



ADJUTANT'S  
NEWSLETTER  
OFFICE PHONE 856-8951  
EMAIL:  
ADJUTANTNH@LEGIONNH.ORG



THE DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
THE AMERICAN LEGION

**TO MY LEGION FAMILY:**

**ORATORICAL 2015:**

The Department Oratorical Contest was held on February 21<sup>st</sup> at St. Anselm College in Manchester. This year the Department only had three contestants to compete in this year's contest. This is the lowest participation in this contest in many years. However the three contestants that entered this year proved they were up to the challenge and all did an excellent job in presenting their orations. However there can only be one winner to move on to represent this Department at the National Competition in April. I would like to congratulate all three for a job well done.

**1<sup>st</sup> Place – Virginia Drye – Home School  
District 6**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Alana Hodson – Nute H.S. Milton  
District 3**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Emilee Metivier – Bedford H.S.  
District 4**

I would also like to thanks those members of the American legion Family that came to support these contestants at the contest.

I would also like to remind everyone we still have a Junior Oratorical Contest that is coming up on March 28, 2015, at St. Anselm College, Manchester, grades 6 – 8. So far there have been no contests in any district. This is a contest that was started in this Department and has been subject of pride where we have been able to give students in the middle grades an opportunity to prepare them for learning about this country's constitution as well as prepare themselves for going on and competing in the Oratorical Contest. It would be shame and outrage if we do not work to keep this contest going

which has been a big success in years past. The packages have been mailed to all the Posts and we need your help to pass the word to your middle school children in your school districts and encourage them to participate in this contest. Some of this department's regular Oratorical Contest winners have come from the Junior Contest in years past. Where does it end if we let programs like this one die away without a fight to keep it for future generations? Please help.

## **THE 97<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION**

It is that time of the year Legion Family where we need to start thinking about this year's convention. The dates for this year's convention are June 25 – 28, 2015. There already has been a lot of mail traffic about the requirement for Posts to make sure they reserve their rooms for convention now. As I write this, there are about 53 Posts in this Department that have not made any attempt at reserving rooms for convention. The deadline for reserving a room is quickly approaching. It is important that each Post try to send some representation to the convention. This is the time to make your voice heard and vote for the future leadership of this organization and its annual operating budget. If you have any questions on rooms or the Convention you may contact the Convention Committee Chairmen, Bob Blais, email: [robt125@comcast.net](mailto:robt125@comcast.net), or the Housing Chairmen, Deb Davis, email: [armygirl13@myfairpoint.net](mailto:armygirl13@myfairpoint.net).

There will be more information on the department Convention as we get closer to the dates. We will be setting up a tab on the website for getting information and anything else that may be important for your Post and its members to consider prior to attending this convention.

Additionally, the Department is trying to make its Ad Book better from years past. This year we have a company out of Massachusetts, Eastern Advertising, who will be soliciting for commercial and business ads for our Ad Book. I want to make you aware of this in case your Post receives any calls from businesses in your area wondering if this is a true solicitation. The money raised from this book will go towards offsetting the cost of convention and to programs of the American Legion.

Post Ads will still go through Department as they have in previous years. I will be attaching a copy of the Department form for submitting a Post or District Ad in this year's convention ad book. There is a deadline of May 1<sup>st</sup> in which we need to have these ads back in order to make print of the book.



While that helps, it puts the burden on veterans to know that they need to file that specific form instead of just sending in a letter.

The agency should change the rule so that if the veteran submits the same information that's on the Intent to File form, his claim starts from the day the VA receives that information, Marszalek said. "That would resolve the whole issue, and that's what we wanted them to do," he said.

Not only is the VA not going to do that, they're not even going to send veterans the correct form, Manar said. In a briefing last week, VA officials said that the agency will, instead, just tell the veteran where he or she can download or otherwise obtain the form. "They said this morning that they're getting away from sending out forms or paper of any kind," he said. "It's bizarre." (*Boeling, Brian, 2015, Tribune News Service*)

**COMPLAINT RE: INDIVIDUAL/BUSINESS POSSIBLE SCAM FOR FILING VETERAN CLAIMS:**

The article I provided above falls in line with the very subject I am going to address next. In considering the difficulties that veterans sometimes have even knowing how to start the claims process with the VA, it is not hard to understand how people out there are trying to scam veterans into paying for help in filing claims for service connected disabilities which is free to all veterans.

Recently the VA Regional Counsel came across one group that has started what looks like a way to possibly scam veterans out of their entitlements and or charge them for services that are already free and provided by certified service officers of veteran service organizations such as the American Legion. The following is some of the information that has come up as a result of this. At this point I am not going to name the group in question since no formal charges have been brought and are under investigation but I felt it was important for us to warn our members and veterans of these types of possible scams to rob our veterans of their hard earned money.

In reference to the subject in question it is apparent there may be alleged inappropriate business practices regarding a subject company/individual who markets that they will assist with "VA benefits pre-qualification" for VA Pension and Aid & Attendance benefits. The subject also gets business through referrals by nursing home and assisted living facilities. It is alleged that the subject appears to be charging veterans and surviving spouses a \$500 fee to complete VA pension documentation and providing "benefits counseling" and then mailing the applications to a local VSO office for submission to VA. The VSO and the complainants believe this is a violation of 38 USC 5902 and 5903.

The subject's invoices state the \$500 fee is for financial consulting, telephone conversations, and all correspondence including e-mail; the invoice specifically states "This fee does not include preparation and submission of a Veterans Benefit application. There is no charge for this service." However, the complainants reportedly received no other assistance from this subject except for preparation of the VA pension application. One complainant advised that the subject told them they could pay \$250 now and pay the remaining \$250 once the VA benefits are received.

Additionally this one group is using the American Legion name and referencing themselves as a Claims representative on the VA Form 21-22 for the American Legion.

It is important that we pass onto our veterans to be aware of an individual or group that may be trying to sell them services for filling our VA claim paperwork. The American Legion, VFW, and others have certified service officers that are ready to help them and you fill out the needed paperwork for getting your benefits or service connection. As mentioned in the article above this is a difficult process to say the least and doing it on line is also difficult for those that may not have a lot of experience with a computer. I will tell you that even I used a service representative to help me fill out my paperwork and track its progress and it was free of charge!

If you happen to be contacted, or know someone that has been contacted by a group not associated officially to any veteran organization or the VA and they are trying to sell you service for filling out paperwork, make sure you contact the VA as soon as possible.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

- March 16, Department Visitation, Post 18, Wolfeboro, 7:00 pm
- March 28, Junior Oratorical Contest, St. Anselm College, 8:30 am

### **MILITARY DATES TO REMEMBER**

- March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1911: Dental Corps established
- March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945: American Forces capture Manila
- March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1781: Battle of Guilford Court House
- March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1962: Vietnam Advisory Campaign begins
- March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1776: British forces evacuate Boston
- March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003: Iraq War begins
- March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1945: Central Europe Campaign begins
- March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1953: Battle of Pork Chop Hill
- March 25<sup>th</sup>, National Medal of Honor Day
- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1780: British besiege Charleston SC
- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1863: Vicksburg Campaign begins

March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1973: U. S. involvement in Vietnam War ends

**THE 97<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION:**

This is a reminder for those thinking about going to National Convention this year; the dates are August 28 – September 3, 2015 in Baltimore Maryland. There will be more information as time gets closer. One thing to think about is attendance to the National Commanders Banquet. Tickets again this year are \$45 a piece. As in the last couple years I have tried to get a idea of who is planning on going to this banquet and pay up front to cover the purchase of tickets which has to be months ahead of time. As in years past I hardly get a response and have to guess. Either Department gets stuck with too many tickets left over or not enough as I found out last year. Since the convention is closer to us this year and maybe more people might go I am going to look at the magic number of 30, which have already been ordered and paid for. I will be selling them on a first come first serve basis. Once they are gone that is it.

Last year national had a hard time digging up extra tickets for departments finding out they needed more including us. This year they have said we are most likely on our own. With that said if you are planning on going you need to get me your money and number of tickets ASAP.

Housing information will be coming out in April so that people may start making plans to go to convention.

**MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN LEGION:**

Did you know that the last time our membership was below 2 million was 1945 when it was 1,667,742? Our 2014 total ended the year at 2,208,651 – lowest total we have seen in 70 years!

I know none of us want to see those totals drop below 2 million.

This year the Department of New Hampshire will be at its lowest mark for membership since 1966 when we had a total of 17,706 members and run the risk of going even lower to figures this Department has not seen since 1955.

Recently I sat down with PDC Bill Hooley and we went over a strategy that he is looking to incorporate in his Post. This will involve sending letters out past members and veterans within the community explaining what the American Legion is all about. Additionally there needs to be more face to face contact with veterans who still have

many questions about the American Legion that not always a mailing can cover. I am going to include the following as part of a draft letter that I believe Post Commanders can use as a recruiting tool to send out to prospective members in their community. This can be tailored to your Post specifically as this one was and include any information that you feel is important.

Dear Veteran,

Remember when you decided to enlist into the military, you took an oath to defend our nation and its constitution not knowing where your assignment may be or whether you would be stationed state side or in an overseas location far away from home. However you dreamed of doing your part for this great nation with honor and pride protecting this countries freedom and fighting for the future of your family to be free. You did this not thinking about the sacrifice you may have to make and this shows you care for all the things this country was built on.

The battle is not over and we need your help. The American Legion continues to fight for those things you earned while serving this country. To carry on the mission of aiding our veterans, their families and all the programs the American Legion supports which give back to those who fought and served so bravely. Help us help them and you. Join the American Legion and become a voice for our veterans. Whether you come to our Post for a meeting or to socialize with the many veterans and families that belong to this Post there are many advantages and perk's that come along with becoming a member of the American Legion. There is a bi-monthly Legion magazine, a State newspaper, Post newsletters that show what the American Legion is doing for you and the community around you. Additionally there is a breakfast the last Sunday of the month. For just \$7.00, \$6.50 for seniors, children are welcome; you can enjoy an atmosphere that encompasses a sense of family; plus many other benefits and events which are part of this American Legion Post.

In order for you to understand the American Legion it is important that you know what the American Legion does. As a potential member of the American Legion you become part of a voice and seat before Congress. You become part of an organization that is at the forefront of all service organizations and without the American Legion there would have been no GI Bill. Many veterans do not know the GI Bill was one of the greatest pieces of social legislation ever passed for veterans and was solely supported by the American Legion at a time when people thought it would do no good. A lot of people thought America couldn't afford it. But the GI Bill made it possible for veterans, like you, after World War II to get an education and accomplish great things. This continues today and if not for the GI Bill thousands of veterans would not be getting the education they are today. The American Legion ensured this legislation passed and since has helped all veterans who had few if any benefits.

The American Legion is a veteran's organization that provides financial, social and economic support to members of the armed forces and their families. Since 1919, the American Legion has been a support structure for veterans. No other organization can even say or come close to that. The American Legion continues to provide services to help veterans file claims and find employment and also supports all members of the military. As a result the American Legion led the way in ensuring our veterans continue to receive the best care holding the VA accountable for recent events inside that organization leading to a much needed restructure of leadership in the VA.

The American Legion has been involved directly and indirectly in helping people come back from natural disasters for decades through programs like the National Emergency Fund that has raised millions of dollars to help veterans and their families recover from all types of natural disasters through direct participation in cleanup to financial assistance and services.

You can become part of this great organization that was built on honor and pride, the very things that many joined the service for to begin with. Be part of the American Legion tradition that has been in existence for almost 100 years. Will you not help us become stronger, be a member of the American Legion!

Our Post dues are \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely

Post Commander  
American Legion

The fate of where we go is in our hands. The solution is simple – we have to sign up and keep more members than we have - not an easy task but one I know together we can accomplish it.

**PLEASE POST ON YOUR POSTS BULLETIN BOARD**