



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



**THE DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
THE AMERICAN LEGION**

TO MY LEGION FAMILY:



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The 99th Department Convention, being held in Lincoln NH, May 19 – 22, 2017, is fast approaching. The costs of the Ad book have been posted.

**ADVERTISE YOUR POST, UNIT OR SQUADRON
IN THE
DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AD BOOK**

PRICE LIST

	BLACK & WHITE POST	BUSINESS	BOTH (business and Post) COLOR
Full Page	\$175	\$250	* \$400
½ Page	\$125	\$175	\$250
¼ Page	\$100	\$125	\$100
BUSINESS CARD		\$ 75	\$100

*note: \$500 inside back and front covers

The Ad Forms can be found on the website, www.legionnh.org/page/content/members/department-convention-information.

*****AT THIS TIME WE CANNOT ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS*****
SEND YOUR CHECK, YOUR AD, AND THIS FORM TO:

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NH
121 SOUTH FRUIT ST STE 103
CONCORD, NH 03301

Ads and payment must be at Department by May 1

The following is information on the banquet:

CONVENTION BANQUET

The Convention Banquet will be held at the INDIAN HEAD HOTEL, in LINCOLN, NH on Saturday May 20, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Social hour will be at 6:00 pm. All American Legion Family members are welcome to attend.

The cost of the ticket is \$30.00 per dinner with a choice of Beef or Fish

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND SEND IT TO:

VERNON LEIGHTON
374 Hayward St
Manchester, NH 03103

Forms for the Banquet can be found on the website at
www.legionnh.org/view/document/convention_banquet_2017.pdf

DEADLINE: MAY 5, 2017 CONTACT PERSON VERN LEIGHTON 785-9622

THERE IS A LIMIT OF ONLY 200 TICKETS AVAILABLE!
GET YOURS TODAY!!

INTERPOST ACTIVITIES AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT

DATE: March 12, 2017 – 11:00AM sign-up and a 12:00 noon start

PLACE: **Post 1 LACONIA**

ELIGIBILITY: All Legion, Auxiliary and S.A.L. paid up members (2017) who have attained the age of 21.

DEADLINE: March 10, 2017. All applications shall be sent to: Attn: Cribbage Tournament, Department of New Hampshire The American Legion, 121 South Fruit St Concord, NH 03301, accompanied with a check for \$12.00 (per two person team) payable to American Legion Department of New Hampshire. NO REFUNDS

RULES: Each team will play three rounds of three games each for a total of nine games. Pairings will be drawn from a hat at the start of the tournament and upon completion of the first and second rounds. Total pegs for the nine games will determine, 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th place winners. In case of a tie, positions will be determined by a play-off. There will be a prize for LOW TOTAL PEGS.

1. Each team will keep track of total pegs.
2. Deal and cut to the left.
3. All players will cut after each game to determine the dealer of the next game.

4. Two points for cutting Jack to be pegged before a card is played.
5. No count of Jack cut in the last five holes.
6. All hands to be counted just once, count in rotation and no interfering.
7. No discussions of play or hands between partners.
8. Kibitzing allowed but no talking.
9. Each team will bring their own cribbage board and cards.
10. No two teams will play each other more than once.

Earlon Beale, Cribbage Chairman
455-2026

Department Headquarters
856-8951

THERE IS A TEAM REGISTRATION FOR 2017 CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT

PLEASE POST ON BULLETIN BOARD

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 99th National Convention will be held in **Reno Nevada, August 18 – 24, 2017**. The Department of New Hampshire will be staying in the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino Hotel, 2500 East Second Street, Reno, NV 89595. I recommend to those of you wishing to go to this convention this year that you start making plans now.
<https://www.grandsierraresort.com/>

The cost per night is \$115.00 + 13% tax + \$2.00 Tourism Tax = \$132.00 a night. I have King and Queen rooms available. Right now I have 23 rooms assigned to this Department. However the Keene Band from Post 4 has decided to join us this year and will also be competing in the National Band Competition along with joining us in the parade.

There is free parking and valet parking available at the hotel. This particular Hotel has a lot of amenities available within the hotel to include many restaurants, activities for the family, and of course gambling.

A copy of the housing form, along with other information is on the website which needs to be back to me with a one night deposit by **July 1, 2017**, www.legionh.org/page/content/members/national-convention-information.

The banquet tickets this year will be \$47.00 a piece. I need people to get back with me as soon as possible on how many tickets they might want. I originally will order 30 tickets, but if there is more that want to go, I need those numbers before national sells out. After that it is first come first serve for any tickets that departments might have left over.

A real miracle - from WWII

I would like to thank Wayne Thomas from Post 5 for sending this story to me. I believe it is a story of the adversity and courage our WWII veterans displayed throughout their time and still to this day. This story was special to me because my uncle was a B-17 Pilot during WWII and flew 25 missions over France and Germany. He passed many years ago but I still remember the stories he use to tell and how proud he was to have served his country at that time. This is what I see here and I wish we had more stories like this one honoring the brave men and women that served this great nation during WWII. We are losing our WWII veterans more and more each day and soon there time will be just a memory and it is important to remember them as we remember all our veterans from every war this country fought in going back to the beginning of establishing this free nation.

CENSOR

Should there be some law, rule, or regulation against sending the picture below to my wife, please seal the flap above and return - it is an undiplomatic shot and one I should hate to lose.

Thank

H. Nuessle
1st Lt., A.P.

DAMAGE COURTESY OF
Walter Messersmith
X His Mark R.I.P.



"PHOTO BY
"Chib" Burbridge"

OLD "ALL-AMERICAN" "SOMEWHERE OVER NORTH AFRICA"
FEBRUARY 1, 1943

THE CREW:

PILOT - Ken Bragg Jr.
COPILOT - G. Boyd Jr.
NAVIGATOR - Harry C. Nuessle
BOMBARDIER - Ralph Burbridge
ENGINEER - Joe C. James
RADIO OPERATOR - Paul A. Galloway
BALL TURRET GUNNER - Elton Conda
WAIST GUNNER - Michael Zuk
TAIL GUNNER - Sam T. Sarpolus
GROUND CREW CHIEF - Hank Hyland

B-17 "All American" (414th Squadron, 97BG) Crew

Pilot- Ken Bragg Jr.

Co-pilot- G. Boyd Jr.

Navigator- Harry C. Nuessle

Bombardier- Ralph Burbridge

Engineer- Joe C. James

Radio Operator- Paul A. Galloway

Ball Turret Gunner- Elton Conda

Waist Gunner- Michael Zuk

Tail Gunner- Sam T. Sarpolus

Ground Crew Chief- Hank Hyland

In 1943 a mid-air collision on February 1, 1943,
Between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area,
Became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II.
An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control,
Probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent
Into the rear of the fuselage of a Flying Fortress named "All American",
Piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.
When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17.
The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away.
The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak.
The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged,
The fuselage had been cut almost completely through
Connected only at two small parts of the frame,
And the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged.
There was also a hole in the top that was over 16-feet long and 4 feet wide at it's widest;
The split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.



Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind
And twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed,
Except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft miraculously still flew!
The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane.
The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses
In an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.
While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart,
The pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.



When the bomb bay doors were opened,
The wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section.
It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes
And haul him back into the forward part of the plane.
When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner,
The tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off.
The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.
The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off.
They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home.
The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky.
For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the *All American*.
Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners
Were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters.
The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage
To aim and fire their machine guns.
The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.



Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the *All American* as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown.

They also radioed to the base describing that the appendage was waving like a fish tail And that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. The fighters stayed with the Fortress, taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base.

Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been "used"

So five of the crew could not bail out.

He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane to land it.



Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn To line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.



**When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had
Been injured.**

**No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition.
The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage
and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder,
at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.**



This old bird had done its job and brought the entire crew home uninjured.



What's in the VA secretary's 10-point plan to reform his department?

WASHINGTON — In appearances before veterans groups this week, Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David Shulkin is outlining his 10-point plan for reforming department operations and offerings, with a heavy emphasis on VA medical improvements.

The plan is separate from the 10-point VA plan President Trump unveiled on the campaign trail last summer, but includes some of the same themes of accountability and a more customer-service focus for department employees.

It also includes several provisions championed by Shulkin's predecessor, former VA Secretary Bob McDonald, who was criticized by Trump and other conservatives for not acting quickly enough on reforms.

During an appearance before the American Legion's winter conference on Tuesday, Shulkin said his new 10-point plan will "take the best of VA and the best of the private sector, and make that work for veterans." He also promised to work quickly on the reforms, saying many are facing deadlines or long overdue.

The list includes:

New accountability legislation

"When people lose their values, and deviate from the ethics and values we hold dearly, they no longer have the right to work in VA," Shulkin said. "We're going to make sure they don't work in VA."

But McDonald struggled with Congress on finding appropriate accountability legislation, sparring over measures he saw as crudely crafted or ineffective in solving department discipline issues. House and Senate leaders could not agree on new firing policies for VA last year because of congressional infighting over the scope of the rules.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe, R-Tenn., has promised to mark up a new accountability bill in early March, and said he has worked with Shulkin already on refining those updated rules.

Extend the Choice deadline past August

The controversial VA Choice Card program -- put in place in the wake of the 2014 wait times scandal -- is set to expire later this year. Lawmakers have complained the program has not helped as many veterans as it should, but Shulkin said he sees it as a key program for future VA reforms.

"We need to see that legislation extended beyond August, because we need those resources to provide care for veterans that they deserve," he said.

Renewing the program will require congressional appropriators to set aside several billion dollars in coming years to fund the outside medical care appointments, a demand that may be difficult to get past fiscal conservatives in the House.

Choice 2.0 Legislation

But Shulkin is also promising that if he gets more money for the Choice Card program, he won't be simply dumping the funding into a broken system.

"We want to come back and redesign the choice program so it actually works for veterans," he told the Legion conference. "We know this program was way too complex, there were too many steps to go out and get the care that veterans need."

Shulkin has already promised to eliminate program rules that limit outside care options to veterans who live at least 40 miles away from a VA facility or face a VA clinic wait time of more than 30 days. But those changes will also require congressional cooperation.

Infrastructure improvements and consolidations

McDonald had pushed for more money for new VA construction projects but also closing of some outdated or underused VA facilities. Shulkin is putting those ideas among his top priorities as well.

“We’re going to be looking towards investments, but we’re also going to have to make some choices,” he said. “There are some parts of the country where facilities are sitting empty, and there is no sense in keeping them empty.”

Both are potentially difficult proposals that will require help from Congress. Lawmakers are often loathe to close facilities in their own districts, and have been critical of the skyrocketing cost of recent new VA hospital constructions.

Enhance foundational services in VA

While Shulkin is open to shifting more routine medical care out of the VA system, he is pledging not to have that move pull away funds from department specialties like prosthetics work, post-traumatic stress disorder care and other veteran-related research.

“There are certain services that VA does better than anybody,” he said. “I want to make sure that we continue to be on the cutting edge, and continue to invest in those.”

VA/DOD federal coordination

Like McDonald, Shulkin is promising better coordination of VA and Pentagon records systems, transition programs and a host of other services overlapping military service and veterans status.

“The Department of Defense needs us, and we need the DoD,” he said. “We’re going to be working closely to make sure we maximize our ability to work together.”

But seamless cooperation between the two bureaucracies has remained elusive in recent years, even with White House pressure for better coordination. And whether both departments can stay focused on joint collaborations may depend on other priorities and distractions in Trump’s military plans.

Electronic medical record modernization

Lawmakers have been frustrated in recent years with the slow pace of modernization efforts for veterans’ electronic medical records. Former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki pushed to move the department from mostly paper records to completely digital files, but Shulkin -- a former medical system director -- sees other areas for improvement.

“These systems desperately need modernization,” he said. “We have to take those steps this year.”

It’s unclear whether that effort will require new funding from Congress, or if existing information technology funds can cover those changes.

Breakthrough in suicide prevention

Shulkin called suicide prevention “our top clinical priority right now” and said he is hopeful for major improvements in treatment in coming years.

Those advances have been disappointingly slow, even with extra funding and focus in recent years. Roughly 20 veterans a day nationwide take their own lives, according to estimates from VA researchers.

The issue is part of a broader push to get more mental health research and experts into the Veterans Affairs system, something that Trump promised on the campaign trail.

Appeals modernization

McDonald had offered a comprehensive appeals modernization plan to lawmakers a year ago that he insisted would have cut benefits appeals wait times from years to months, but the legislation stalled.

Shulkin is picking up that same initiative, calling it an urgent improvement which would save time and stress for thousands of veterans and their families.

“We need to get that system fixed,” he said. “Veterans should not be waiting anywhere near the amount of time they are to get their appeals heard and decisions made. But until we get a legislative fix, we’re not going to see any progress made.”

Accelerating performance on benefits claims

VA officials brought down the veterans benefits claims backlog by more than 500,000 cases in recent years, but a substantial number of filings still take more than four months to fully process. About 99,000 cases were still backlogged as of Feb. 25.

“Although we have made tremendous progress, we still have more we can do to make faster decisions,” Shulkin said. The backlog numbers have seen an increase in recent months, raising questions of whether improvements made in the past were temporary fixes instead of systemic changes. ([Leo Shane III](#), February 28, 2017, *Military.com*)



Please Post