Convention held June 11-13, 2020 at the Hilton Raleigh North Hills. Plan on attending to participate in what the Legion is about.
Michael C. Gast
For District 16 Commander

Post Experience:
- Post Commander, 2014-15, 2018-present
- Finance Officer, 2015-16
- Post Adjutant, 2013-14

Goals as District Commander:
To retain existing members and recruit new members from active duty and retired military. As our members grow older, replacements must be made to keep our posts active.

Christopher Smith
For District 8 Commander

Military Service:
- U.S. Army 20th BN (C)(A) Ft. Bragg
- Work Experience:
  - 21 Continuous yr member
  - Post Commander, 5 years
  - Post Service Officer, 10 years
  - 100% Post Commander

District Experience:
- District 8 Commander 2017 to present
- National Achievement Award, 2018
- First to 100% District Commander, 2018
- Top District Commander, 2018
- Post Commander Award, 2018

Department Experience:
- Jr Sports Shooting Committee, 4 years
- Resolutions Committee, 2019-20
- V&A, Commission, 2019-20

Legion Education:
- American Legion Extension Institute, 2015
- Degree: Bachelor of Science

Greensboro Post 262
Proudly Presents
Jerry L. McClough
Alternate National Executive Committeeman

Military Service:
- U.S. Marine Corps, 1989 - 1999

Post Experience:
- Paid Up For Life Member
- House Committee 2013 – 2014
- Chaplain 2013-2014
- JBOTC Committee 2014 - Present
- Adjutant 2015-2018
- Commander 2019-2020

District Experience:
- Membership Chairman 2013 – 2014
- 14th District Commander 2016 – 2018
- Oratorical Chairman 2016-2018

Division Experience:
- Membership 2015-2016
- Oratorical Chairman 2019-2020
- Division III Commander 2019-2020

Department Experience:
- Law and Order Committee 2014-2018
- Sergeant-at-Arms 2015-2017
- Sergeant-at-Arms Asst Chief 2017-2019
- Department Adjutant 2016-2019
- JBOTC Committee 2017-2019
- Oratorical Chairman 2018-2019

Regional Experience:
- Kinder Camp Chairman 2019-2020

Henry A. Haynes
For Department Chaplain

Military Service:
- U.S. Army, Chaplain, March 31 1980 to March 31 1990
- Installation Chaplain at Fort Jackson, SC

Post Experience:
- The events of September 11, 2001 tasked the ministry resources of the Pentagon Chaplain's Office to the maximum. Chaplain Haynes' acquired National Guard Chaplains to assist with the demanding services required.
- Immediately after the attack be provided comfort and prayer and visited victims in hospitals as well as traveling with Senior Leaders to attend services across the country.
- He provided logistical support to the Chaplain Ministry at the crash site in the weeks following and to the personnel inside the Pentagon.

Post Experience:
- Member Post 30 Lincoln
- 5 member

American Legion Post 290
Presents
Clifton J. Kilby Jr
for 2020-2021
Division IV Commander

Military Service:
- U. S. Marine Corps 1982-1985, M. P. Canine Handler
- American Legion

Post level:
- Americanism Chairman
- Judge Advocate
- Membership Chairman
- Vice Commander
- Post Commander: 2017-present

District level:
- Vice-Commander 2016-17
- District 14 Commander 2017-2018

Division level:
- Division IV Membership Chairman 2016-17
- Department level:
  - Boy State Committee

Personal:
- Former Coast Guard
- Former Marine

Secretary:
- Spouse Cathy H. Kilby, Daughter-Jennifer Kilby, Sons Clifton J. Kilby III and Calvin E. Kilby and spouse Ashley K. Kilby.
- Retired: Forsyth Co. Sheriff's Office, March 2011
- Attorney Law Enforcement training, Forsyth Tech
- March 2011 to present

National Security and Foreign Relations Commission 2014-2016
- Law and Order Committee 2014-2018
- Sergeant-at-Arms 2015-2017
- Sergeant-at-Arms Asst Chief 2017-2019
- Department Adjutant 2016-2019
- JBOTC Committee 2017-2019
- Oratorical Chairman 2018-2019
- Oratorical Committee Vice Chair 2019-2020

National Experience:
- National Americanism 2015-2020
- National American Legion Co-Chair 2015
- National Oratorical Contest 2019-2020

District Experience:
- Community Service:
  - Triad Veterans Council Member 2014-2016
  - Community Veteran Engagement Board Member 2013-2016
  - Guilford County School Volunteer, Mentor and Lunch Buddy Program 2013-2018

Personal Information:
- Proudly Presents
- For Dist 23 Commander

Military Experience
- Marine Corps – 1982-1985
- Retired Marine

Post Experience:
- Post 22 Adjutant, 2017-2018

District Experience:
- District 23 Commander 2017-2018

Personal Information:
- Proudly Presents
- For Dist 23 Commander

Shelby Post 82
Proudly Presents
Woody Weaver
For District 23 Commander

Military Experience
- US Army – 1961 to 1984

Post Experience:
- 52-year member
- Post 530 – 1st Vice Commander 2010 to 2012
- Post 82 – 1st Vice Commander 2018

District Experience:
- 2nd District Vice Commander – 2019 to 2020

Department Experience:
- Vice Chairman Maryland Department Boys State – 2018-2020

Personal Information:
- Spouse, Vivian Weaver – Unit 82
- 5 Children
- 7 Grand Children

Shelby Post 82
Proudly Presents
Jim Quinlan
For Department Commander 2020-2021

Military Service:
- U. S. Marine Corps, 1971 - 1975

Office Held:
- Post 54 Adjutant, 1975-76, West Branch
- Post 54 Commander, 1977-78, West Branch
- Iowa Dept Historian, 1979
- IA Aost Adjutant, 1979-84
- IA Department Adjutant, 1984, 1986
- IA Dept Public Relations Chair, 1979
- American Legion Baseball Director, 1986-1993
- World Series Consultant, 2014-Present

North Carolina:
- Post 52 Newsletter Editor, 2015-Present
- Post 52 Adjutant, 2016-18
- Post 52 Commander, 2018-20
- District 23 Vice Commander, 2018-19
- District 23 Commander, 2019-20
- Council of Young Men Comm Chair, 2015-17
- Americanism Comm Chair, 2018-19
- Nat Cmdr's Rep- Unconventional Forces & Intelligence Cmte, 2018-20
- Campaign Manager, Bill Oxford for National Commander

Personal Information:
- Married to Linda Quinlan
- Auxiliary Member 19 years
- Shelby Unit 82 President 2017-19
- District 13 President 2019
- Past Chair NC Aux Public Relations Program
- Past Chair NC Aux Community Service
- Past Chair, Jenna, Tricia, David and Chad
- Six Grandchildren
Vietnam Veterans are battling the effects of Agent Orange, and the various medical problems associated with that chemical. A VA suicide prevention counselor, Kevin Hendrick from Rutherdfordton addressed Legionnaires and Auxiliary members to learn more and perhaps in our own way, we can help other veterans with the issues. American Legion members want to let veterans know the Legion is there to support them. American Legion District 23 Posts consist of Legionnaires from Forest City, Fallston, Henrietta, Chimney Rock, Kings Mountain and Shelby. These six posts have a combined membership of 700.

Kevin was presented with an American Legion Centennial pen and mini flashlight in appreciation for heading up the seminar.

PTSD Seminar Held

American Legion Post 155 and District 23 hosted a PTSD seminar on Saturday, Nov. 9 at 2 pm at the Post home at 613 E Gold Street. The public and veterans were encouraged to attend. At the August National Convention in Indianapolis, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert L. Wilkie Jr. stated that the number of veteran suicides has dropped from 21 a day to 16 a day and that over 50% of those committing suicide are Vietnam Veterans. Seventy percent of all those veterans committing suicide have never been to a VA Hospital to seek help or treatment. Many Vietnam Veterans are battling the effects of Agent Orange, and the various medical problems associated with that chemical.

A VA suicide prevention counselor, Kevin Hendrick from Rutherfordton addressed Legionnaires and Auxiliary members to learn more and perhaps in our own way, we can help other veterans with the issues. American Legion members want to let veterans know the Legion is there to support them. American Legion District 23 Posts consist of Legionnaires from Forest City, Fallston, Henrietta, Chimney Rock, Kings Mountain and Shelby. These six posts have a combined membership of 700.

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Hickory Post 48 Presents
Bill Richard
Department Historian

Military Service
USAF, Vietnam era

Post Experience
29 year member
100% Post Commander, 2006-07, 2007-08
2nd Vice Commander, 2008-09, 2009-10
Post Commander, 2006-08

Various Committees
District Experience
District 22 Commander, 2008-09, 2009-10
District Delegate to National Convention 2009-12

Division Experience
Division V Vice Commander, 2010-11
Oratorical Chairman, 2009-10

Department Experience
Gold Brigade, 2013
New Member Recruiter, Class A, 2012-13
Legion Institute Graduate, 2012

Legion College Oratorical Instructor, 2011
Joe Riley Award Recipient, 2010
State Oratorical rep to National Contest, 2009

Rules and Credentials Committee, 2009
Veterans Affairs and Rehab Commission, 2 years

Oratorical Committee, 3 years, Vice Chair, 2 years

Attended Legion College, 8 years

Department Historian, 2018-present

National Experience
Foreign Relations Council, vice chair, 2012-13

Attended NC Parade Chairman, National Convention, 2010

Pioneer Award, 2010

National Foreign Relations Council, honorary member 2008-09, 2009-10

National Executive Committeeman, 2014-16

Liaison to Rehabilitation & Rehab Cmte, 2015

Attended Washington Conference, 2012-13

Attended National Convention, 8 years

Convention Delegate, 5 years

Community Experience
Relay for Life, American Cancer Society, 10 years

In God we Trust Program, District 22
Past Chef de Gare, Voiiture 1441

Eagle Scout

Member New Hope Baptist Church

Wife, Elaine, son, Jeremy, step-daughter, Gwendolyn Jones (Rev Byron Jones), member Post 48, grandchildren Caleb and Isaac Jones, granddaughter Jaela Jones.

Eagle Scout Project Benefits Post 39

Charlie Blizzard from BSA Troop 39 chose American Legion Post 39 for his Eagle Scout project. Charlie decided to spruce up the landscaping for the Post. He planted new boxwood bushes and added new mulch to the landscape.
In early January a film crew came to Sylva and American Legion Post 104 to take footage of the Charters Of Freedom Memorial in Sylva which is just across the parking lot from our Post Building. The soldier is Medal Of Honor recipient Kyle Carpenter. This footage ran around the National Anthem at the 2020 Super Bowl The Flags were provided by the Rotary Club in Sylva as part of their Flags For Heros project and put in place by the Jackson County Maintenance Department. The Charters Of Freedom Memorial is a project undertaken several months ago by Vance Patterson. As part of the campaign, the radio station Five Forty Broadcasting, owned by Legionnaire Roy Burnette in Sylva, had a telethon and raised $10,000 to complete this project after the fundraising campaign stalled. It was really nice to see the effort pay off this way. It might give The Charters Of Freedom campaign a shot in the arm. Vance has the goal of erecting a display in every community.

2020 Super Bowl Ad shot in Sylva

Pooch Pace, Henderson County Honor Guard member, Honored

Ninety-two-year-old Rufus “Pooch” Pace straightens his U.S. Air Force uniform as he sits at a table inside American Legion Post 77 on Fourth Avenue West.

Beside him is his wife, Jean, looking vibrant and fresh – even warm - on an otherwise cold November morning.

The two look like they could be headed to church, but it’s Saturday and Pooch – who rarely if ever is called by his real name – graciously has agreed to drive his 2014 Nissan to his favorite hangout to be interviewed, perhaps for the last time as a leader of the Henderson County Honor Guard.

It’s hard to imagine the Paces have been married for 63 years, and even more difficult to absorb the fact that Pooch has been an active member of the Honor Guard even longer.

When the man with a distinctive, hoarse yet high-pitched voice carries an American flag during a Veterans Day ceremony at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Monday, he will be answering his final call to duty.

After 70 years of marching in parades, hastily organizing military funerals and scrambling to gather enough men to form Honor Guard details for Veterans and Memorial Day ceremonies, Pace has decided to retire.

“I’m having trouble walking around the cemetery because of the (uneven) grass,” he says matter-of-factly, just after ordering a round of hot chocolates. “I don’t want to stumble, and I don’t want anybody to think I’m out there drunk.”

His wife smiles, as she often does, at his last comment.

“He had a lot of responsibility getting everything together and getting everything ready at the cemetery,” she says.

Pace goes on to talk about his military experience and how it began after he quit high school in 1945 to join what was then known as the Army Air Corps.

After spending 18 months in the service, mostly with occupied forces in Japan, he returned to his native Henderson County – only to be recalled as a member of the Air Force Reserve in 1951, a year into the Korean war.

“They stationed me in Texas,” he said. “They wouldn’t let Reservists go overseas; I tried to get them to send me, but they wouldn’t.”

Pooch again came back to Henderson County, where he has become a community treasure to anyone who knows him.

Forest Lawn Memorial Park President Shuford Edmisten, a former U.S. Army sergeant and decorated Vietnam War veteran, says Honor Guard details will never be the same without Pooch Pace.

“The first thing that comes to mind when I think of Pooch is what a great man he is - his character, his dedication to this community and to all veterans of all (armed) services,” Edmisten said. “He’s probably buried or helped to bury thousands of veterans across this county, and at the state Veterans Cemetery in Fayetteville. He’s been a true staple.”

Pace has received an abundance of recognition over the years, including having his right hand bronzed and placed on the Veteran Cemetery’s Wall of Oath, where it is on display with one representative from each of North Carolina’s other 99 counties.

As for his nickname - which everybody knows, but few know of its origin - well, there’s really nothing to report.

“I was raised on a farm in Horse Shoe, and everybody had nicknames,” Pace said as he reached for his hot chocolate. “People just started calling me Pooch. I think it started when I was in high school.”

Pace isn’t one to speak in flowery tones, and explains in typical modest fashion why he has remained a true staple of the community.

“Every one of them is different,” he added. “It’s a different group of people and you get different reactions - but they’re always very appreciative.”

So how, then, can the people of Henderson County express enough gratitude to a man who has demonstrated unwavering loyalty to his fellow soldiers and unprecedented dedication to the Honor Guard while becoming a beloved member of the community? Perhaps we can all stop for a moment to salute him - if only in our minds - and keep him and his wife in our prayers.

Stephen Kindland is a freelance writer, photographer and author of an award-winning children’s book titled “I Beg Your Pardon, But This Is My Garden!” He can be reached at stephenkindland@gmail.com.
President’s Message

Thank you for your service to our country and organization. As Department President, I have had the chance to work with some of the best Legionnaires. Your hard work and dedication fills me with pride; I am thankful to be a member of the Legion Family. Being Department President has provided me with many opportunities to serve our veterans.

One of my favorite activities is serving coffee to local veterans on Tuesday mornings, at K&W in Salisbury. There are many coffee events throughout the state. The Veteran’s Coffee gatherings provide a chance for veterans to gather together and fellowship. Veterans learn about upcoming community or healthcare events, and they participate in a relaxed meeting. Most importantly, they have fun, because we all need a sense of community. I hope you all can find and attend a local coffee event.

Mid-Winter Conference was a wonderful event. Our National President Nicole Clapp inspired everyone to keep working and caring for our veterans and active military. President Nicole spoke about her travels and tours. We loved hearing about her experiences with adaptive sports from skiing, kayaking, and bicycling, to wearing a prosthetic leg. She was able to experience how veterans with disabilities can still participate in sports through adaptive sports equipment.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the President’s Project. The money will be divided between the 4 VAMCs in NC for the PTSD units. I am proud to say that we have surpassed our goal of $20,000. We are currently at $20,068.09. The treatment that the VAMCs provide our veterans, who are suffering from PTSD, is costly. Some of the treatments use Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy. Others need to purchase sound machines to help with sleep disorders. Music therapy includes buying instruments and sending veterans on trips to Nashville to work with song writers.

Recreational therapy includes day trips, arts, crafts, and gardening. All these treatments are expensive. I ask for continued support of the project, and I thank you for your generosity. Thank you for celebrating our 100th Birthday with us. As we move into the new century of service, I have asked the Auxiliary to remember the first part of our mission. To support the American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who have served by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military and their families.

One of the things of the Auxiliary I would like to say thank you for the beautiful new office. The Auxiliary looks forward to working with the Legion and SAL to grow our Legion Family. For God and Country, ALA Proud

Vice President Report

The Department of North Carolina American Legion Auxiliary has been busy this year working Membership. Our Goal for 2019-2020 is 6,058 and we currently have 5,435 paid. We have signed up 520 NEW recruits/members, but are working to re-enlist all members that paid last year. We are ALL calling these members to let them know what their membership means to our Veterans and Children and Youth. We currently have 51 Units that are Goal or Goal Plus, several have called to say they will be Goal in another week and many are close.

This is our Centennial Year, and we are celebrating! We are doing District meetings now and hearing how our Units are working our Mission. We are proud to have the spouses of Female Veterans joining our ranks. National has ask us to have “One Week of Caring & Sharing” April 1-7th, 2020. We will work as a group to give Members a week of calling to any member that has NOT paid their dues. We will be sharing with our Community “Who we are, What we do, and Why we do it!” We will be getting in touch with past members to see if they would like to sign back up. We want to grow North Carolina bigger and stronger for years to come! JOIN US!

Veterans & Children Foundation

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly the American Legion Endowment Fund, delivers vital financial support for service officers worldwide who are working on VA disability claims for more than 700,000 U.S. military veterans at any one time, all the time.

The fund also supplies American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance cash grants for military and veteran families with minor children at home, who have encountered hardships beyond their control and need short-term help covering the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing or other necessities.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation

www.legion.org/donateVCF

April - June 2020
Adjudant from Page 2

Permitting and the fourth has held his own ceremonies at the cross. The tri- al court and an earlier decision by the Eleventh Circuit reluctantly agreed that the cross was unconstitutional under the Religious Lemon test, which has often been successfully invoked by anti-religious plaintiffs to push re- ligion out of the public square. Earlier

Judge from Page 2

for Boys State. $100,000 from Williamston Post 163 to Charities. This went toward Veterans Programs. The Charities Board has stewardship du- ties over the funds. They have all signed conflict of interest statements.

There will be another meeting about the Charities in July at Legion College. The Board has agreed to transfer funds from undesignated funds to the NEC Scholarship Fund to get the corpus over $25,000, plus $5,000 to get it started with $5,000 scholarships this year. We will get the application out as soon as it is up- dated.

Commander from Page 2

six weeks for us at VA have concen- trated 78 percent of our time – and now, pretty much full-time – on the response to the coronavirus.”

On Thursday (March 12th) the na- tional office sent an email stating that due to health concerns stem- ming from the coronavirus, that travel to department functions by the National commander, vice com- manders, and National staff was canceled through the end of March.

After consulting with the Depart- ment Judge Advocate and Adjudant, I directed the Department to follow suite and suspend department and post meetings in North Carolina for the remainder of March. We will con- tinue to monitor, and update as need- ed.

Once again, I want to thank you, for allowing me to serve as your Depart- ment commander. It has been a great year and we aren’t finished yet. I particularly want to thank my mem- bership chairman Nancy Phillips for

Chaplain from Page 2

imagine God saying to us, “Oh, now you see, God, never says that to his children. Having a regular prayer life is vitally important. While it appears from my perspective that the universe revolves around me, prayer reminds me it doesn’t. Prayer helps me to see the bigger pic- ture. It makes me sensitive to how God is interacting with his creation. It convinc- es me that people, God isn’t “getting back” at them, but rather “calling them back” into a rela- tionship with him – a relationship that is desperately desired by God and des- perately needed by us. Prayer can seem intimidating. At some level, it should, as we are approaching the throne of grace where the decisions the universe are made. Yet we should approach God with the simplicity of a child in crying out to God for our needs, our frustrations, and our hopes.

Here is my challenge to you: take one baby-step forward in prayer. I encourage you to learn more about prayer in your faith tradition. Pray for our children, our country, and our leaders. We don’t have to learn how to be specific to indi- viduals or groups, but God does, and I’ve learned that I can trust him with all of the details. I often just pray, “God, you

are missing any of these, where

obligations or stop doing. Every Post needs a representative to attend their Dis- trict meetings to learn from others in your area. Enhance your officer & program skills at our NC Legion Convention, which is May 10 & 11. Also, you can stay with the American Legion Vietnam Vet- eran once told me to get involved, be an officer and join a Department Committee if I wanted to make a dif- ference. By joining a Foundation for the Future begins at the Post.

New Department Service Officer

My name is Justin Nicholson and I am your new Department Service Officer! I come to you from the North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs in their Winston Salem office, which is where I served as a State VSO rep- resenting Veterans before the Board of Veteran Appeals since July of 2018. I started working with Veterans in 2012, and was an accredited Service Offi- cer with the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners, Port St Lucie, FL back in 2013.

I am a proud United States Marine! I served in the Marine Corps from 2006 to 2011. I am a combat Veteran who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science in Orga- nizational Management from Indian River State College, Fort Pierce, FL, completed Veteran Support Specialist (VSS) training given by Duke Universi- ty and the State of North Carolina, and I am currently completing a Master of Science in Human Relations and Busi- ness at Amberton University.

As I began my service as DVSO with the Department of Veteran Affairs in North Carolina, I think it important to share my philosophy regarding claims. Every Service Officer has his or her own unique style. I like to think I am a straight shooter and I try not to sugar coat things. For example, a lot of the VA backlog is created, unfortunately, by people, God isn't “getting back” at them, but rather “calling them back” into a relationship with him – a relationship that is desperately desired by God and desperately needed by us. Prayer can seem intimidating. At some level, it should, as we are approaching the throne of grace where the decisions the universe are made. Yet we should approach God with the simplicity of a child in crying out to God for our needs, our frustrations, and our hopes.

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know what is going on in this situation. I pray for mercy and healing for the hurt- ing, grace and peace for the friends and family, and that in all things you will get the glory and credit.”

Chaplains, I have a couple of challenges for you, too. Pray for the members and leaders of your post, division, district, and department. Remember that when you pray during meetings, you are also teaching others how to pray. Prayer is our most important responsibility, yet rarely noticed task, we have as a chap- lain. Be a student of prayer and model what matters.

Peace and Grace, +mike

state-of-the-art home for TALNC as we continue our second century of service. As with the past generation I was willing to do it myself and a wise American Legion Vietnam Vet- eran once told me to get involved, be an officer and join a Department Committee if I wanted to make a dif- ference. By joining a Foundation for the Future begins at the Post.

April - June 2020