

# Legion News

The Official Publication of the American Legion Department of North Carolina



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## HAPPENINGS

### “HAPPY NEW YEAR”

Your Staff in Raleigh and Winston Salem wish for each and everyone of you a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

**MID WINTER CONFERENCE**  
February 18th and 19th at the North Raleigh Hilton.

- National Vice Commander, Carlos Orria-Medina from San Juan, Puerto Rico and his wife Maria will be the guests of Commander Oxford.

- Friday night is scheduled a “No talent” show. Come and enjoy the fun. Laughter is good medicine for the soul. A \$5.00 donation for The American Legion Legacy Fund is appreciated but not Mandatory, to get in.

### HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST

Please attend your Post, District, and/or Division Contests and support our young Leaders of tomorrow. You’ll be glad you did!



## Commanders Still Serving

Department Commander Bill Oxford, Rockingham Post 147 Commander Richard Lunceford, Hamlet Post 49 Commander Willard Page, serves up a welcome home meal (prepared by Post 147 and Post 49) to the National Guard upon their return from Afghanistan.



Pictured left to right are, Nancy Brown-Perry, Chief, Voluntary Service, Salisbury VAMC, Wanda Moore, American Legion Auxiliary Department President, Paul M. Russo Director Salisbury VAMC, Bill Oxford, Department Commander and Cajun Comeau, Department Service Officer. (Luke Thompson photograph)



Pictured left to right are Norma Fraser, Chief of Voluntary Services; Department Auxiliary President and volunteer Wanda Moore, Elizabeth Goolsby, Fayetteville VA Medical Center Director, Bill Oxford, Department Commander. Cajun Comeau, Department Service Officer. Jerry Tart, Assistant Dept. Service Officer FVAMC.

## Leading Concerns for the VA Medical Centers

**Reference:** Annual Department Commander, Department Service Officer, and Auxiliary President visits to North Carolina VA Medical Centers

**Background:** The Commander, Department Service Officer, and Auxiliary President have completed their evaluative tours of the four major VA Medical Centers (VAMC) in the state.

The issues listed below are the leading concerns as set forth by the Department Commander. The summarized responses are a conglomeration of the information provided by the hospital representatives at each respective location.

**Commander Bill Oxford’s Comments:** There are a few things that should be paramount in our minds as a veteran’s service organization. First we should always be a strong voice as we continue to lobby for Veterans rights and benefits. Second we must continue to seek full funding for VA benefits and healthcare programs. Lastly, The American Legion, Department of North Carolina and The Auxiliary members provide many hours of volunteer service and a large amount of donated funding to our VA medical centers. We can not reduce or lessen our efforts.

- The availability of VA healthcare for all veterans. While it is desirable to provide all veterans with healthcare the current Veteran’s Healthcare Administration policy does not accommodate this need. If the veteran is not service connected at a certain percentage, is not on pension, does not meet the means income threshold test or does not meet certain other criteria the veteran will be required to pay co payments for care or may not be eligible for enrollment at all. Government law changes are needed to reform this issue. We will continue to support change to include all honorably discharged veterans in the VA healthcare system.

- C&P Examinations. The Compensation and Pension examinations were recently decentralized from Winston Salem, NC and Salisbury VAMC to the other outpatient clinics and VA medical centers throughout the state in an effort to decrease travel time and exam wait times. The process is slow moving and the lack of adequate staff and facilities have caused a backlog in examinations. The respective directors at Durham, Fayetteville and Asheville are acutely aware of the issues and are taking aggressive steps to address and remedy the issues.

- Women’s healthcare availability and advancements. Each facility in NC has a women’s clinic however there are some variances in staff level, facilities and focus in these special treatment sections. The Commander inquired about the need for improved and enlarged programs at each of our VAMC. The female veteran population is the fastest growing client sector in the VHA.

- The frustrating VAMC phone systems. The Commander vehemently delivered the message that the veterans of this state are not happy with the respective phone systems at our VAMC and outpatient clinics. The directors have heard the negative comments and they have made improving these systems one of the top priorities. Some of the VAMC have hired additional staff, trained volunteers and others have extended customer service hours all in an effort to provide veterans with better and more personal service when they call our VAMC.

The myhealthvet computer software found at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov/> will be instrumental in veteran self service and will cut down on VAMC telephone calls.

- Elderly care quality within the

See Concerns, Page 8





**ADJUTANT'S  
CALL**

**FRANK STANCIL**  
Department Adjutant



**Contentment Makes A  
Poor Man/Woman Rich**

"Happy New Year" to everyone. It is hard to believe that here we are in 2011. There is so much to be thankful for and so much to do and so little time to do it in, but we must persevere. Let's be thankful for living in the United States of America and for living in North Carolina.

Many of us are content with our lives and most thankful for our families, our friends and all the opportunities that is provided us every day. So please enjoy what you have, while you pursue what you want. Contentment is the quality or state of being content. Are you content? What makes you content? Is it being a good parent; brother-sister-aunt-uncle; church member; neighbor; friend to all; good employee; a good citizen; as a member of The American Legion?

Many can find contentment in reading a book; going on a trip; fishing; hunting; volunteering; or just sitting in the sunshine. Whatever it takes, just do it. Content people smile more because they have that something to smile about. Please don't allow negative things and negative thoughts mess up your contentment. Concentrate on the positive by surrounding yourself with positive things and positive people.

Life is short, so let's all of us do the very best that we can and make the best of the time that we have left. Thanks to each and every one of you for all that you do for The American Legion which helps bring contentment to a lot of people.

**CHAPLAIN'S  
CORNER**

**GAREY GULLEDGE**  
Department Chaplain



**What Life  
Is All About**

Well, here we are facing the New Year that has arrived. I am sure it will be a great year for the American Legion family. Sharing our love and compassion is an important factor in the American Legion's success.

I have spent many long hours in intensive care waiting rooms.... watching with anguished people.... Listening to urgent questions: will my husband make it? Will my child walk again? How do you live without your companion of thirty years?

The intensive care waiting room is different from any other place in the world. And the people who wait are different.

They can't do enough for each other. No one is rude. The distinc-

See Chaplain, Page 8

**Commander's Column**

I hope everyone has had a safe and happy Holiday season. As we look at the past year in the American Legion, I think we have had a successful one. But as the calendar flips to start a new year, we need to reconsider where we are and what we need to do to achieve our goals. Our programs are important, have helped many young people, and we need to maintain the time, money, efforts, and man-hours we put into these many programs. However, we need to remember that these programs do not function, operate, or maintain themselves without the Legionnaires who make them happen.

The Legionnaires who run our programs are also the backbone of who we are. We need to recognize the value of these veterans and the contributions they make to our causes.

We have had a GREAT membership year so far, but the year is far

**My Fellow  
Legionnaires**

As Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, one of the earliest lessons I had to learn was that there was no "Send Button" to get the word out on all the activities of our great organization at one time. In other words, when something happened I thought the whole world ought to know about, I couldn't just hit one button and send it to every newspaper in the state, every radio station, every television station or cable media outlet. In spite of going to meet with several leaders in the media industry, I found out there just wasn't an easy way to get the job done. Isn't that always the case? Nothing worth doing comes easy in life.

What I also learned turned out to be something I already knew all along. Each Post in the Department of North Carolina has something unique that they do better than anyone else. There's always that "little something" that sets that Post apart from all the rest. Then there are those Posts that seem to do it all but nothing gets publicized. Then we all wonder why we continually get a blank stare from potential members when we try and recruit them into The American Legion. If only someone took the initiative to get that information about our activities into the public view, wouldn't membership efforts be much easier?

The other thing I learned was that the someone was looking back at me in the mirror. Chances are that same someone is also looking back at you in your mirror as well. What we all need to do is make a concerted effort to pause whenever something good is about to happen in our Post and think of how we can best get it out in front of the public. Newspapers need news to survive. The same goes for radio and television stations.

Then on top of that, we give awards to the best of the industry for how well they get our message out. Next time you're sitting on top of a story, pay a visit to your local newspaper, radio or television station. Visit often and share our message. We all benefit from your efforts.

"Are you in or are you out?" Sit-

**COMMANDER'S  
COMMENTS**

**BILL OXFORD**  
Department Commander



from over. We need to double our efforts and make every possible effort to reach our membership goals. Membership is a year-long effort, and we have been able to reach every membership goal established by National Commander Jimmie Foster.

The last goal was 75% by Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 2010. We reached that goal, but that number is a bit misleading. We went to Indianapolis in August of 2010 to discuss our membership goal with National Commander Jimmie Foster and his membership team. We were elated to receive a goal of "what we achieved last year "+ 1. We have been ahead

**PUBLIC  
RELATIONS**

**LOU COOK**  
Public Relations Committee



ting around the proverbial poker table, we've all faced a player who just couldn't make up his/her mind if they were going to play the hand and call the bet or fold their cards and watch from the sidelines. In our organization, we've got some of the same folks who just can't decide if they want to "make the commitment" or not. It's that way in every organization. Like so many of my friends, I decided long ago to call the bet and stay in. We all need to reassess our positions from time to time and once we decide to continue our membership, we need to make that conscious effort to make the best efforts we can to fully support this great organization. When the dealer says, "Are you in or are you out?" Your response needs to be, "I'm in and I'm raising the bet."

The holidays are behind us now and I trust you all had an enjoyable time with friends and family. All too often we get caught up in the festivities and forget those less fortunate than ourselves, especially those service members who are currently deployed far away from loved ones. All of us have been there and while the military leadership attempts to make the holidays tolerable, it's just not the same.

Our District and Division Oratorical Contests are either underway or scheduled as well as the Department Contest and I'm excited! Each year, I continue to be amazed at the quality of our young speakers and the effort they put into this annual contest. When you were visiting the schools to drum up support for this program, did you remember to start scouting for Boys State and Student Trooper attendees? Quite often they are found in the same locations as the Oratorical contestants.

The Community Covenant signings are continuing to be reported across the state so I'm confident

See Public Relations, Page 8

of every established goal so far, but actually when we consider what we achieved last year, on December 1, 2010 the Department of North Carolina is almost 1800 members behind.

We still have time to reach and exceed our goal but we need the help and assistance of every Legionnaire. Please remember "Membership is the most important thing we do".

At the Fall Conference, we presented awards for; Post Adjutant of the Year- Post Commander of the Year, Law Enforcement officer of the Year Baseball Hall of Fame Veterans Employment Awards Colon Furr Nursing Scholarships.

And at the Mid-Winter Conference, Feb. 18-19 in Raleigh, we have many other awards to elect and present; Scout Leader Awards Scout Unit Awards News Media Awards JROTC Instructor Awards Service Officer of the Year Fireman/EMT of Year.

See Commander, Page 8

**MEMBERSHIP  
REPORT**

**JAMES MOORE**  
Membership Chairman



**Membership**

My fellow legionnaires during the past six months we have done a lot of good things to keep the state of North Carolina in position five thru sixteen in the national rating. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, which allowed us to meet our monthly goal.

During the month of November we conducted the Membership Roundup covering all five Divisions. We were able to collect membership totaling 495(renewals, transfers & new members), this is what team work is all about. The members of the membership roundup team: Natl. Vice Commander Carlos Orria-Mendoza, Dept. Commander Bill Oxford, State Adjutant Frank Stancil, NEC Man Jerry Hedricks, Dept. Historian Larry Rozier and members of the Legion Riders for escort during clear days thanks to Chairman Wally Higgins I would like to thank everyone that was involved to make this membership roundup a success.

**The North Carolina  
Legion News**

**Bill Oxford**  
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

**W. Frank Stancil**  
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

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**JROTC Erwin High School/Venture Crew 110 BSA**

American Legion Post 2 of West Asheville, NC held its 15th Flag retirement program September 14, 2010. The ceremony was held in accordance with public law #344. The post has retired over 600 flags to date, these ceremonies are open to the public and local JROTC units and Boy Scout units act as honor guards and flag bearers. The post holds a fellowship gathering with refreshments as part of the program.



**Post 262 Members Are Honored**

Charlotte American Legion Post 262 recently presented plaques and awards to their members. Honored at that meeting, left to right; Jim Wilson, Post Historian, Skip Hunt, 1st Vice Commander, Joyce Hunt, 2nd Vice Commander, Harvey White, Post Commander, Gerald Young, Finance Officer and Bob Burns, Post Chaplain.

## Sweepstakes 2010 a Big Success!



**Kenneth Day, of Candler, Grand Prize winner with Sweepstakes Chairman, Ben Lee, Commander Oxford, Kenneth and Mrs. Day, and Randy Coleman of Fair Bluff Ford.**



**Martha Lowe, Wilmington, \$5,000 winner, pictured with Wilmington Post 10 member Dick Parker, left and Ben Lee.**



**John J. Carroll, Wilmington, \$500 winner. Winner pictured with Parker and Lee.**



**Charles Chappell of Rocky Mount is presented with \$500 by Commander Bill Oxford**



**Commander Oxford presents \$500 check to Tom Dougherty of Raleigh.**



**Charles Starnes of Charlotte is presented with \$500 check by Commander Oxford.**

**Not pictured are William Gergory, Franklin, \$2,500 winner and Charles Davis, Fayetteville \$500 winner.**

Again this year we can say... WOW!! What a success. Thanks go out to each member reading this for your support of our enhancement Sweepstakes that was held between June 1 and October 1 of 2010. The drawing for all eight prizes took place at our fall conference in Raleigh on October 11, 2010. The grand prize winner,

Mr. Kenneth Day, chose a 2010 Ford Fusion with many extras. The other seven winners were awarded cash prizes ranging from \$5,000 to \$500.

Again this year, the proceeds will allow us to have more flexibility in the funding of our youth programs and enable us to participate more directly with our many other worthy

programs.

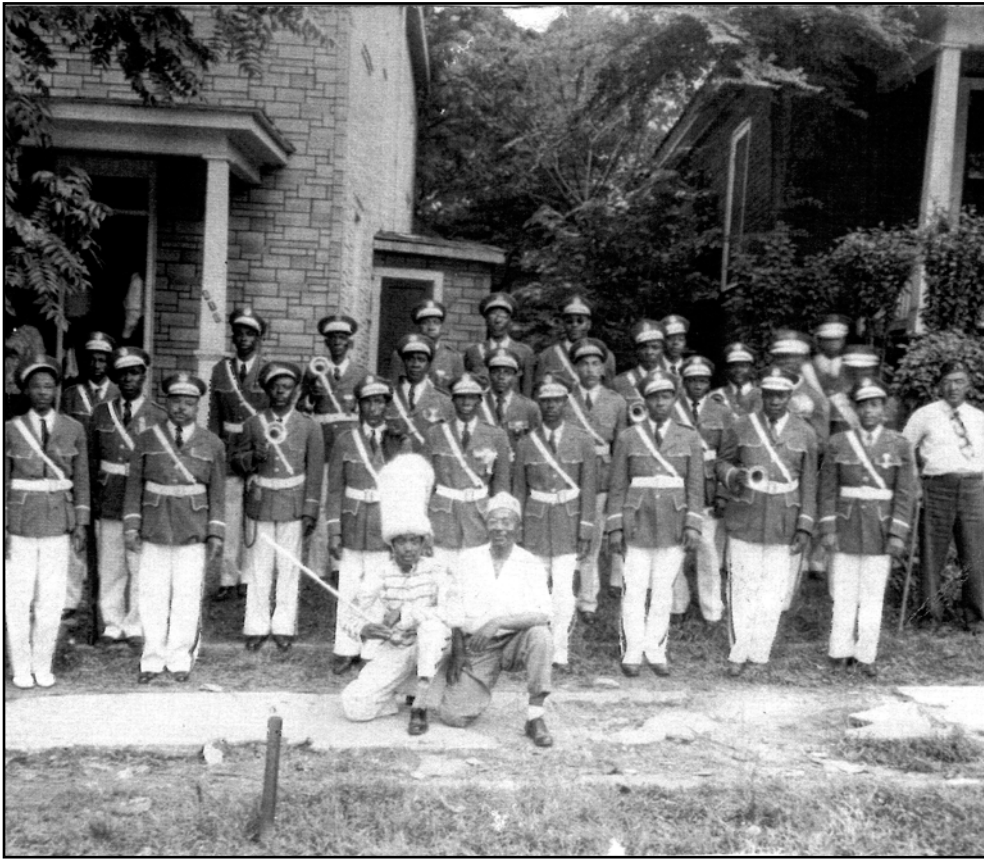
Additionally, if the annual Sweepstakes is as successful in the future as it was the last two years, we can almost guarantee we will not have to worry about a dues increase at the state level for the foreseeable future. Lastly, the Sweepstakes Committee hopes you and your loved

ones had your best Christmas Holiday Season ever and we also hope you are blessed in the New Year with an abundance of all things good.

Remember, you are an important part of the largest veterans organization of the world--- an organization that truly lives by its motto " For God and Country".



## Historical Perspective – Veterans Day & Raleigh Post 157



The Drum and Bugle Corps of Charles T. Norwood American Legion Post 157 received plaudits and accolades whenever it performed in parades and at conventions throughout North Carolina, and it reaped national acclaim on patriotic days when it marched in parades in cities such as Cleveland and Milwaukee. They were heartily cheered when they climaxed the North Carolina delegation's participation in the parade marching up fifth avenue at the 29th National Convention in New York.

By Mrs. F.I. Francis  
The Carolinian, Raleigh, NC

The Charles T. Norwood American Legion Post 157 in Raleigh observed Veterans' Day with an annual luncheon held at the Brownstone Holiday Inn Hotel in Raleigh. Approximately 200 Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and friends of the historic post were in attendance. Retired Lt. Colonel and Legionnaire Joseph H. Holt, Jr. emceed the program. Holt highlighted the service focus of the post over the years including the organization's efforts to insure that veterans and veterans' families receive the services, benefits and respect they earned by serving their country.

The speaker for the program was Retired 1st Lieutenant Charles T. Irving, Jr. whose speech was entitled "Veterans Day and Post 157 – A Historical Perspective." Highlights of that speech follow.

November 11th was designated as "Armistice Day" in 1919 as a day to honor the fallen heroes of World War I and to exhibit America's sympathy for world peace. The name was later changed to Veterans Day to honor the services of all veterans to the cause of peace. The American Legion was born in March 1919 and the Charles T. Norwood Post 157 was chartered in December 1924. It will be 86 years old this year. Only a few organizations or people survive for 86 years.

Legionnaire Irving said, "We should give immense credit to the 14 men of foresight who chartered this post and to those people who have preserved it." The daughter of Charter member J. Jerome Turner, Mrs. Geraldine

Turner Crooms, was in attendance along with her husband, Dr. Allen Crooms. World War I veterans who had early memberships in the post and who continued their membership and support into their nonagenarian years were Legionnaires James Coffield, Charles G. Irving, Sr., and Millard Peebles, Sr. These legionnaires continued their participation in the Raleigh Veterans Day Parade into their late 90s.

Irving said that the post was named for Charles T. Norwood, who was wounded while in service in November 1918, subsequently dying on January 17, 1919. His late mother, Mrs. Norwood, was the Gold Star Mother who lived on Heck St.

From its inception, the post concentrated on obtaining health benefits, pensions, housing, financial service, GI Bill, educational benefits, recognition and respect for African-American veterans and their dependents. Much of this responsibility fell on the Service Officer. Prior to World War II, the only full-service Veterans Hospital open to black veterans in the Southeast was at Tuskegee, Alabama. It was hard to gain admission and when secured, the Service Officers usually accompanied the veteran to the facility. World War II benefits were more accessible for African-Americans, but segregation did not end when World War II ended.

In the 1930's, the Charles T. Norwood Post members brought their sons to an organization called Sons of The American Legion (SAL). The Ladies Auxiliary was active in that decade and thereafter. The post maintained quarters for the group on the second floor of the Royal The-



Pictured l to r at Post 157's Veterans Day luncheon are Legionnaire Charles G. Irving, Jr., Mrs. Geraldine Turner Crooms, daughter of Charter member J. Jerome Turner and Legionnaire Joseph H. Holt, Jr.

atre building on East Hargett St, thereafter, the second floor of the Savoy Café building on S. Blount St, and later at the post-owned property at 412 E. Cabarrus St.

A vibrant and talented group of post members comprised the Drum and Bugle Corps of the Charles T. Norwood Post, led by Drum Major Wiley Roach. This group received repeated applause wherever it performed – in local parades, at conventions in Asheville, Fayetteville and other North Carolina cities. It was heartily applauded when it climaxed the North Carolina delegation's participation in the parade marching up Fifth Avenue at the 29th National Convention in New York City. This parade lasted for 24 hours!

Legionnaire Irving stated that the American Legion was a segregated institution for many years after its organization. In North Carolina, most posts were allocated geographical sections in Division A, but all African-American posts were in Division B. Division B had few constitutional rights, and it was supervised by the all-white Division A. In a speech in January 1946 to the Bryan-Best Post in Goldsboro, Division B State Vice Commander Charles G. Irving, Sr. spoke against the race discrimination and political domination of Division A over Division B. It was under his leadership that "Division Six" evolved with full voting rights in the North Carolina Department of the American Legion by the early 1950s.

For many years African-American youth were barred from the Boys State program. While vice Commander of Division B, Legionnaire Charles G. Irving, Sr. Spearheaded a Boys State for Negro youth. The first Division B Boys State was held at North Carolina College in Durham,

June 8-15, 1947. That year the Post its Auxiliary sponsored 11 delegates to attend that program. Post 157 is still active in the program today having sponsored 6 delegates who attended the 2010 session of The American Legion Tar Heel Boys State held at Catawba College in Salisbury.

The Charles T. Norwood Post 157's membership is composed mostly of World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans. Membership is also open to veterans of later conflicts. Legionnaire Irving paid tribute to the most recent World War II veterans who have entered Post Everlasting: Legionnaire William "Buster" Perry, Past Commander Robert Upperman and Legionnaire Louis Dunbar.

In most recent history the post has sponsored a workshop and program at the North Carolina Museum of History; noteworthy speakers; and presented an audio-visual chronology of its activities under the guidance of UNC Channel 4 staffers. The post continues its focus on service to veterans and veterans' families and outreach in the community.

### Ronald McDonald House Pull Tabs October Round Up

Congratulations to all that participated. The Legionnaires, Ladies Auxiliary, Legion Riders and Sons of The American Legion brought to the Fall Conference in October at the North Raleigh Hilton, 4,798 pounds which provided \$3,604.07 to the Durham Ronald McDonald House. Your time and efforts for the children going through cancer treatments at Duke Hospital and their families staying at the Ronald McDonald House is much appreciated. Thank you for being a big part of their dealing and healing process at a critical time in their lives. We are truly an organization that cares. The next collection time will be during the Mid Winter Conference, February 18-20, 2011.



### Hayesville Post 532 Assists with Food Drive

The American Legion Post 532 and Ingles are teaming up to help stock the shelves of the Clay County Food Pantry. Shoppers will have four weeks to donate non perishable foods in two collection barrels located at both entrances of the supermarket. All donated items stay in Clay County to be used for local distribution. On hand for placement of the food drive barrels are [from left] Bob Epperson, Ingles Store manager Josh Haynes, Phil Cantley, Ingles customer service manager Dee Serra, and Jack Greve.



### Post 518's Veteran's Day Raffle Winner Announced.

Program Chairman, Percy Clark (left) and District 11 Vice Commander, Jerry Mangum (right) presented a \$1,000.00 check to Ms. Phyllis Tomlinson of Garner, NC, the winner of the Ernest E. Adams American Legion, Post 518 Veteran's Day raffle.

## Tribute Marker to Honor Veterans Dedicated in Marion



On Veterans Day, 2010, American Legion Post 56 of Marion, held an honorable ceremony to dedicate a tribute marker to Honor Veterans. The memorial was placed at Autumn Care nursing home in Marion, where a large number of WWII and Korean Veterans reside. Alan Mainer, Commander of Post 56 and also a District Commander of District 24, Division 5, spoke at the ceremony and told all present that "it is an honor to be a part of such a rewarding and long overdue showing of appreciation for all the sacrifices our veterans have paid so we can be free and enjoy The American Way. It demonstrates a small token towards those who fought for their country, living and dead." Mainer also stated, "it couldn't have been a more appropriate day, than Veterans Day, to present this memorial to the Veterans. As long as this marker stands here, it is in honor of all Veterans."

Along with Commander Mainer, were other legionaries, Don Davis, 1st Vice Commander, Alicia Mainer, 2nd Vice Commander, Ken Walters, Assistant Chaplain, Carroll Kanipe, Finance Officer, Dale Wiggins, Judge Advocate, Ken Lael, Post Historian, and Albert Nelson, a long time legionnaire.

The marker was worded "In honor of our veterans", to honor all veterans living or dead. It was discussed by the Post to not display "in memory" because that would only represent deceased veterans, so, in honor was chosen to represent all veterans.

Pictured along with the Legionaries are some of the veteran residents at Autumn Care. In all, there were approximately 20 to 25 veterans present for the ceremony.

## AFMAC Unveils Legacy Paver Program at WWII Living History Event

The Armed Forces Museum & Archives of the Carolinas (AFMAC) presented its first granite Legacy Paver to a distinguished military hero and Enola Gay navigator, Theodore "Dutch" Van Kirk at a recent WWII Living History fundraiser for the museum in Matthews, North Carolina.

This memorial paver will be placed in a prominent area on the "Honor Walk" in front of the museum which will be built in Mint Hill, North Carolina. It was Dutch's special request that the paver be dedicated to the entire 12-man crew of the Enola Gay who were part of the 509th Composite Group which was in training for atomic bomb missions off the Marianas Islands in the Pacific in 1945. At the Living History event, Van Kirk also shared the facts about the weeks leading up to the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945. Dutch said, "This project was so secret that members of the group were followed by the FBI, and if word got out about the

training, you were eliminated from the program."

The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 which started the war with Japan is well known and remembered. The brutal Japanese Bataan Death March in 1942 in the Philippines of American and Filipino prisoners of war and the sinking of the USS Indianapolis on July 30, 1945, which cost thousands of American lives, are almost lost history to our current generation. These Japanese military actions are important historical facts to put the war in perspective. During 1945, numerous attempts to negotiate peace failed between the Allied nations and Japan. Many pamphlets were dropped over Japan to warn of an Allied attack, but the culture of the Japanese military at the time was to fight until death. The warnings were ignored by the Japanese; therefore, President Harry S Truman ordered the mission to go forward. When asked by an audience member about the great loss of life resulting from the atomic bomb,

Dutch remarked, "Tell me how to go to war without loss of life and I will be the first person to sign up." He said, "The bombing was justified."

"Initially the crew thought the bomb was a dud because of the complete silence following the drop of the bomb. The pilot, Colonel Paul Tibbets, flew the B-29, which had been stripped of all its guns, minus the tail gun, to increase speed, took a 150-degree turn, and flew 11 1/2 miles and approximately one minute before we felt the aftershock of the explosion which rocked the plane pretty bad," explained Van Kirk. After a perfect mission that lasted 12 hours and 13 minutes, the crew of the Enola Gay landed safely back on Tinian Island. AFMAC President, Bill Dixon, thanked Dutch Van Kirk for his courage and that of the crew for carrying out such a dangerous military mission that changed the course of history, saving a million lives and avoided a ground invasion of Japan.

Bill Griffin, a retired U. S. Air

Force Chaplain and AFMAC board member, is pleased to present the "Honoring our Heroes and Building History" Legacy Paver Program to provide an opportunity to honor a family member, a member of the armed forces, a veteran or loved one with a purchase of a granite paver. Chaplain Griffin said, "A gift of a memorial granite paver is perfect for birthday remembrances, Father's Day, Mother's Day and anniversaries." Approximately 3,300 square feet around the museum will be dedicated to the "Honor Walk."

The minimum 8" x 16" sized granite paver cost is \$200. For additional information about the Armed Forces Museum and the Legacy Paver Program, please contact Bill Griffin at bgriffin@visitaftamac.org or call 704-837-3091. A paver order form can be found on our Web site, www.visitaftamac.org.

Submitted by Kathleen Wilsbach, AFMAC Media Director  
Phone: 704-942-8002



Pictured left to right are Past National Commander Ray G. Smith, Post 109 Adjutant Jerry Tart, scout Matthew Flood, legionnaire John Ennis, scout Bryce Ivey and scout Kyle Williams.

### Benson Post 109 Holds Flag Retirement Ceremony

Approximately 500 worn American flags were properly destroyed November 13, 2010 as a part of Banner Post 109 American Legion's Veterans Day events when the local post, it's unit of the Legion Riders

and Boy Scout Troop 19 hosted a flag retirement ceremony.

Over 50 citizens stood in silence watching the tattered and worn symbols of our country properly retired.



### Collecting Food for "Interfaith"

Greene Central High School JROTC teamed up with the local American Legion Post 536 to collect food for local food bank 'Interfaith'. The cadets and Legions collected over 150 can goods and several turkeys and presented the food December 15, 2010 under the supervision of First Sergeant Bottoms (ret), Greene Central High School JROTC Army instructor. Members of the American Legion Post 536 were Anthony Darden (Adjutant), Robert Britt, Johnny Albritton, Kelly Smith, and Joseph Jones.



### Post #5 Welcomes Special Guest

Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Rudy Hernandez, seated, is welcomed to St. Pauls American Legion Post # 5 by John McCauley, Post Adjutant, when the post held its annual Christmas party on December 9, 2010. The special guest of honor distinguished himself during action in the Korean War

### The American Legion World Series, Shelby, N.C.

The American Legion Baseball World Series will be held in Shelby, NC August 12-16, 2011. In May, 2010, Shelby/Cleveland County was named the permanent home of The American Legion World Series. This series will take place on Veterans Field at Keeter Stadium located in Shelby, NC.

For more information, tickets or to volunteer, please be in contact at ALWS@ccagency.net, 704-466-3847, or by visiting the web site www.clevelandcountybaseball.com. Shelby was chosen after many, many hours, days and months, by many, many Cleveland County residents. The only way we can keep the World Series in Shelby, is by supporting this great event. Please, plan

ahead and support The American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, August 12-16, 2011. Thanks! This is the only way that we, as The Legion Family, can show Cleveland County that we appreciate their efforts for one of our great American Legion programs for the youth of our Nation.

By supporting The American Legion World Series in Shelby, we can show our National Organization that they did not make a mistake by choosing Shelby as the permanent site for this event. Now, Let's Play Ball!

## American Legion Post 215

By KENNETH FINE  
Goldsboro News-Argus  
Staff Writer

A younger William Johnson was often asked about a house in Goldsboro - a place where "many a man met a good wife," where dancing was done in shifts because the crowds were simply too big for everybody to be inside at the same time." People used to say, "You from North Carolina? You know about 215 on Pine?" he said. "I had no idea what they were talking about." Back then, the young airman had no way of knowing that one day, American Legion Post 215 - referred to as "215 on Pine" because from 1948 to the mid-1990s, its headquarters was located at 221 W. Pine St. - would be a significant part of his life, that without him, the historically all-black Post was going to die.

Johnson made Wayne County his permanent home after retiring from the Air Force - the technical sergeant spent more than 23 years in the service after joining in 1954 with the intention of simply staying in long enough to use the GI Bill to pay for a college education. "While

I was stationed at Seymour Johnson in 1961, I bought a house here ... and when I had to go I rented it out," he said. "That was the best decision I ever made." And in 1980, he finally made his way to that old house on Pine he had heard so much about from Vietnam to Hawaii. "But by the time I joined, the members were getting old," Johnson said. "They were kind of dying out."

The Post's glory days had long since passed - the dancing replaced with storytelling, the all-night parties with quick meetings. And since his youth made him the most able, the organization's newest member quickly became adjutant, treasurer and, finally, commander. "Somebody had to call the meetings and make sure the paperwork got done," Johnson said. "And the other guys, they had just gotten so old. Many of them were in wheelchairs and so forth."

By 1990, the Post's membership had dwindled down to five men, but even then, Johnson fought to keep 215 alive - ensuring its dues were always paid, pleading with state and national officers to allow its lega-

cy to continue. And thanks to him, its charter was never pulled - even when he was the only active member, even after that house on Pine was demolished and meetings were moved to the Disabled American Veterans headquarters on Patrick Street.

"For a while, it looked like it was gonna fade off and drop out of sight," Johnson said. "Let's just say it didn't quite happen that way." Johnson believes the spirit of the old "215 on Pine" lives on through those 55 local veterans who now make up the county's once all-black American Legion. "We got young people involved," he said. "And we're still growing."

So he takes pride in knowing that although he was not among those World War II-era service members who created the legacy of the Post he has grown to love, he can still say he honored his heroes by keeping alive an organization they held so dear to their hearts.

"I'm very proud and thankful," Johnson said. "I feel good about it. I really do. I feel like I really contributed a great deal to 215."

### Posts Filing 990

All posts have been encouraged to file 990 forms as required by the IRS. The filing deadline has passed and there will be or could be fines for late filing. We attempted to instill the importance of filing on time because of the possibility of losing your not for profit status. All posts that have not filed their 990 this year are encouraged to contact your local IRS office, file your 990 and pay the penalty if appropriate.

This is like anything else, the longer you wait the worst that the situation can become. You don't know what the news is until you get it, so please go ahead as soon as possible and find out just what your post obligations are with the IRS. We are sure that they work with you as long as you are willing to work with them. Your post tax situation will not resolve itself. So please take action so you and your members can remain an active and productive American Legion Post.

If your post has lost its tax exempt status, you will be required to complete Form 1024, Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(a), and also Form 8718, User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request. On Form 1024, Part I, the appropriate box to check is box m, Section 501(c)(19).



## The Power of One

The North Carolina American Legion Auxiliary welcomes the new year with "horn-blowing, balloon showering, head-hugging, and well wishing" celebrations! To all of this, I want to add my "HAPPY NEW YEAR" to all our Legion Family!

With renewed energy, we look forward to opportunities to improve the quality of life for our veterans, support our Troops, and innovative ways to provide "lead by example" guidance for our youth.

At the same time, we are working on ways to strengthen and grow our numbers in the ALA. From our National Leadership Committee, we are reminded: "It is said that this organization is a dying organization. Let it not be said that we died because of bickering and fighting amongst ourselves. This is one of our biggest problems and why we lose so many members"

This is a problem we can fix ladies! We all have it in us to require civility, respect, and good manners from each other. Our National Membership Chairman reminds us to use

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WANDA MOORE  
Department President



our "POWER OF ONE" to influence positive and respectful conduct. You have the ability to do this with clear communication, patience, and above all-- kindness. It all starts with ourselves--"THE POWER OF ONE". So many of our ladies already exhibit these qualities. Let's all follow their lead.

We are doing a great job in North Carolina. We need to accomplish our mission with fun and fellowship.

Members across our State are doing a wonderful job actively serving our veterans in our four VA Hospitals, Nursing, and Rest Homes. So many reports have come in with heartwarming stories of cook-outs, parties, Holiday celebrations with tray favors, lap robes, children's cards, skits, and entertainment.

We have organized some exceptional Community Service events of all sizes: Flag Retirements; Pocket Flag folding at schools, with Boy Scouts, and with Senior Citizen

groups; hundreds of certificates of appreciation to citizens for flying our Flag; Warrior Rides, Ride 2 Recovery; thousands of toys for 'TOYS FOR TOTS'; dinners and parties for our local National Guard; and lots of community fund raisers for gifts for our Military Families-especially the children.

So many of our Units have sent care packages to the Troops, saw them off at Deployments and welcomed them back home at Home Comings. Our members have not forgotten the families left behind. They have provided baby-sitting services, entertainment, and story telling parties, and generously given thousands of toys at military parties.

These are only a few of the shining examples of the kind ways our members are making a positive difference in the communities across our State--an amazing group of ladies who love the USA and never forget the ones who have protected her--our veterans.

A sort of "State of the Union" address finds our Auxiliary active and accomplished. It is well that we take note of those things we need to work on to grow our organization in strength and numbers.

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

RACHEL ERVIN  
Aux. Department Chaplain



## A Look at What's to Come

I hope all of you experienced a joyous Christmas with your families and friends. Throughout the hustle and bustle of that time of year, I hope we all were mindful that it is about the birth of Christ...not just receiving and giving gifts. We know that the greatest gift at Christmas is the gift of salvation. It is absolutely free. All we have to do is ask for it.

In the month of December we've seen beautiful snow (which melted quickly) and extremely cold weather. The weather forecast in the immediate future is for more of the same. Let's remember to check on our housebound veterans and friends to make sure that they are not in need.

Happy New Year! With the beginning of a new year many of us make resolutions such as to lose weight, exercise more, or to be a better servant of God. Whatever your resolution, may God grant you the diligence to follow through and be successful.

In the New Year 2011, I ask that all of us make a new resolve to better serve our veterans and their families, no matter what their needs may be. We must never, ever forget their sacrifices to secure our freedoms. We must let them know how much we appreciate their services to our country.

I welcome your notifying me of illnesses, deaths and prayer requests. I would hate to have a member's health or spiritual needs go unacknowledged. I offer prayers up to any and all of you who have experienced the loss of loved ones or health issues. You can email me at [ervinmanor@suddenlink.net](mailto:ervinmanor@suddenlink.net). If you need my mailing address each unit President should have it. I will send cards if you'll let me know your situation. I'm still also looking for photos of each member's church.

May God go forth with us into the New Year!

### Membership Goal Units

As of 12-16-10

- Cherryville #100
- Roanoke Rapids #038
- Swansboro #078
- Four Oaks #346
- Albemarle #520
- Granite Quarry #448
- Huntersville #321
- Spring Lake #230
- Lenoir #029
- Greenville #039
- Goldsboro #011
- Whiteville #233
- Durham #007
- Salisbury #107
- Belmont #180
- Hayesville #532
- Carolina Beach #129
- Calabash #503
- Hamilton #131
- Liberty #081
- Fayetteville #032
- Newport #203
- Snow Hill #536
- Wake Forest #187
- Unionville #535
- Hudson #392
- Marshall #317
- Franklinton #052
- Carthage #012

## Got GAS?

### 'Goal Ambulance Service'z

Holidays are a special time for families and friends to come together with festive meals and socials, spending time to catch up on all the news missed as we pursued our own active careers and activities. Please, remember that holidays can be a sad and lonely time for those serving our country in combat zones, thousands of miles from families and loved ones. Some will miss the birth of their own children and other milestones in lives that have great importance to them.

We must remember to include these people in our prayers and in

### MEMBERSHIP

SUE GOOCH  
Membership Chairman



our daily lives. If at all possible, try to visit veterans in nursing homes and hospitals, support VA functions and those of the USO, and remember the families left behind if you know any residing in your neighborhood. Consider gifting to their children to let them understand that others share their loss and care for the parent serving overseas. Deployed troops should know that Americans stateside are helping to care for their families and that they value the ser-

vice they render to freedom and the American way of life.

Pause in your busy routines to remember that the Auxiliary is in a great campaign to reach membership goals. Do what you can to help your unit and our department reach their goals. You can appeal to families of veterans and those currently deployed. By helping others, they may feel that in some way they are helping their own loved one through dangerous and lonely times.

The more members we have, the greater good we can do for those who answered their country's call and ask little in return. Honor them with whatever you can for them and their mission.

## Unit 108 Remembers the Troops at Christmas

Franklin's American Legion Auxiliary President Louise Womack and members of Unit 108 are shown sorting and preparing cards for shipment. Unit 108 members wrote individual messages and mailed 6,130 Christmas/holiday cards to our troops overseas



## Celebration With a Bang - Walter E. Cole American Legion 187 Auxiliary

There was an additional reason to celebrate the 4th of July in 2010 when the Walter E. Cole American Legion Post 187 Auxiliary revived Wake Forest, NC's three-mile Freedom Run from the 1970s and 1980s. The 2010 1st Annual 5k Freedom Run was a competitive and recreational 5K run/walk to show support for veterans and active military personnel.

This first effort was an explosive success. Anne Deal, race coordi-

nator and President of the Unit 187 Auxiliary in Wake Forest, reports that the run welcomed 182 race-day participants to Historic Downtown Wake Forest and generated nearly \$3,000. The Auxiliary's effort provided the opportunity to offer support to three organizations recognized nation-wide for their military personnel support.

\$1,000 donation was made to each of the following three organizations:

- The Wounded Warrior Project at Fort Bragg that offers warriors and caregivers the chance to address readjustment challenges.

- The Fisher House at Ft. Bragg, a temporary home for family member who have a relative in the base hospital.

- The Raleigh Vet Center, which is part of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and is a source of support and services for local veterans.



## Commander

From Page 2

But there is something in common with all of these awards. Somebody had to do the application, put the packet together, or do the paperwork to nominate these candidates. Every town and community in North Carolina has people who do exemplary things or perform in an outstanding way and we need to recognize their service. These awards are a great way to recognize outstanding service, but it also provides an oppor-

tunity to get some great publicity for your local Legion Post.

Finally, I have had the opportunity in the past few months to visit and review the operations of the Veteran's Administration Medical Centers in North Carolina. These hospitals, which provide primary care to more than 2,000,000 North Carolina veterans, are in Asheville, Salisbury, Durham, and Fayetteville. We all know that a system this size can have problems, but I am happy to report that the overall health and

service level of these Medical Systems are GOOD. Recent changes in leadership and the appointment of new Directors have emphasized the VA's commitment to our nation's veterans.

I met with the leadership of these hospitals and each one made a commitment to quality service. The leadership is committed and has the education, knowledge, and experience to make it happen, but I was impressed with something

else. The commitment to Americans veterans is shared by every person we saw and talked to.

I'd like to finish on a tone set by National Commander Foster when he addressed Congress. Budget deficits and government overspending was not caused by America's Veterans, nor should the burden of correcting these errors fall on their backs. We must continue to let Congress know what we want and expect.

## Public Relations

from Page 2

the word is getting out through the North Carolina League of Municipalities as well as through your collective efforts. However, the job isn't complete. There are still hundreds of municipalities and counties left to cover. Please take the time to visit your Mayor, Council Members, County Commissioners, Aldermen, etc. and talk to them about the program. Remember, it's free!

Membership is coming in steady but the stream is starting to dwindle. It's time for that "Surge" to go out and reach the ones who are sitting

on the fence. If you need help, ask anyone on the Membership Team or your Division/District Commander. If one of them doesn't help, contact me. Nationally, we've been everywhere from 7th to 33rd place; we need to focus on holding a position somewhere in the top ten. It all starts with you! Sign up a new member this month and bring him/her to the next meeting!

During my visits to various District meetings, I've noticed one thing they all have in common . . . they're all different. Something I wish each District Commander would focus on

is allowing (insisting) each Post that is represented, to provide a report on what is happening in their respective Post. The other Post members need to hear it and the one providing the report needs to boast about it. I've been in awe of some of the activities going on in some Posts that no one ever knew about.

As I write this article, it's been less than 24 hours since my local newspaper quoted me. When is the last time your newspaper interviewed you? All it takes is a few minutes of your time and a subject you want to talk about. They'll listen to you because it's their job, not to

mention something they might have a personal interest in hearing about. Give it a try!

We just completed a Membership Roundup in November which included twelve Posts in three days from Roanoke Rapids to Lenoir. Our National Vice Commander, Carlos Orria-Medina accompanied us on the journey and he was thrilled to be with us. The Legion Riders furnished some great PR by escorting us part of the way. Good job, Riders!

Tell me what's on your mind. My email address is: lcookjr@nc.rr.com Hope to see you soon!

## Chaplain

from Page 2

tions of race and class melt away. A person is a father first, a man second. The garbage man loves his wife as much as the university professor loves his, and everyone understands

this. Each person pulls for every one else.

In the intensive care waiting room, the world changes. Vanity and pretense vanish. The universe is focused on the doctor's next report. If only it would show improve-

ment.

Everyone knows that loving someone else is what life is all about.

Could we learn to love like that if we realized that every day of life is a day in the waiting room?

I see so much love and compassion among our legionnaires and auxiliary members. We display an atmosphere much like the people in the intensive care waiting room.

God Bless Is My Prayer For You.

## Concerns

from Page 1

VAMC. The Community Living Centers (CLC) in several of our VAMC are currently undergoing extensive renovations to provide a more home-like atmosphere for our elderly veterans. The initiative to convert dual living spaces to single spaces has contributed to the allotment of more space per veteran thereby allowing veterans to stock their area with items such as recliners and larger televisions. The staff in these facilities has facilitated programs such as volunteer home cooking groups to make food for the residents and is actively seeking out programs such as therapeutic pet therapy to make the later years of our veterans enjoyable and fulfilling.

6. The eradication of homelessness among veterans in North Carolina. The respective VAMC are aggressively employing programs to identify and assist homeless veterans in NC. The mandate, issued by Secretary Shinseki, that veteran homelessness be eradicated by 2014 is well underway and staffing to assist in the efforts has been increased to tackle the problem.

7. Timely Claims processing in VHA system. The volume of requests for medical care, clothing allowances and other VHA benefits are at an all time high due to the influx of OEF/OIF veterans into the system. The VHA is exploring ways to target manpower in the hope of decreasing wait time for claims development and decisions. Some of

the VAMC directors communicated their intention to open on weekends and extend weekday hours to service the increased clientele, complete backlogged Compensation and Pension examinations and improve care operations at the facility.

8. Child care availability for single parents with appointments. The VA directors expressed concern about the accident liability regarding providing in-house child care for veterans. The initiatives that were being explored to provide this service are no longer a focus topic for the VAMC. It is unlikely that we will see childcare in the VAMC in the near future due to logistics and liability roadblocks.

9. Parking. Each VAMC within the state has specific challenges

when it comes to adequate parking. All of the facilities now have valet parking. Patients have had mixed reaction to the service depending on location and weather variables. All VAMC have park and ride services that allow the veteran to park in a lot and board conveyance to a desired location on the VAMC campus. Durham VAMC is currently enlarging parking as is Salisbury VAMC.

10. The rural healthcare initiative. There is a huge directed effort by the respective NC VAMC rural healthcare staffs to reach veterans in the state that otherwise would not have access to care. The updates received both in these visits and in the VISN 6 Veterans Advisory Council meetings points to the fact that this initiative is well thought out and that there are many motivated, passionate individuals doing all they can to help rural veterans.

### Liberty American Legion Post 81 Holds BBQ Sale to Remember

As the afternoon slowed to the evening The Post received this note attached to a cake donated to our fundraiser which read:

Dear Veterans, 11/08/10  
Thank you for all that you have done. When I look at it my dad will become a veteran soon but not yet. When I think about veterans I know how much you guys have done for us. Like most of you have gone into war like Iraq or different wars like my dad. So now I know that when you were Soldiers you went through all of that stuff and I know that some of you survived and some of you died in honor.

That is why I'm thanking you for keeping our country safe. That is why everybody honors Veterans Day

and they think the same thing. Like my family we have in the Army and we honor them and honored some of them and we honor you. That is why I'm thanking you for keeping our country safe as well as the United States.

Sincerely, Taylor Autumn Thompson

• This little girl 10 or 12 years old was very Thankful for the Veterans and their service. She stated in her letter that her Dad would soon be a veteran but what she did not realize is that her Dad was already a veteran serving overseas now. We wish him a safe deployment and a safe return.

Submitted by Cary A. McMasters, PDC, Post 81 Commander

### The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund

Opportunities to attend college should not be out of the reach of the children left behind because a parent died on active duty while serving in the United States Armed Forces. One way we will be there for you is by providing The American Legion Legacy Scholarship. Those eligible to apply for the scholarship are children of the United States military and National guard, and military Reservists who were federalized and die on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

This includes legally adopted children or children of a spouse by a prior marriage or dependent children as defined by the United States Armed Services for active duty personnel. An applicant must be a high school senior or a high school graduate to apply for the scholarship. The scholarship is for undergraduate study at a US school of higher education.

The deadline to apply is April 15th of each year. Awards are made in early May and are renewable. To obtain an application or for more information contact: The American Legion American Legion Legacy Scholarship PO Box 1055 Indianapolis, IN 46206 or 317-630-1212 or acy@legion.org or www.legion.org.