"The Connector"

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of South Carolina

Veterans Serving Veterans and America since 1919

IN THIS ISSUE

★ Department Commander & the 2021 Rifle Raffle
★ Department Adjutant
★ National Executive Committeeman and 100 miles for HOPE
★ National Commander
★ Department Membership Chairman
★ ALCSC State Director
★ Detachment Commander
★ Department Chaplain
★ Our South Carolina American Legion Posts are alive and well in our towns.
★ A Veterans Story
★ Department Headquarters Updates
★ SCDLC
★ 2021 Department Oratorical Contest
★ 2020 Department Convention Awards
★ Department Historian
★ 2020 ALR Fundraising efforts

GOD BLESS AMERICA
Adjutant’s Remarks
Nick Diener
Department Adjutant

Legionnaires:

Over the last few months the COVID-19 virus has created many challenges for us all, both personally and for our Department. We, at all levels have stepped up to meet these challenges and I am very proud of the efforts of our posts, districts, various committees and the Department leadership. You all have adjusted to the situation and found ways to adapt and keep our Department moving forward.

Our membership numbers are off to a fantastic start. Even with what seems like constant changes and challenges we are well ahead of last year at that time. Think about what that says. Posts have not been able to hold meetings, yet their members are getting their renewals in and we are recruiting new members. Post leadership has found ways to overcome the challenges and should be very proud of what they are accomplishing. Our membership team is also working hard to assist you. The DMS “Blitz” was a great success and now the membership team is looking for ways to further assist posts. Don’t be afraid to call them, the Department Headquarters or any of the Department leadership. We are all here to help you. Let’s keep pushing. I am confident that if we work together as a team we can meet Commander goal of 20,000 members, despite all of the challenges we are facing.

The programs of our Department are also off to a good start. Again, despite the challenges around us, our dedicated committee members are hard at work keeping our many programs on track. Palmetto Boys State, Law Cadet Academy and the Oratorical Contest are on track and ready to come back strong this year. Please make sure your post is planning for these programs and for ways to overcome the obstacles facing us with the current school situation.

The State Legislature has passed S.719 to allow our Rifle Raffle to be conducted so we are back on track for this important fundraiser. Remember, your posts get $10 for every ticket you sell so this can be a major fund raiser for your post as well as the department. Over $92,000 went to our post from the last rifle raffle. How much your post receives is depended on your members getting out and selling the tickets.

As we begin to open things back up, remember to keep your members informed and do your “Buddy Checks.” We have included an article from National Commander Oxford on page 10 that discusses the need to keep our members informed. Please read it. The article is very informative and outlines steps that we all need to do for our veterans and our members.

Thank you for everything you are doing and continue to do for our veterans and our Department.

Nick I. Diener
Department Adjutant
On March 21, 2020, the Coronavirus, aka COVID-19, struck The Department of South Carolina. This virus changed the way we do things. We made the hard decisions to cancel some of our programs, our Annual Convention, the Fall Conference and had to change the way that we conduct our meetings. Throughout the state, our Posts were hit equally as hard. The past six months have been very hard on everyone.

The American Legion, Department of South Carolina might have been forced to slow down, but we did not change our direction. Due to the resolve of our members across the state, we persevered, we did not waiver, and we continued to maintain our focus on our four pillars: Veterans, Defense, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Your Department has continued to move forward. Our membership is looking good. The October 7th membership goal of 55%, we have already met. We are presently at over 60% and are increasing everyday. We have three Posts that have already reached 100%. The Department has 161 Posts and 115 of them are taking part in online membership processing. More Posts are joining the online processing everyday, if your Post is not using this feature; you really need to reexamine how you do membership. I think that the online membership processing is a major factor in the recent success that we have had with our membership program. Every Post that has adopted this method has endorsed it. Our membership team has already made plans to go and help two of our Posts with their membership, if you would like our team to come and assist you with your membership, contact District Commander Darlene Walton she is also the Chair of the membership team.

We quickly realized that COVID-19 was going to negatively impact The Department and the Posts financially. Under the leadership of your Finance Committee and your Department Executive Committee, we have “weathered the storm”. With all the restrictions that were placed on us, we knew that we would be operating at a deficient for the year. That deficient was substantially reduced, and we are now making plans for our total recovery. The Finance Committee is working on next years budget and we are planning for another successful year. In addition, The Department Executive Committee created a non-interest loan program for Posts that are in danger of losing their Post homes.

The Rifle Raffle is being planned and are some major changes to it. We have a committee of Legionnaires through out the state that know weapons and are willing to come to your Post and talk to your members. The weapons will be awarded one every calendar day for 52 days, starting in July. In the past we awarded one a week for the year, which just took too long. Most important, the rifle raffle will be held every year, not every two years. This will provide our Posts with a permanent and reliable source of income that is only limited by the amount of work that the members of the Posts put in to it. The weapons that we are raffling are all top flight, highly desirable weapons that anyone would be happy to win. More information concerning the dates, rules, rifles and ticket sales will be forth coming.

Throughout the state, American Legion Posts are beginning to come together and have meetings. They are being safe, wearing masks, and practicing social distancing. I am certain that the major factor in their decision to meet was the safety of the members. While it is entirely a Post decision whether to meet or not, I encourage the leadership of all the Posts in The Department to begin to explore the possibility of conducting safe meeting. I am certain that the decision you make will be the correct one for your Post.

Thanks,

Walt
## List of Rifles for 2021 American Legion Rifle Raffle

**Page One**

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### List of Rifles for 2021 American Legion Rifle Raffle

**Page Two**

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American Legion 2021 Rifle Raffle

Post Name__________________________________________________________
Post Phone Number____________________________________________________
Post Commander______________________________________________________
Post Adjutant___________________________________________________________
Number of raffle tickets requested________________________________________

Remit to Department by 10/29/2020

depsc@outlook.com

103 Legion Plaza Rd, Columbia, SC  29210
American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford literally took the first steps Aug. 3 on a new campaign to support the nation’s veterans, military families and their communities.

Oxford walked three miles in his hometown of Lenoir, N.C., to kick off the 100 Miles for Hope campaign which benefits The American Legion’s Veterans & Children Foundation (V&CF). He is encouraging members of The American Legion Family to accompany him on his journey to cover 100 miles by walking, running, cycling or riding a motorcycle 100 miles over the next 100 days, concluding on Veterans Day.

“We have been cooped up and self-isolating for so long that the 100 miles is a way to reintroduce exercise to Legionnaires and the country,” he said, noting the coronavirus. “In addition to what we gain from the exercise, we hope to gain some much-needed donations for our Veterans & Children Foundation.”

He is encouraging members of The American Legion Family to accompany him on his journey to cover 100 miles by walking, running, cycling or riding a motorcycle 100 miles over the next 100 days, concluding on Veterans Day.

The South Carolina Department Commander Walt Richardson was challenged by The National commander and strongly encouraged members to jump on board. Many South Carolina active duty soldiers and Veterans have greatly benefited from the Veterans & Children Foundation. “Exercising and helping Veterans is a win-win for everyone” said Commander Richardson. Jim O’ Brien of Hilton head said “Today when I totaled up my walking and running, I had 107.95 miles - 53.59 walking and 54.36 running. Not bad for a Vietnam vet. Hooah! It was an honor to participate in this celebration. I am with American Legion Post 205 in Bluffton, S.C.”
Walk, run, bike or ride 100 miles for veterans and

By James W. "Bill" Oxford, National Commander

Dear American Legion Family members and friends,

I have taken the first steps on a 100-mile journey in support of our nation’s veterans and children. The unique challenge — 100 Miles for Hope — was created to help drive resources toward our Veterans & Children Foundation.

In a show of American Legion Family solidarity, Sons of The American Legion Commander Clint Bolt and American Legion Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp have committed to their own 100-mile challenges.

We’re asking for support from our American Legion Family members to put on their walking or running shoes, get on their bikes or rev up their motorcycles for 100 miles today through Veterans Day, which is 100 days from now. And I am issuing a special challenge to department commanders to join me, if they are physically able, in the 100-mile quest.

For a $30 registration fee, 100 Miles for Hope participants receive a slick tech shirt (available in men’s, women’s and children’s sizes), a sign to display and a certificate of accomplishment when they finish. Roughly 50 percent of the $30 fee will go toward V&CF after figuring in costs for the shirts, shipping, etc.

Posts can also participate by creating their own events for members while keeping local social distancing rules in mind. This is a great opportunity to safely celebrate Patriot Day, American Legion Day and Veterans Day later on.

Learn more about this initiative on the Legion website, www.legion.org/100miles and get started by registering at Emblem Sales.

One hundred miles may seem like a long way. But it was chosen with a purpose. The 100-day time frame was selected so that walkers could break it down to a mile a day. That’s roughly 20 to 30 minutes a day, which is the activity level many health experts recommend.

I’ll be walking 100 miles and riding my bike for another 100 miles to support our veterans and children. I’m sure my health will benefit from the increased activity, after being sheltered in place for so long. But the real beneficiaries are veterans and children in need who receive vital assistance from The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly known as the American Legion Endowment Fund.

The foundation provides necessary funds to train and support The American Legion’s network of more than 3,000 accredited service officers who represent veterans, free of charge, with their benefits claims and other needs. Additionally, military families facing financial crises are eligible to receive Temporary Financial Assistance, which is funded by American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation donations.

It’s up to you how you cross that 100-mile threshold (and when you do, share your journey on our Legion-town web page). On days when you lack the motivation to put in a mile or two, just remember who we are doing this for.

Join me in keeping this important foundation strong to ensure we honor our commitments to all veterans,
"100 Miles For Hope" Registration

Detailed Description

- Price is for one (1) registration
- Select your t-shirt size above
- If no shirt is desired, select "Donation Only"
- T-shirts are 100% moisture-wicking polyester
- Approximate T-shirt delivery times:
  - Order by Aug. 10, receive Aug. 25-31
  - Order by Aug. 17, receive Sep. 1-8
  - Order by Aug. 24, receive Sep. 9-14
  - Order by Sep. 7, receive Sep. 22-28
  - Order by Sept. 21, receive Oct. 6-12
  - Order by Oct. 5, receive Oct. 20-26
  - Order by Oct. 19, receive Nov. 3-9
- Find out more about 100 Miles for Hope

Last Updated: October 2, 2020
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The American Legion
Engagements efforts must adapt and overcome

We are all trading new ground as we adapt to what seems to be constant changes around us. Now more than ever, we cannot expect a “cookie cutter” approach to retention, recruiting and engagement to work. There is no “one size fits all” strategy for a successful post membership program because nobody knows your neighborhoods, communities and departments better than the Legionnaires who live there. Use that expertise to create the plan and program that will work for you, your post, and your department. All of the tools are in place, but our success will come from the execution.

Embrace this opportunity to get to know your post membership by reading out via email and phone. Our “Buddy Check” program has received national attention and has been exceptionally well received. I have received hundreds of calls, emails and text messages about what a GREAT idea the Buddy Check is.

Veterans Day is right around the corner and has been the traditional time to conduct your biannual BuddyCheck. Your Post may wish to move the timeline up this year and plan a Buddy Check event sooner to personally contact veterans living in your community. This is not a membership drive, but solely a health and welfare check on current, past and potential new members. And while you are making phone calls, check on a neighbor, friend or relative. This is one of our reasons for existence—we do not want to leave anyone behind. Assisting veterans and checking on their well-being is the essence of one of the founding four pillars of The American Legion. Reassure your members and potential members that The American Legion is alive, well and active as ever. Our programs and events have not gone away, they are just on hold for the safety of participants. When the current crisis is over, your post’s fish fry, Legion Family Day, Boys and Girls Tate program, flag retirement ceremonies, and American Legion Baseball games will resume. We must be ready with a plan involving the entire American Legion family when we invite and welcome veterans back into our posts.

As my extended term as National Commander continues, my membership goals have extended as well. Our all-time high was 3.3 million members in 1946. This needs to be our ultimate goal, but we cannot expect this to happen overnight...or even this year. We need to set and achieve goals that will act as stepping stones to getting us back to attaining our all-time high.
For the 2020 membership year, our retention rate for the whole organization finished at 86.8 percent and we recruited 62,351 new members at the local post level. Although these numbers are respectable, if we are going to have success and grow our last year’s membership totals, we have to increase our retention rate and our traditional new recruiting. That is why I have set a few personal goals four our great organization based on membership.

The first goal is to increase our overall retention rate to 90 percent. As of Aug, 31, our retention rate stands at 44.32 percent, which is nearly halfway to our goal. We have to reach out to them personally through e-mail, text message or phone call. We cannot solely rely upon the renewal notices to make contact.

The second goal is to increase our traditional recruiting to bring in 100,000 new members. Last year’s passage of the Legion Act opened the door for 4.2 million veteans to join The American Legion. That gives us an eligible pool of over 19 million veterans. We just have to ask these veterans to join and education them on what we do. Every member, post, district and department can help by increasing our visibility by engaging these veterans. As we work to surpass our membership goals, we gave to tell our story to complete the job.

The final goal I have is not based around membership numbers bu rather on the Consolidate Post Report (CPR). I want to increase our CPR response rate from 70 percent o 100 percent. Each post has a story to tell an when we speak collectively our strength is magnified. Some posts may have created new processes for assisting their communities during the current crisis. Be sure to report these efforts by attaching a narrative, including ay articles or pictures along with the written descriptions.

As we submit reports about our American Legion programs and efforts, we must consider the people it took to make things happen. I want to recognize American Legion Family members for a job well done.

So any Legionnaire, Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion member who recruits three new American Legion members will receive my commander’s membership incentive pin. The commander and membership chairman of any post, district, county or department that exceeds 103 percent of their membership goal also will receive my pin. If we meet these goals, we will set the organization up for success. Ultimately, we have to raise The American Legion’s visibility in our communities if we are going to be successful in membership.

The things we do today, and the things we will do tomorrow, are critical to the future of our organization.

James W. "Bill" Oxford
We are over 90 days into our new Membership year, and looking pretty good. We have 13 Districts that have exceeded the monthly Goals. Out of all the Districts we are seeing some weak spots with Posts that haven’t put in any or very few members for this year. Also as hard as everyone is working, we also have those Posts that haven’t made the plunge to sign into the OLINE PROCESSING. Reminder, Maggie has been working very hard in assisting those that need assistance. Currently we have over 72% of our 161 Posts on board.

Posts- your main focus should be on RENEWALS and all those new members you acquired by the BLITZ. No Post can survive without their members, (call, email, or stop in and pick them up). The Membership Team is there to assist with ideas and solutions; but as a Post who knows your Members, you need to work it.

The Membership Team will be going out to assist some Posts that have lost Leadership or other factors and helping them get back up and running. The Membership Team along with District and Vice Commanders are here to assist.

Membership Team: Each member handles 1-2 Districts-

Annie Hough-Everage- Dist. 12/18
Jamie Rumbaugh- Dist.15/17
Paul Smith- Dist. 3/5
Jim Defrehn- Dist. 16
Steve Reck- Dist. 10/11
Darlene Walton- Dist. 1/7

Rick Gibson- Dist. 13/14
Bill Eroh- Dist. 4/8
Jim Northrup- Dist. 9
Janet Rein-Dist. 2/6
Russ Cantrell- Dist. 10/11
Jim Jarvis- 4th Vice-Overseer

RENEWAL SCHEDULER: OCTOBER 9th-55%

NOVEMBER 6th-65%
NOVEMBER 11th- (Number #1 Plaque if your Post 100%)
I would like to see everyone at 100% by December 31, 2020

RENEWALS, RENEWALS, RENEWAL
The ALRSC has changed many of our plans for this year as we continue to adapt and overcome the challenges of the pandemic. We postponed our 9th annual 2020 Legacy Run until October 24th, and then decided we would have each chapter execute their 2020 Legacy Ride independently, as a Coronavirus precaution. This is the first year we had to execute a “distributed” Legacy Run, but this year has been anything but normal.

We wrapped up our 2020 fund raising efforts for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. In 2020 the ALRSC raised $40,920.30. Not our best year but considering the obstacles to fund raising created by the pandemic, it was nonetheless a stellar performance by the ALRSC. As usual, Chapter 6 in Columbia led the way, raising a phenomenal $20,401.30 for the Legacy Fund this year.

Due to the pandemic, and the disruption of our normal fund-raising efforts and schedule, we extended our 2020 fund raising efforts well past our usual timeframe. Thus, our 2021 fund raising efforts will be somewhat abbreviated. The Riders have already begun raising funds for our 2021 Legacy Fund contribution.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship fund helps pay college tuition for children of veterans who died while on active duty since 9/11, or have a 50% or higher VA disability rating. With your help, we can continue to provide an opportunity for higher education to the children of our fallen and disabled military heroes.

The ALRSC had to cancel our annual Meet and Greet in Goose Creek this year at Post 166, due to Coronavirus concerns. Our planned ride to Washington D.C. in October to wash the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean Veterans Memorial for the National Park Service was also canceled. However, individual chapters are remaining highly active with funeral escorts, flag lines, Hospice and nursing home visits, fund raisers for many causes, parades, and other activities.

Do you have questions about the American Legion Riders? Do you have members at your post considering starting an ALR chapter? Please contact me if you have questions about the American Legion Riders. If you would like to have Riders come to your post and visit with you and your members, let me know and we will coordinate to make that happen.

Alan Osborne
Director, ALRSC
Director, Chapter 34 Rock Hill
yakerbiker@outlook.com
There appears to be a misconception as to paying your membership dues. For example anyone who has not paid their dues on or before December 31, 2020 will have the following restrictions:

- They cannot participate in any Squadron events.
- They are not allowed to use the Post home if one is available.
- They cannot visit another post unless they are a guest of a paid post family member.
- They cannot hold a Squadron Office.

Paid membership cards should be requested to be shown every time the Squadron meets.

This is why it is imperative to start collecting dues as soon as possible after your Squadron receives their new membership cards. National, in October sends out delinquent notices to everyone who has not paid to advise them of their delinquency.

We hope all our Squadrons are staying active during our current pandemic. Please try to help your American Legion in anyway you can. They are hurting just as much, if not more than our Squadrons are.

Remember with the new membership requirement there are many more individuals who have become eligible to join our ranks. Each of us should try and obtain individuals to join the Legion, Squadrons or Auxiliary.

We are hoping to hold a virtual meeting some time in the month of October. We will be sending out information as soon as the time has been determined. It will be important that all Squadrons try to attend, as we have not been able to get together since June of last year.

Lastly we hope everyone is doing well and be sure to stay safe.

For God and Country
Jason Yodice
Detachment Commander
I would like to look at a scripture that we are all familiar with. Psalms 23:4.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

This Covid 19 has been a shadow of death to us. The media would have us to believe that a high percentage of us will die because of this virus. We don't know who to believe for the facts.

There is always a doomist in our midst. They are always talking like things are bad and getting worse by the minute. I choose to trust God and believe His promises. The Bible is full of promises and hope. Not only for the future but also for daily living. Worrying robs us of the peace from anxiety and fear that God is promising us.

When we were young and fearless, nothing scared us. Our Combat Comrades faced death on the battlefield with less fear than many fear Covid 19, so this is a shadow of death that we fear. Just as God gave the Psalmist comfort and assurance of His presence, He is still extending that comfort and assurance to us during this time of trouble in our lives.

I'm so thankful that God has safe guarded our Comrades. There have been a few that tested positive but with wonderful medical facilities and dedicated Doctors and Nurses we have been blessed. God has worked in the lives of our Doctors and medical staff to study and know how to take care of us, but we need to acknowledge that we will trust God and claim the promises of His Word. We know that when the medical staff reach the end of their knowledge and skills that God will hear and answer our prayers.

For God and Country,

Richard Mullinax
Department Chaplain
803 622 4300

If you believe in it
You'll be recruiting for it.
James Island Post 147 Cmdr Steve Driscoll & PDC Joe Lysaght make trips in August and September to the Victory House with personal hygiene products. They are hoping to make one more trip before the end of October.

Laurens P-25 donates $500 to Laurens County Sheriff’s Office to fill the Cruiser supplies for children.

Left: Greenwood Pathway House
“Thank you American Legion Post 20 for donating coffee, milk, sugar and chips to support our shelters. Post 20 in Greenwood is a faithful support of the Pathway House”

Post Cmdr Alfred White,
Post Adj Terry Weeks.