

Legion News

The Official Publication of the American Legion Department of North Carolina



April - June 2018

Vol. 81, No. 2

USPS 009-812

HAPPENINGS

APRIL

April 1, Easter
Children & Youth Month
Boys State, Student Trooper,
Scouting, Jr Shooting Sports,
Baseball, JROTC, ROTC, Teach-
er Appreciation, School Awards,
Etc, all involve our youth. Sup-
port them!

MAY

May 28th Memorial Day.
Please be involved
**DO NOT FORGET MOTHERS
DAY! May 13th**

JUNE

Birthday of US Army **June 14, 1775**
Department Convention **28-30, 2018**
Boys State **June 17-23,**
Catawba College
(Note: Student Trooper Program
has been moved to July 15-20, 2018,
Highway Patrol Training Center,
Raleigh)



James W. "Bill" Oxford National Commander Campaign 2019-2020

When the Legionnaires of North Carolina endorsed Bill for the high office of National Commander that endorsement was a small piece of a multi-level, multi-year process. One portion of the process requires Bill to visit nearly every Department. The ideal time for a visit is during a Mid-Winter Conference, Department Convention or Fall Conference. The large American Legion conferences allow Bill to get his message to thousands of Legionnaires across this country.

Bill has traveled to eight Departments and attended several national events over the past nine months. That however is going to change. Over the next several months Bill will be traveling to 40 Department conferences or conventions over the next 17 months. He will also need to attend various national events such as service officers school; membership workshops; spring and fall meetings as well as national conventions. Bill's travel obligations will also increase because the 100th anniversary invitations will be sent to him.

While a campaign for National Commander does not match the expense nor intensity of a national political campaign, there are several parallels such as brochures and campaign

material (pins and pens) and a nation-wide travel. Much of these expenses are born by the candidate. There are no national campaign funds to cover the cost of travel. The candidate (Bill) will receive donations from Legionnaires across the USA and certainly several Posts and individuals in North Carolina want to help his campaign. Several Team North Carolina campaign workers have volunteered their time and paid their own expenses to help at these Oxford receptions. The campaign has hosted two of the six receptions held in connection with Bill's campaign. There two big assignments at conventions in which 20 to 30 Legionnaires will be needed to visit the 50 Department caucuses in Minnesota.

The campaign is going well, and we are on track, but the busiest portion of the campaign will start to heat up this summer and be in full gear by the fall. The number of invitations for Bill will double over the next few months. In January, Bill was invited to one Department Mid-Winter Conference. In January 2019, Bill will be on the road every weekend. Which means the amount of funds needed will quadruple! We have asked and will continue to ask for North Carolina Posts to step up and

assist Bill's campaign. We have suggested each Post contribute \$1 per member per year. These critically needed funds will allow Bill to keep campaign invitations and allow him to host these important receptions held in Indianapolis and Washington DC.

Checks should be sent to:
The American Legion of North Carolina
Attn: Larry Rozier, Treasurer
PO Box 26657
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

In memo line add Bill Oxford Campaign

Legionnaires who wish to contribute to Bill's campaign may also contribute online:
www.BillOxford.org and click on the donate button. Or you can click on link on the Department of North Carolina link: <http://nclegion.org> OR <http://nclegion.org/bill-oxford> and make a contribution via a credit card.

Bill Oxford Campaign is an important milestone for Bill but also the Department of North Carolina. Bill's influence will have a positive impact on the National level and the Department of North Carolina for many years to come. Your support and your Post support is important, it is critical and most of all it is appreciated.



Pictured l to r, Commander Clifton Bell, Peter Paul Blasko, III, Judith Blasko, General Gorham, NEC Jeff Joyner



Soldiers honored

Southern Pines Post 177 Celebrates Legion 99th Birthday

Rufus A. McLaughlin American Legion Post 177, Southern Pines, NC, celebrated the 99th Birthday of the American Legion on Saturday, March 17, 2018 by honoring the 7 Servicemen of Southern Pines who were killed in Viet Nam and their families. The speaker for this event, Brigadier General (Ret.) James R. Gorham of Kernersville, NC, (the first African American officer to become a general in the N.C. National Guard) stressed the importance of being reminded often of the sacrifices of men and women who make the ultimate sacrifice of their very lives while working to preserve the dignities and privileges we have traditionally held dear in America. They understand from the beginning the possibility of this sacrifice. Yet they forge ahead with courage, determination, and honor on a daily basis, doing what is required to complete their mission. Their sacrifices have secured the possibilities of Americans to dream beyond what we see to what we desire. American military personnel are held to high standards in department which should also inspire and motivate all Americans to treat each other better, show more respect to and apprecia-

tion of one another. Men and women who pay this high price represent the greatest of all, as referenced in the biblical statement, there is no greater love than a man lay down his life for a friend. General Gorham reiterated that we, as Americans, referencing Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, should continue to remember "all men are created equal, and endowed with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..." Gen. Gorham, the son of a sharecropper, Roy Gorham in Falkland, NC, shared with humor and gratitude, the hard-earned character traits of humility, respect, service, faith, hope, endurance and integrity instilled by his father, which were the major catalysts for his service and success. The list of Families are:

PFC Clinnis Harrell Jackson US Army Nov. 7, 1966
PFC Ernest Edward Ross US Army November 17, 1966
Lnc Cpl Paul Matthew Spencer -US Marine Corp. April 18, 1968
Sgt. Gary Nelson Frye - US Army -May 19, 1968

SFC Donald Lutz - US Army -June 13, 1968
BosMate 3rd Class Paul Blasko, Jr. US Navy -November 8, 1968
Spec 4 Joel Steven Ivy, Jr. -US Army - November 28, 1971

During a formal memorial ceremony, each family lit a candle in honor of their Veteran and was presented with a framed photo at the end of the event. All families were present except that of PFC Clinnis Jackson, whose family lives out of the area. Also in attendance were Served by Post and Auxiliary members, dinner of Prime Rib, Pineapple Chicken, Twice Potatoes, Asparagus and Cake was prepared by Post Adjutant Arthur 'Gene' Mason, Post Commander Clifton E. Bell Jr. also serves as Commander of Department of North Carolina 16th District. Also in attendance were NEC Jeff Joyner, Post 147, Rockingham, NC, Ken Kelly Veteran's Service Representative and Adjutant Mike Gast, Post 12, Carthage. Tessie Taylor, Auxiliary Secretary, Post 177.





Commander's Column

I want to thank you for all the support you have given your fellow veterans and the American Legion this year. The American Legion once again showed their determination and strength in Washington DC during the Winter Conference. We were able to speak with all of our Senators and Congressmen or a representative in their office. No doors were closed this year. It may be that it is an election year, but it was great to be able to speak with them about veterans' issues that concern us all, such as Privatizing the VA Medical Hospitals and Clinics, Fully Funding a Superior National Defense as the Global War on Terror continues, Creating

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

CAROL BARKER
Department Commander



Lifetime Electronic Health Records (EHR), and many other issues.

I also want to tell you what a wonderful and exciting time I had this year representing the State of North Carolina as your Department Commander. It has been such an honor. Each and every one of you have been so gracious and warm, regardless of the location. I wish there were more days of the week so that I

could visit more posts. Please know that I think of all of you as I travel around this wonderful state. I have received reports on your great work and all that you have accomplished. It is truly gratifying. Recently, the Department Oratorical Contest was held at the historical Guilford County Courthouse in Greensboro, NC. It was exciting to hear four very talented speakers from across our state. These young men and women are our future. They spoke on the Constitution of the United States with such knowledge and passion. The Department Junior Shooting Sports Program State Championship showcased some of the finest marksmen in North Carolina on 10 March at Post 48 Hickory. Although I was unable to attend, due to a prior commitment, I understand the young men and women were

See Commander, Page 8

ADJUTANT'S CALL

TIERIAN CASH
Department Adjutant



Adjutant's Column

At some time or the other, we hear a complaint from a man or a woman which contains the statement, "Life has been unkind to me," or "I've gotten a raw deal." While one readily understands that there are defeats and disappointments in life, it is in these complaints and underlying assumptions that one needs correction.

Most people go through life with the feeling that the world is indebted to them. It owes them health, sustenance, freedom from pain and sorrow and a guarantee of happiness. When something goes wrong, they feel they have been cheated. It might help these individuals, rather, to ask themselves, "What do I owe the world? This would make them debtors instead of creditors.

Recently, during the Washington Conference in February, I made several trips in a taxi—that is always an adventure in the D.C. traffic. I realized that as we traveled along, the meter kept ticking away, adding to the amount I would have to pay when the trip was over. Even when we were standing still, waiting for the light to change, the meter continued to work.

I realized that a similar situation exists in the life of every person. The further we travel in life, the more we owe. We cannot, in good conscience, accept the things that life brings us, without being prepared to pay for them. Every step further along life's path demands an increasing tariff. Knowledge is purchased at the price of sacrifice, success is attained only through effort. Joy is often compensated with responsibility and sorrow. One cannot lose a loved one unless

See Adjutant, Page 8

Chaplain's Column

Billy Graham, one of God's greatest messengers, recently passed away. He was known as "America's Pastor" and preached to many millions of people on all continents. As he shared the gospel worldwide, thousands responded to the call.

He lived a life unscathed by scandal. He was true to his faith in every way possible. With the love and support of his family, he sacrificed time away from them to bring others into the fold. He wholeheartedly believed that all individuals, regardless of nationality, race or skin color, should be treated as equals. He lived by the teachings in his Bible. He earned the love and respect from the world's peoples from the lowliest to the most high. Although he had no official title, he had access to every President of the United

States since 1945. He met with and was admired by Kings, Queens, Presidents, Popes and average people from all walks of life.

More people have heard Billy speak than any other human in history. Over his sixty plus years of ministry, Billy preached the gospel to over 210 million people in 185 countries. His simple message was easily understood and received by all who heard. I feel certain that many of them are now at peace in the afterlife in heaven as a result of his teachings. He was such a humble man that he said he only wanted "Billy Graham - Preacher" on his tombstone. He was qualified to spread the gospel by his faith in his God. His demeanor was warm, welcoming and loving.

Once can speculate just how awesome our influence on the world could be if each and every one of us would adopt the character and faith

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

JAMES ERVIN
Department Chaplain



of such a great man. Mankind will long honor his memory and what he stood for.

Recently as I was recruiting a new member, I looked at the qualification era list on the reverse of the application. It became clear to me that for almost 28 years, every service member who has an honorable discharge or is now on active duty are eligible to join The American Legion. We need to continue to pray for our veterans and their families and for peace in our lifetime.

Please remember our motto, "In God We Trust". I hope to see you all soon.

JUDGE'S CORNER

GAITHER M. KEENER, JR
Department Judge Advocate



ing sent officers of all types of the military service to Paris with the objective of establishing a military veteran service to represent and assist all American veterans.

It is interesting when reading the minutes and the following quote, "It appeared to those 20 officers that their untied presence in Paris constituted an unusual opportunity to initiate such an organization for the welfare of the AEF veterans".

That caucus of 20 officers assigned by General Pershing appointed committees on convention, organization, constitution, and a committee to name the organization, and all were appointed by the acting chair, Major E.F. Wood.

The convention committee was chaired by Brigadier General Sher-

Happy 99th American Legion Birthday

As we celebrate our ninety ninth American Legion birthday, I am at Duke Medical Center working on some health matters which I hope to control and hopefully will eliminate. So, I was unable to attend any post celebrations this year, especially my home American Legion Post 48 Hickory. Normally, I speak at several post birthday parties celebrating the day our organization was instituted.

With that said, Dan Wheeler, the national adjutant sent me the minutes of the first meeting of the caucus of the American Legion, which was held on March 15, 1919, the birth of The American Legion and the date we celebrate as our birthday. Dan's note was straightforward, during your downtime and it seems you have a lot of spare time currently, take time to read and enjoy the proceedings of the minutes of the first caucus of The American Legion.

See, Dan and I have become very close friends and Dan knows I am a history buff. Therefore, he knew not only would I enjoy reading those initial minutes of the organization but hopefully learn from the past.

It is interesting that the caucus was called to order by Major E.F. Wood, the temporary secretary of the temporary committee in absence of Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt Junior, the temporary chairman of the temporary committee absent since he was called to go back to America. The first meeting of course occurred in Paris to help determine should there be an organization of veterans who made up the AEF. That meeting occurred in February and lasted approximately three days. It was attended by 20 officers of the AEF from all parts of the services that composed the AEF, as ordered by General Pershing. General Pershing had ordered 20 officers from all parts of the AEF to meet in Paris to set up an organization to represent the veterans of the American WWI Services. Therefore, General Persh-

VA Expands the Decision Ready Claims Program to Include More Types of Claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs, in an effort to improve the disability claims process, has modified the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) program, to include additional types of claims.

In addition to claims for increase, veterans are now able to file claims for direct service connection, presumptive service connection, and secondary service connection. Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a

decision within 30 days from the time VA receives their claim.

To file under DRC, veterans must work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer (VSO), who will ensure all supporting evidence is included with their claim, at the time of submission. This advanced preparation allows claims to be immediately assigned to VA claims processors for a quick decision.

Currently, mandated by the VA as part of the rules, you must have pre-

DSO REPORT

JAMES McMINN
Department Service Officer



viously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from the VA on that claim. You also cannot file your claim through the DRC Program if you currently have another disability claim pending, an appeal pending, or if your claim is related to pension or special

See DSO, Page 8

The North Carolina Legion News

Carol Barker
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Tierian Randy Cash
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Articles May Be Submitted For Consideration To Be Published In The North Carolina Legion News, Po Box 26657, Raleigh Nc 27611-6657.

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The North Carolina Legion News (Usps 009-812) Is Published Four Times A Year, In January, April, July, And October By The American Legion Department Of North Carolina, 4 N. Blount St., Raleigh, NC 27601. Periodicals Postage Paid At Raleigh, NC. Postmaster: Send Address Changes To The North Carolina Legion News, Po Box 26657, Raleigh NC 27611-6657.



American Legion Post 72 Brings Holiday Cheer to the Family of Deployed Soldier

Post 72 Aberdeen honored the family of a deployed soldier with a special Holiday Party this past December. Special guests for the December/Holiday Meal was Mrs. Kyla Ward and her children Elin age four, Corbin age two, and the baby Maura age three months. Her Husband, Shelton Ward is currently deployed overseas. The American Legion family at the Post surprised them with gifts and a special visit from Santa after the meal. The Auxiliary made sure that Shelton received a package for Christmas. Respectfully, Mandy Croy 2nd Vice Commander



Post 234 in Valdese Donates \$1,000

Dorothy Webb, American Legion Post 234 Social Quarters Director, and Tony Smith, Post Finance Officer, presented a check for \$1,000 to Bill Chapman of the East Burke Shrine Club for the Greenville, SC Shriners Hospital for Children. Nobles present were Ben E. Roney, Jerry Brittan, Berry Heavner and Roger Heavner.



Pictured l to r, Elizabeth Hons, Emily Saffo, James Cooley and Sterling Hall



Commander Barker presented 1st place plaque to Elizabeth Hons

State Oratorical Contest Held in Historic Courthouse

The 2018 State Oratorical Contest was held on March 3rd at the old Guilford County Court House in Greensboro.

We had 4 outstanding contestants. Representing Division II was Emily Saffo. Elizabeth Hans represented Division III. Division IV was represented by James Cooley and Sterling Hall represented Division V. All of the contestants represented their Divisions well. But there can be

only one winner. Elizabeth Hons was the winner and will be representing the State of North Carolina at the National finals in Indianapolis on April 13th thru April 15. Elizabeth is a Senior at Rolesville High School near Raleigh. She was sponsored by Post 187 Wake Forest. The 1st runner up was James Cooley a Senior at Richmond Senior High School. Photos by Larry Rozier



Smithfield Native Serving on USS Kearsarge

*By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steve Watterworth, Navy Office of Community Outreach
Photo by Dustin Good*

NORFOLK, Va - A Smithfield, North Carolina, native and 2014 Smithfield/Selma High School graduate is serving in the U.S. Navy aboard USS Kearsarge. Petty Officer 3rd Class Malachi Barnes is a boatswain mate aboard the amphibious transport dock operating out of Norfolk. Kearsarge, one of the Navy's most advanced amphibious ships, is designed to deliver Marines and their equipment where they are needed to support a variety of missions ranging from amphibious assaults to humanitarian relief efforts.

A Navy boatswain mate is responsible for for the anchors, mooring, and driving the ship. "We launch the Marines to the beach," said Barnes. "I bring a good work ethic, and hard-working small country town perspective," Barnes said. "Being in the NJROTC made me join the Navy."

Sailors' jobs are highly varied aboard USS Kearsarge. More than 400 men and women make up the ship's crew, which keeps all parts of the ship running smoothly, from handling weaponry to maintaining the engines. An additional 700 Marines can be embarked. USS Kearsarge is capable of transporting Marines and landing them where they are needed via helicopters, vertical takeoff and landing aircraft and landing craft. "The success of our Surface Force ships is measured by our ability to provide Fleet Commanders with combat naval power at sea and to project that pow-

er ashore where and when it matters," said Vice Adm. Richard A. Brown, commander, Naval Surface Forces. "It's hard work to ready ships for combat operations at sea - it takes the talent of an entire crew working well together. I'm extremely proud of the each and every surface warrior's contributions to the Navy's enduring mission of protecting and defending America, at home and around the world."

These amphibious transport dock ships support amphibious assault, special operations or expeditionary warfare missions and can serve as secondary aviation platforms for amphibious ready groups. Because of their inherent capabilities, these ships have been and will continue to be called upon to support humanitarian and other contingency missions on short notice.

Barnes has military ties with family members who have previously served and is honored to carry on the family tradition.

"I'm the first one in my family to serve in the military," Barnes said. Barnes's proudest accomplishment was earning his Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal he earned by completing underway replenishments during wartime deployment.

As a member of one of the U.S. Navy's most relied-upon assets, Barnes and other USS Kearsarge sailors know they are part of a legacy that will last beyond their lifetimes.

"I've been able to work hard to improve myself, instilling leadership and encouraging myself to do things I wouldn't have done," Barnes said. "I want to be the best at my job."



Shelby Post and Unit 82 instruct on Flag Etiquette

On January 22, four members of Shelby's American Legion Post 82 and one Unit 82 Auxiliary member visited Township No. 3 Elementary School. They were there to instruct the school's honor flag squad in U.S. Flag etiquette and the proper way to fold, carry, raise, and lower the flag. The students on the squad are all fifth graders, and take their responsibilities very seriously. Principal Molly Blanton invited the Legionnaires to the school to give the presentation. Post 82 presented Ms. Blanton with a new 4 X 6 foot U.S. flag to be flown in front of the school's main entrance. The Post will also provide the school with a NC state flag.



Post 38 Receives Memorabilia Of Namesake

American Legion Post 38 was presented service medals and other memorabilia from the family of Robert May (the first local resident killed in WWII) who name the post now bears. The American Legion will be 100 yrs old in 2019. The Shaw May Post 38 moved to its current location on American Legion Rd. in 1989. Medals were gratefully accepted on behalf of the post by Glenn Mosley.



Garner Post 232 Celebrates Fireman and Law Officer of the Year

In the photo: from L to R: Garner Fire Chief M. Poole, Fire Capt. Tim Rooks, Jesse Mendoza, Jeff Hicks, First Class Officer Bert Walker, Garner Police Chief Zudema and Garner Police LT Chris Clayton

December 21, 2017: At the Garner American Legion Post 232's annual Christmas party the Garner Fireman of the Year Captain Tim Rooks and the Garner Law Officer of the Year First Class Officer Bert Walker was honored. Presenting certificates of appreciation for The American Legion Garner Post

232 was Post Commander Jeff Hicks and presenting certificates of appreciation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10225 was Post Commander Jesse Mendoza. Also present was Garner Fire M. Poole, Garner Chief of Police Zudema and Garner Police LT Chris Clayton.



State Air Rifle Competition Held

By Emily Willis ewillis@hickoryrecord.com

Mar 12, 2018
 NEWTON — The 2018 State Air Rifle Competition was held Saturday morning at the American Legion Post 48, where 30 of the top marksmen from throughout North Carolina gathered to participate.

Harry Flynn, president of the American Legion Hickory Post 48 Air Rifle Team, said when the Junior Shooting Sports Program was established three years ago, he did not expect it to take off as fast as it did. "My vision was to begin having state championships in 2020, and we are ahead of that schedule," Flynn said. This is the second year Post 48 has hosted the state championship, which included sporter and precision shooters.

Flynn said the differences between sporter and precision shooters is in the cost of the air rifle and uniform.

Precision shooters use more expensive air rifles and dress out in

bulky uniforms that limit their movement.

Lexie Liptrap, a 10th -grader at Bandy's High School, participated Saturday as a sporter shooter, but her father said she is preparing to move to precision shooting soon.

"She wants to go down that route, because she wants to earn scholarship money," Richard Liptrap said. He added that Lexie is part of the shooting club at her school and is the top rifle shooter, out-shooting seniors on the varsity league.

"She has a gift with shooting, and she is using this talent to achieve her goal of becoming a nurse," Richard Liptrap said.

Richard Liptrap expressed his hope that all schools will offer a shooting club, because he and many others believe it's about more than pulling a trigger.

"This teaches you discipline, and you really have to focus on what you are doing at all times," Richard Liptrap said. "All kids could benefit from a sport like this."

Evan Thompson
 Candidate for Department Commander



Military Experience

1969-70, US Marine Corps Infantryman, Admin Specialist
 1971-72, NC Air National Guard Admin Specialist
 1972-76, Marine Corps Reserves Infantryman, Admin Specialist
 1976-81, US Army Reserves 108th Division (Training)
 1982, US Army, 2nd Battalion, Co E Fort Jackson, SC, 1st Sgt
 1983, Fort McClellan, Alabama 1st Sgt, NBC School
 1984-85, US Army Reserves 108th Division (Training)
 1986, Fort Bliss, TX US Army Sgts Major Academy
 1987-90, 108th Division 2nd Battalion Sgt Major
 1990-92, 108th Training Brigade Fort Jackson, SC Brigade Sgt Major

Education

1965-69, BA Warren Wilson College
 1971-72, MBA, Appalachian State
 1978, Ed.S, Appalachian State
 1982, Assoc Degree Criminal Justice
 1990-92, Ph.D Studies, Higher Education Univ of South Carolina

Work Experience

1972-82, Instructor, Cleveland Co Technical Inst., Shelby, NC
 1982-96, Gardner Webb Univ., Prof, Asst Dean, Dean
 1996-2008, Operated Painting Business

Legion

Member Post 82, 8 years
 Post Commander, 2016-2017 (2 yrs)
 Post Adjutant 2012-15, 100%, 2012,13,15
 District 23 Commander 2014-2016 (3 yrs) 1st to 100%, 2015
 Dept. Vice Commander (Div V), 2017
 Recipient of Cmdr's Deuce and a Quarter Award
 National Americanism Council, 2015-17 (3 yrs)
 Dept Leadership Committee, 2015-16 (3 yrs)
 Internal Affairs Commission, 3 years
 Publications & Personnel Cmte, 2017
 Legion College Attendee, 4 years
 Instructor 3 years
 Graduate of Legion Extension Institute
 Graduate National Legion College, 2016



Apex Post 124
Endorses

Patricia Harris

For Re-Election
Alternate
National
Executive
Committeeman



Military Service

US Army & US Army Reserve 22yrs Ret.
Signal Corps MSE (Secure) Commo Section
Chief

Finance Specialist

Education

Needham Broughton High School
Central Texas College, Ft. Hood TX
Dudley's Cosmetology University, Kernersville NC
NC Board of Cosmetics Licensed

Post

(Post 157, Raleigh)

Executive Committee

Children & Youth Chairperson

Second Vice Commander

Post Commander 2005-2007

100% Post Commander 2005-2007

(Post 124, Apex)

First Vice Commander – 2009- Present

District

Chaplain 2006-2007

District 11 Vice Commander 2007-08

District 11 Commander, 2008-09

Division

Division III Commander 2010-11

Division Membership Chairperson

Division Chaplain

Department

Alternate National Executive Committee-

man 2016- present

Department Commander – 2013-14

Created NC 5 yr. Membership Plan

96th National Convention Hostess, 2014

Constitution & Bylaws, 2014- present

Public Relations & Publications – 2014- present

(Chair- 2016)

Leadership and Development -2012- 2013

Internal Affairs Commission 2011-2013

(Chair- 2017-present)

Rules and Credentials Committee 2012

National Leadership College Vice Chair

2012

Membership Cmte Vice Chairper-

son-2009-10

Membership Cmte member 2008-09

Legislative Commission – 2008-10

Resolutions Committee – 2006-08

Special Committees, 2014-15

Post Reorganization (Division II)

Employee Manual

Committee Reorganization

National

Nat'l Internal Affairs Comm, 2013-Present

Sub Committee Appts, 2013- present

Nat'l Legion College

Nat'l Legislative Council 2013-present

Nat'l Legion College Class Facilitator 4

years

21st Century Membership Strategic Plan

2013

Nat'l Children & Youth Commission 2007-

2013

National Legion College Graduate, 2007

Veterans Rehab Committee, Honorary 2005

Auxiliary

National AL Auxiliary Southern Division VA

& R Chair 2016-2017

Vice President, Unit 124 Apex

Community

NC Military Affairs Commission

NC State Veterans Council 2014- 2017 Com-

mander

NC Women Veterans Challenge Group 2017

Member, Poplar Springs Christian Church/

Mt. Gilead Bapt Church

Women Veterans Support Services, Inc.,

Founder/CEO

Director VIP, 20 & 4 Honor Society of Wom-

en Legionnaires

Farm Service Bridge to Opport Cmte

VFW Post 10999, Raleigh

DAV Chap 1, Raleigh

ANAVICUS

National American Legion College Alumni

Assoc

Adjunct Professor, NC State Univ Topic

Women Vet/PTSD 2010-2015

US Army Advisory Board (CAB) Raleigh

Wake County Veterans Council, Pres 2001-03

Raleigh Veterans Day Parade Chair 2011-12

Kappa Epsilon Psi Military Sorority, Inc.,

Honorary

Order of THE LONG LEAF PINE Award

2013

“Forward March!”

Thomas Hunsucker

Candidate for
District 22
Commander



Legion

Post

Life member Post 48

Post Commander

Legion Riders Asst. Director

Served as Sgt-at-Arms

Member Post 48 Honor Guard

Junior Shooters team coach

Hickory American Legion Fair Board

Member

Baseball food booth volunteer

Department

Leadership and Development Commit-

tee

Reconnect Committee

Military Experience

Air Force (Active Duty) 1983-94

Air Force Reserve 1994-1995

Air Guard 1995-2015

Retired Oct 2015, Chief Master Sgt

Mike Donnelly

Division I
Commander



*Success through
Leadership and
Training”*

Military Experience

U.S. Navy Retired (1972 – 1991)

SKC (Storekeeper Chief Petty

Officer), E-7

Legion Experience

Member for 12 years

PUFL Member

Post 52 - 2nd Vice Commander

2015 to Present

Post 52 Executive Committee 2015

to present

District 5 Vice Commander 2015

– 2016

District 5 Commander 2016 to

Present

Attended NC Legion College 2015,

2016, and 2017

Internal Affairs Commission 2017

- 2019

2017 National Convention - Military

Benefits

and Quality of Life Committee

Personal Information

Married to wife Carolyn

Employed at Duke Energy

Community Activities

Member of Franklinton United

Methodist Church

Chairman Board of Trustees

FUMC 2014–Present

(Together We Stand for Veterans)

Org. of Duke Energy

Post 405
Pine Level
Endorses

Thomas Ingram

For Division III
Commander



Post Commander, 3 years

District Commander, one year

In the top 3 of the District for the year

After a successful year as

District 11 Commander,

I am asking for your support

for Division III Commander

Jeff W Joyner

for
National
Executive
Committeeman
2018-2020
Endorsed by
Rockingham
Post 147



Military Record: United States Navy,

1964-68, rank of TM3 (SS)

USS James Monroe, launcher techni-

cian, submarine service

Department (State) Organization:

American Legion Post 147, Rockingham:

48 years membership

Past Post Commander, 100% Member-

ship

Post Offices, 2nd Vice Cmdr, 1st Vice

Cmdr, Sgt-at-Arms,

Service Officer, Judge Advocate,

Executive Committee

District Vice Commander, 1983-84

District 16 Commander, 100% member-

ship, No. 1, 1976-77

District 16 Commander 1997-2001

National Achievement Award (100% Dist

Cmdr) 1977, 1999

Division IV Commander, 1989-90

Department Commander, 2006-07

Past Department Commanders' Club

Department Committees/Commissions

Department Sgt-at-Arms, 1973-74

Veterans Employment Committee, 1987-

90

Internal Affairs Commission, 1987-99

Internal Affairs Commission, Chair-

man, 1995-99

National Security Commission,

2000-01

Department Administrative Com-

mittee, 2001-06

Legislative Commission, Chairman,

2007-2015

Legislative Commission, 2007- 2017

Resolutions Committee, 2007- present

National Organization:

National Americanism Council, 1998-

2000

National Foreign Relations Committee,

2000-2007

National Public Relations Commission,

2007-2011

National Legislative Council, Chairman,

2015-2016

National Legislative Council, Vice Chair,

2008-2013

National Legislative Commission, 2011-

2015

Graduate American Legion Extension

Institute

National Convention Commission Liaison

2016 - present

National Convention delegate, 2001- 2017

Attended Spring and Fall Meetings,

Indianapolis

Attended Washington Conference, 2007-

present

Attended National Commander Testi-

mony

Washington DC

Career and Community Activities:

Semi Retired, salesman fertilizer and

chemical industry

Member VFW

Member DAV, Life Member

ANAVICUS, US Chapter

US Submarine Veterans (Tarheel Base)

Past member NC Veterans Council

Richmond County Veterans Activity

Council, Past Chairman

Richmond Co. Extension Advisory

Board, past Chairman

Richmond Co. Soil & Water Dist. Super-

visors, currently Chairman

Personal:

Married to Julia Baker Joyner, son,

Johnny (Jenifer) ,

daughter Jamie Dickerson (Jason);

grandchildren,

Nathan and Annah Dickerson; Andrew

Joyner. Julia, Jamie and

Annah are members of American Legion

Auxiliary, Johnny, Nathan

and Andrew are members of the SAL.

Son-in-law Jason, active duty,

US Army, is a member of Rockingham

Post 147.

Gaither M. Keener, Jr

Candidate for
Department
Judge Advocate
2017-18
Endorsed by
Hickory Post 48



Legion

• Department Commander, 2014-15

• Department Judge Advocate, 14 years

• Post Commander, 17 years

• 100 % District 21 Commander 99-2000

• Constitution & By-Laws Cmte 1986-87

• Dept Baseball Committee 1988-2001

• National Baseball Tournament Assis-

tant Director, Mid Atlantic, 1995-96

• American Legion World Series Tourna-

ment Assistant, 1999-2003

• NC Baseball Hall of Fame Member

• Member National Finance Committee

• Veteran of US Marines

• American Legion Charities, 2002-pres-

ent, Chairman



Lest We Forget

Bob Price, Post 342

The Price of Freedom Museum is a labor of love honoring our country and the men and women who defend her. Located in an old elementary school, the museum is manned by patriotic civilians and members of American Legion Posts 14 and 342 in Salisbury, NC. The museum is a mandatory field trip for all 5th grade students in the local school district.

Each session lasts two hours and is divided into two programs. One half of the class attends one program, while the other half attends the other program. After the hour is over, they exchange places. During one breakout session, the students are exposed to the D-Day invasion of the beaches of Normandy. One of the students is outfitted in authentic WWII clothing and equipment to demonstrate what a soldier would carry as he stormed the beach on June 6, 1944. First they put on a woolen uniform shirt and a back pack followed by boxes of K-Rations, an ammo belt with his canteen, bayonet, shovel and a pouch for a medical dressing. Then they strap on a bandolier of extra rifle ammunition plus a tent half, these items are only a partial list of what the student is weighted down with.

Once it is time to switch the first group goes to the building that had been the school's cafeteria but today's fare isn't eatable but is actually artifacts from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.

This breakout begins with a lesson on the history of our flag taught by one of the Legionnaires followed by a demonstration of the proper way to fold the American Flag. Again volunteers from the class are used and they learn how to perform a six man fold. The second part of this session is a scavenger hunt where the students form two or three person teams and have to locate as many artifacts as they can from a list they receive. They head in all different directions to locate a Purple Heart Medal, a WWII blue star flag, a piece of the Berlin Wall or maybe a Navy Whistle, a Chocolate Chip Uniform, a picture of a K-9 and it's handler or a WWI Soldier in his uniform while home on leave. There are several lists that go on and on.

For these your students, our nation's wars are no longer just something in history books or stories they hear their parents or grandparents tell on special occasions. They are something tangible. It's one thing to see a picture of WWI doughboys uniform, but to actually be able to see one leaves a much deeper appreciation for what the previous generations have sacrificed and the legacy they have passed on to this student's generation. Many students arrive with great anticipation because of the stories by their older siblings who have already had the experience.

American Legion Post 543 Assists Wounded Warriors

On a cold and windy day, Legionnaires from Post 543 were the "boots on the ground" helping the United States Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, the USO of North Carolina and Operation North State provide an "American Experience" for wounded warriors participating in the Marine Corps Trials.

The Marine Corps Trials, held at Camp Lejeune, was an intense adaptive sports competition involving wounded, ill, or injured U.S. Marines, sailors, veterans and military personnel from our allied countries. Thirty of the athletes from seven nations journeyed to Ocean Crest Pier on Oak Island for a day of fishing before the competition began.

After a bus trip from Camp Lejeune, escorted by American Legion Riders, Motorcyclists from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, and the Oak Island Police Department,

the warrior-athletes were met by a cheering crowd of Operation North State volunteers at the Ocean Crest Pier. Legionnaires from Post 543 who helped organize the event were on hand to register the athletes and help them get ready to fish.

The day was cold and windy and the fish weren't running, but some were caught as the athletes, some recovering from severe wounds, would not give up and seek shelter from the cold until they succeeded: until they caught a fish. Some bystanders marveled at this, but not Post 543 Commander Mike Fegan who observed, "These warriors just do not give up. Every day they fight to regain control of their bodies and train to be competitive athletes. Every day is a challenge. A little cold weather is not going to stop them as they try to catch a fish."



Broadway Native serves with Navy Strike Fighter Squadron

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Tom Gagnier, Navy Office of Community Outreach, Photo by Dustin Good

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.- A 2015 Western Harnett High School graduate and Broadway, North Carolina, native is currently serving with a U.S. Navy strike fighter squadron which flies one of the world's most advanced warplanes.

Airman Paul Blossom is an aviation electrician's mate with the Gladiators of VFA-106, which operates out of Naval Air Station Oceana. A Navy aviation electrician's mate is responsible for maintaining electrical and instrument systems, including power generation, conversion, and distribution systems; aircraft batteries; interior and exterior lighting; electrical control of aircraft systems. "I am not afraid to get out front, be a leader, and get things done," Blossom said.

Members of VFA-106 train pilots to fly the F/A 18 Super Hornet, one of the most advanced aircraft in the world. The Super Hornet takes off from and lands on Navy aircraft carriers at sea and is capable of conducting air-to-air combat as well as striking targets on land. It is approximately

61 feet long, has a loaded weight of 51,000 lbs., and a max speed of 1,190 miles per hour.

Operating from sea aboard aircraft carriers, the Super Hornet gives the Navy the power to protect America's interests anywhere, at any time. The versatile jet has the ability to destroy targets located hundreds of miles inland, without the need to get another country's permission to operate within its borders.

Blossom has military ties with family members who have previously served and is honored to carry on the family tradition. "My great-grandfather was in the Navy during WWII," said Blossom. "Another grandfather served in the Air Force during Korea. My mother and father served in the Army during Desert Storm. I've learned a lot since joining the Navy. I have a lot of respect for those senior to me."

As a member of one of the U.S. Navy's most relied-upon assets, Blossom and other sailors know they are part of a legacy that will last beyond their lifetimes providing the Navy the nation needs.

"The Navy can be fast-paced," Blossom said. "If you pay attention, you can really learn a lot."



Post Commander of the Year

District Commander 17 - Claude 'Jim' Kelly, left and Division IV Commander Jack Ward, right, presented the Department Post Commander of the Year to recipient Commander John Brewer of Post 535 in Unionville.



President's Message

Hope everyone is doing well !! Spring has arrived and we are now very busy with our District Meetings. It has been wonderful to see and hear all that the members are doing for our Veterans. Our units are very busy and I'm looking forward to visiting with the rest of the units as our District Meetings continue. I've completed all of my visits to the VA Hospitals and it was such an honor to see what all of our donations and hours that our members do by volunteering. I was able to see firsthand all of the Hospice Units and hope you will continue to make donations to this

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEBBIE HARRIS
Department President



cause. Our veterans and their families greatly need our support during their very difficult times. Thanks for all of the donations that have been so graciously given so far. Let's remember to "BEE -Lieve" in our mission which is to support our Veterans. Thanks again to the American Legion for all you do for the Auxiliary and also for your service!!

Buzzing For Membership

Are you buzzing for membership? Are you actively seeking out those new members? Have you spoken to the members of TAL and SAL for eligible ladies? Have you called past members to ask if they would like to rejoin? How about those current members that have not renewed their memberships this year? We have received numerous online interest forms. Are we all making follow up calls to these ladies? I am disappointed in this year's membership numbers. We are still 400+ members short from this time last year. It is not too late to change these numbers. I know that we can reach our 100% goal.

FYI: Last year National increased our dues for the coming year. Senior dues are going up by \$3 and the juniors by \$1.25. You might want to take that into consideration when planning for next year. You may want/need to increase your unit dues to cover this change.

A dues form was in this month's mailing. Please fill out and send it into State Headquarters by the dues date of May 11, 2018. This is important so that National will have the correct amounts that are due on your renewal notices.

Each unit should also fill out a Unit Officer List and send it into the State Headquarters. We want to assure that the proper members are receiving the mailings and membership packets.

VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

BETTY MOORE
Vice President



Districts meeting have started. I am enjoying meeting everyone and look forward to the remaining meetings. This is a great place to learn what other units are doing in our communities and for our veterans.

Don't forget about my membership awards. All Units, Districts and Divisions having 100% goal by June 13th will be entered for a prize to be given at June Convention. A donation will also be made to the Presidents Project for the first District and Division President to reach 100% goal.

We are forming a fantastic team for next year. If you would like to serve on a committee or as a member please let me know. There is also a form that you can fill out and get back to me. Many members think that you have to be a Past Department President to be a chairman. You do not! You just need to have the desire to serve.

For God and Country

Betty Moore

Department of North Carolina Vice-President and Membership Chairman

Committee members are Judy Norfolk and Beth Whitaker. If we can be of any assistance please contact one of us.



Sailors of USS North Carolina (SSN 777) Receive Operation North State NCCARES Christmas Boxes

"The care packages from North Carolina were a huge hit with the crew. We passed them out on our muster the day after Christmas. Our Sailors were extremely grateful to get some hand-written messages and cards from the citizens of North Carolina. The packages and their contents were definitely a huge morale boost for the crew during this arduous dry dock period. The cooks secured french-fry seasoning from Bojangles and used it to spice up the fries for our traditional Friday burger days onboard. It was nice to have a little bit of North Carolina added to the ship's routine.

The Sailors onboard really treasured knowing how much they are appreciated back in the States. A long shipyard period can be frustrating for a young Sailor. Acts of kindness like this from Operation North State help remind them of the importance of their jobs and that people on the home front appreciate their sacrifices!" V/R Geoff Walker

COLLECTION OF PULL-TABS

The purpose of collecting the pull-tabs is to help pay the rent for families of seriously ill children who stay at the Ronald McDonald House of Durham and is sponsored by your Department Children and Youth Commission.

Update: Mid-Winter Conference-2018
(2,161 LBS.)

The following contributed;	Tryon Post 250	36 Lbs.
Raleigh Post 1	Jacksonville Post 265	67 Lbs.
Asheville Post 2	Coinjock Post 288	45 Lbs.
Lexington Post 8	King Post 290	26 Lbs.
Tarboro Post 19	East Bend Post 336	48 Lbs.
Manteo Post 26	Salisbury Post 342	93 Lbs.
Greenville Post 39	Greensboro Post 386	200 Lbs.
Edenton Post 40	Elizabethtown Post 404	19 Lbs.
Kinston Post 43	Midland Post 433	33 Lbs.
Morehead City Post 46	New Salem Post 440	166 Lbs.
Concord Post 51	Calabash Post 503	136 Lbs.
Rocky Mount Post 58	Swift Creek Post 530	10 Lbs.
Hendersonville Post 77	New Bern Post 539	18 Lbs.
Swansboro Post 78	Wilmington Post 545	2 Lbs.
Liberty Post 81	Goldsboro Auxiliary Unit 11	1 Lbs.
Shelby Post 82	Washington Auxiliary Unit 15	1 Lbs.
Siler City Post 93	Cary Auxiliary Unit 67	11 Lbs.
Benson Post 109	Aberdeen Auxiliary Unit 72	3 Lbs.
Kannapolis Post 115	Hertford Aux Unit 126	46 Lbs.
Rockingham Post 147	Waynesville SAL Sq. 47	29 Lbs.
Hampstead Post 167	Legion Riders Post 124	3 Lbs.
Newport Post 203	Victor Tart	36 Lbs.
Waxhaw Post 208	Ellen Jury	10 Lbs.
Goldsboro Post 215	Kathy Watkins	3 Lbs.
Kinston Post 219	Duke Cancer Center	29 Lbs.
Spring Lake Post 230	Lawyers Mutual	2 Lbs.
Matthews Post 235		

"100 Years of The American Legion in North Carolina"

"100 Years of the American Legion in North Carolina" will chronicle the rich history of The American Legion of North Carolina and represent over 42,000 members. The Department has contracted with Publishing Concept (PCI) in Dallas, Texas. The expected delivery date is fall 2018. In the next year our membership will be contacted by PCI and given the opportunity to participate in the project. This is an excellent opportunity to highlight and celebrate the rich history of The American Legion of North Carolina.

- You have earned the right to be recognized in the volume because of the tremendous contributions you made while serving our country.
- Only Legion members who agree to be included will be published. Regardless of whether or not the member purchases the publication or other items, all submissions will be included.
- The publication will include a 32-page introductory section that includes photographs, stories, and an up-to-date history of the Department.
- Biographical section includes color photographs of the Legionnaire and information celebrating your story.
- When directed, you will submit two photographs with captions. The photographs are of your choosing. Custom questions will be scripted by the Department.
- You will also be listed in an alphabetical section.
- Included in our contract with PCI is a member verification process which is helping the Department improve its administrative processes.
- For each volume sold, The American Legion of North Carolina will receive \$10.00 to go toward Department programs.
- The following represents the main purchasing opportunities offered by PCI:
 - Loyalty Package:** This package includes: hardbound publication, digital publication, t-shirt, sweatshirt, and weekender travel bag featuring an embroidered American Legion logo. This includes a free cap as a thank you with the American Legion logo! \$329.90 + \$34.90 S&H
 - Pride Package:** This package includes: hardbound publication, digital publication, t-shirt and sweatshirt. This includes a free cap as a thank you with the American Legion logo! \$229.95 + \$24.95 S&H
 - Value Package:** This package includes: hardbound publication and digital publication. \$179.95 + \$15.95 S&H
 - Hardbound Publication Only:** \$99.95 + \$15.95 S&H
 - Digital Publication Only:** The digital publication features a SUPER SEARCH engine, which allows multi-conditional searches. \$99.95 + \$0.00 S&H

"100 Years of The American Legion in North Carolina"
Staying Strong for the Future
By Remembering Our Past



Judge

from Page 2

bun along with 13 other active veterans which five were NCOs or enlisted men. So, it is quite interesting when you read the minutes that each committee was chaired by an officer; however, enlisted men were present as members of each committee the caucus appointed.

The second meeting of The American Legion occurred on March 17, 1919, also in Paris, where several other committees were appointed; and all committees continued to meet until their work was completed.

DSO

from Page 2

monthly compensation (SMC). To see a full list of exclusions that would disqualify your claim from the DRC Program, go to www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/drc.asp.

How do I file a claim under the DRC Program? First, you must work with an accredited VSO to file your claim through the DRC Program, and he or she will help you determine if the DRC Program is right for you. They are fully trained on the DRC Program and can serve as a qualified advocate. What information do I need to submit in order to ensure that my claim is

ed.

Yes, The American Legion is an organization of Committees. Membership and Committees are very important. When you are appointed by the Commander to sit on a committee, it is important that you attend those meetings. Failure to attend those meetings quite frankly is a Breach of your duty when you agreed to serve. Currently, our department committees and commissions have issues as several times in the last several meetings, some commissions and committees did not

decision-ready? You will need copies of your medical records, Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs), federal records, and any other evidence that supports your claim. Depending on the type of DRC you're filing, you may also need copies of your Service Treatment Records (STRs), and all your relevant private medical records. Providing all relevant evidence when you submit your DRC allows the VA to process your claim much faster. Please visit www.americanlegion.org to access links to find a service officer prepared to guide you through the DRC Program.

Membership Input for State

It is March and we have a few months left to reach 100%. I want to thank every post in the state of North Carolina for your assistance. We have had some revitalization and still have a few more to go. We still need every legionnaire's assistance. Reach out to your family members, friends, and anyone else that qualifies for the American Legion. May 10th is the date that the official cutoff for 100%. As the membership chairman this

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BOB BARKER
Membership Chairman



year I want to thank every post that I have had the privilege to visit and work with. Your assistance and hospitality has been nothing more than outstanding. Remember Membership, Membership.

have a quorum. How can we operate those important commissions and committees and fulfill the duties of our organization unless we have individuals who are willing to serve. It is important that if you accept a position on a commission, that you attend. We all understand illness or sicknesses etc., but to have numerous committees without a quorum means those committees cannot make recommendations to the appropriate commissions and to the DEC is alarming!

Yes, our forefathers understood

the obligations they took to work and establish the greatest veterans' organization in the world. We must continue their work and grow their seeds. So, if you have the opportunity, below is the link which will allow you to read all pages of the initial minutes of our Great Organization.

<https://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/6826>

Take some time from your busy day and read the minutes of our organization's first meeting and the very beginning of our organization. For God and Country!

Commander

from Page 2

right on the mark and showed remarkable talent and poise.

A letter from the Commander would not be complete unless it mentions membership. I know everyone across the state is putting in a tremendous amount of effort to bring in new Legionnaires. Sometimes the task seems impossible, but remember, in order for the American Legion to continue its advocacy of veteran issues and affairs, we must recruit the next generation of Legionnaires. Being the largest veteran's organization has its unique responsibilities and if we are to remain in the forefront of service to our nation, we must reach out to our fellow veterans. We must remind our nation not to forget their service and sacrifice, many of whom gave their last full measure. A strong American Legion will do just that. Your work in the re-

cruitment of new members ensures that the American Legion will remain a strong voice in our second century of service.

Please, also remember my special Commander's Choice Award. It recognizes a member of your Legion Family that is always there, doing what's needed, but isn't necessarily in the spotlight. A plaque will be given in each class A-F. No form is needed, just a short narrative describing the person's service to the Post and fellow Legion Family members. And finally, in keeping with our National Commander's theme of "Family First," let us not forget the entire American Legion family made up of the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion. Every day this extended family works tirelessly to support our nation and veteran causes. Each one of you deserve a heartfelt thank you for all that you do.

Still Serving America

Adjutant

from Page 2

you had the privilege of having one. One cannot lose a fortune without the pleasure of first possessing it.

No one understands this better than veterans. The sacrifice of past and present Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast-

guardsmen is a reminder to all Americans of the obligations we all have as citizens of this great land.

We must recognize the debt we owe the world for everything we enjoy, and realize that life expects something from us. If we accept the bounties, we must be prepared to pay the price for them.



Photo, from left: District 11 Commander Thomas Ingram, Legionnaire Buddy Morris, and Post 141 Commander Mark Petersen.

65 Continuous Year Certificate Presented

Legionnaire Buddy Morris recently was awarded a certificate commemorating his 65 years of continuous membership in the American Legion. Buddy served in the US Navy in the Pacific theater during WWII. After he was discharged from the Navy, he returned to Selma, NC and joined Selma Post 141 in 1952. All 65 years of Legionnaire Morris' membership has been with Post 141. Joining Morris to commemorate his dedication to veterans and the American Legion were his wife, Virginia Morris, District 11 Commander Thomas Ingram, and many members of Selma Post 141. CDR Ingram and Post 141 Commander Mark Petersen presented Morris with a certificate signed by National Commander Denise Rohan, North Carolina Department Commander Carol Barker and Post Commander Petersen. "Past Selma Post Commander Morris is a credit to Selma Post 141, the Department of North Carolina and the American Legion," said Petersen. "His service to our great nation and to our great organization is an example for each of us to follow."



American Legion Presents 70 Years Of Continuous Service Award To Bill Whitley

American Legion Award presented to Bill Whitley by Jim Kelly, NC Legion District 17 Commander and Jack Ward, NC Division IV Commander

On Tuesday, March 6, William L. Whitley of Kannapolis was presented a National Award from the American Legion for 70 years of continuous service. Bill

served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a flight engineer gunner on B-24 Liberator heavy bombers during World War II. He successfully completed 35 bombing missions over Germany and the Balkans. The award was presented by the Commander of Legion Post 115 in Kannapolis, Daryl Darby, and Jack Ward, the NC Legion Divi-

sion IV Commander, and Jim Kelly, the NC Legion District 17 Commander. Bill joined the Beaver Pittman American Legion Post 115 in Kannapolis after he returned from World War II.

During each bombing mission, he kept detailed hand-written notes. His son-in-law and family convinced him to write a book of his memoirs so his grandchildren and family could experience some of the stories and things that he saw during the war. He published "World War Two Memoirs of a B-24 Flight Engineer Gunner in Italy 1944-1945". He dedicated his book to the thousands of flight engineers and crew members of WW II who flew on B-24 heavy bombers with courage and honor in the face of death. He stated that many paid the supreme sacrifice in combat during World War II. One of his quotes in his book is "whoever said he wasn't scared, has never faced actual combat situations".

He was assigned to the 459th Heavy Bomber Group, 759th Squadron of the 15th US Army Air Corps at Guila Field in Cerignola, Italy from October 1944 to March 1945. He returned to the States before Germany surrendered. In his book, Bill

provides several personal thoughts while on combat missions. Often times, he would hear and feel the flak bursting around the aircraft, and thought—"just let us survive". He also mentions that while flying at 25,000 feet with fluffy clouds and a breathtaking view, it was hard to believe that very soon there would be hundreds of flak bursts and enemy fighters attempting to knock us out of this beautiful, tranquil setting. Several times, he found himself up in his gun turret alone with hardly anyone speaking on the plane's intercom, privately asking God to forgive us if any innocent people are killed as a result of the saturation bombing they were dropping below.

Bill Whitley, Jr joined the family business in Kannapolis after his military service and ascended to become its president and treasurer. The company was renamed from Heilig B Wilkerson Furniture and Undertaking to become Whitley's Funeral Home in the 1960's. Today, it is physically located on Dale Earnhardt Blvd in Kannapolis—and is one of the premier funeral homes in Kannapolis.

Story submitted by Ken Parker, American Legion Post 115 Adjutant