

BAMA LEGION NEWS



Department of Alabama
American Legion Family Newsletter
February 2022

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Chaplain's Reflective Thoughts

Sunday, Feb. 2, will mark the 79th anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army Transport Dorchester and the selfless acts of four Army chaplains aboard. The Dorchester tragically sunk on Feb. 3, 1943, while crossing the North Atlantic, transporting troops to an American base in Greenland. A German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck the Dorchester, killing 672 of the 902 officers and enlisted men, merchant seamen and civilian workers aboard. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by four chaplains of different faiths, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

As soldiers rushed to lifeboats, Reverend George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic) comforted the wounded and directed others to safety. One survivor watched the chaplains distribute life jackets, and when they ran out, they removed theirs and gave them to four young men.

As the Dorchester sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying.

Chaplain Duke Martin

Department Commander's Message

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through our membership year. It has been another tough year for all. It seems that just when we think we can go back to normal, life knocks us back two steps. We've had to say goodbye to family and friends. We can get through this together.



I commend all of you for your continued service to our veterans, families and communities. We continue to show that we are always here and ready to do whatever it takes to care for others, not just ourselves. I appreciate each and every one of you.

Have you done a buddy check today? Have you checked on your family, neighbor, or another post member? It only takes a minute to say, "I am calling to say hello and see how things are going.." Sometimes a kind word is all it takes to make someone smile and say someone does care about me. Your call can turn someone's life around.

Membership is critical for The American Legion Family. Numbers are down. Why? Some losses are normal. However, the question should be "What can we do to help those that may be struggling?"

I pray that you and your families stay safe and healthy. I am here. I will even come to visit if you want.

Tina

National Officers Visit Alabama

Several national officers attended the 2022 Department Mid-Winter Conference in January. The national commander Paul Dillard, national Auxiliary president Kathy Daudistel, national Sons of the American Legion commander Michael Fox and national judge advocate Mark Seavey, all attended and spoke at our conference.



Remarks from Commander Dillard focused on membership. He mentioned how he came up with our goal for the year, which is basically where we ended last year. He offered several suggestions on how to achieve success. New members are important, but renewals are essential. The greatest accomplishments seem to come from buddy checks. It is a low cost effort, but very valuable to reaching out and checking on our members—especially with the last two years of the virus.

Department Annual Convention

Make your reservations for the 2022 annual department convention at the Birmingham Marriott located at 3590 Grandview Parkway, Birmingham, Alabama. The room rate is \$113.00 plus 17.5% tax. Call 888-426-5171 to make reservations. Be sure to let them know you are with The American Legion family to get the group rate. ALL reservations must be made by Thursday, May 26, 2022. If you make your reservations after this deadline, you may not be able to receive the reduce rate.

Districts planning on hosting a hospitality room, the hotel has a no outside food or beverage policy. You will have to purchase from the hotel directly.

LEADERSHIP THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

It is very important for a leader not to lose touch with the people most affected by his or her leadership. To do this, a leader must have a close core of followers who have the confidence to tell him or her the truth. Some leaders give the signal that they will tolerate only good news. This is a terrible mistake. The most valuable follower a leader can have is one who will deliver the tough truth. When a leader asks, "How am I doing?" (and this is a question that should be asked periodically), a trusted and trusting follower should be able and willing to give a truthful, unvarnished answer.

Be sure you engender this kind of trust in a group of close associates who will be willing to give you both the good news and the bad news, both about how you are doing and about how people perceive your leadership effectiveness. Use their truthful, honest answers to make your future leadership more effective.

"But you, "He asked them again, "who do you say that I am?" Mark 8:29

Peace and Blessed

Minister Jeff Gibson Sr. PDC
Sons of The American Legion

Welcome to New Adjutant

As of January 3, 2022, Ryan M. Marshall, started as our new department adjutant. Ryan hails from Eufaula, AL.

He enlisted in the Army Reserves as a combat engineer in 2008. In 2010 he enlisted to serves in the regular Army on active duty. He served tours in Kuwait and Afghanistan with the 15th Engineer Battalion while stationed in Germany. Ryan was honorably discharged in 2015. He's a graduate from Faulkner University.

He's married to Jana. They have three sons; Gabriel, Josiah and Micah, all new members of SAL.

Adjutant Marshall says that he was happy to meet everyone at the mid-winter conference and looks forward to complete his training and get involved.

Membership Stats

All posts should be at 85 percent at this time. Overall, the 1st division is over 85%. Thirteen percent of posts (20) are at 100% or greater. Thirty eight percent of posts {62} are at 85% or greater. Twenty One percent {34} is below 70%.

Just a reminder that the Race to the Top Award is achievable. Districts need to achieve 100% by the end of March. There are several districts that are close enough to achieve that accom-

Target VII	March 9	90%
Target VIII	April 13	95%
Target IX	May 11	100%

plishment.

Below are the remaining target dates.

The bottom line is that membership is about our veterans and including them in an organization that is caring and working on their behalf. Thanks for doing your part in strengthening our veterans and The American Legion.

2022 Legion College Application

Legionnaires interested in attending National's Legion College need to complete application and submit it to the Department Headquarters by July 1st. The Selection Committee will meet and select the attendee. Contact the department for the application.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Department Headquarters.

The President's Remarks

The mid-winter conference was terrific. We were honored to host the National American Legion Auxiliary President Kathy Daudistel. We appreciated her making time in her busy schedule to join us. She shared lots of ideas with us. She's promoting care for the care givers of our veterans and family members.

We conducted round-circle training at the mid-winter conference. Please send me an email concerning your thoughts on the training. The feedback has been very positive, but we have only heard from a few. We value your input for future gatherings.

Keep up the great work on membership. However, we can and need to do better. Get excited, get busy, share our mission and programs, let others know what we do for our veterans and their families.

Iris Keen



State Legacy Fund Drive

Over the past five years Alabama's American Legion Riders have crisscrossed the state collecting donations for the National American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, collecting over \$10,000 each year.



In an effort to raise more funds from the state, we're asking each district to collect donations and we'll have a Department Rider delegation attend the district meeting to pick up donations. We suggest setting a goal of 50 cents or \$1 per member, to include the Auxiliary and Sons. If your district supports this proposal,

then contact a state Riders' officer to coordinate a collection date and location. Make checks payable to the Department of Alabama American Legion with the notation -for the Legacy Fund. For questions or more information, contact the Department Rider Director Bill Kilde at 207-841-5307 or turbine54@att.net .

85TH ANNUAL BOYS STATE MOVES

2022 Boys State has moved to Troy University. Boys State week is will be held at Troy University May 29 through June 4, 2022. The fee will remain \$225.00. The due date for applications and fees will be May 6, 2022.

Brochures are being printed after we receive them all schools and posts will receive a registration packet. Go to www.alboysstate.org for further details about the program.



IN THE NEWS



Two dogs are on a stroll through the city. They come to a row of parking meters and one says, "How do you like that—pay toilets."

Up and Coming

FEB 21	Presidents Day
MAR 1	Fat Tuesday
MAR 1	Eagle Scout Nomination due
MAR 5	Jr Shooters Commander's Cup
MAR 12	Department Oratorical Contest
MAR 13	Daylight Savings Time
MAR 15	American Legion Birthday
MAR 17	St. Patrick's Day
MAR 31	Race to the Top Deadline
APR 17	Easter Sunday
MAY 6	Boy State Application Deadline
MAY 8	Mother's Day
MAY 15	Baseball Early Registration due
MAY 26	Annual convention deadline
JUN 1	Baseball Final Registration deadline

Eagle Scout Nominations

Eagle Scout of the Year nominations for the Department of Alabama is open. Submit nominations to the department by March 1st.

Information on the award at the National level can be found here:

<https://www.legion.org/scouting/nominate>



To be eligible, the nominee must:

Be either a registered active member of a Boy Scouts of America unit that is chartered to an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit or Sons of The American Legion squadron. Or,

Be a registered active member of any chartered Boy Scouts of America unit and have a parent or grandparent possessing up-to-date membership in The American Legion or Sons of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary, and in the case of a recently deceased member, their membership for the year immediately prior to the current year may be used. And,

Received the Eagle Scout Award.

Received a Scouts BSA or Venturer Religious Emblem.

Have demonstrated practical citizenship in church, school, Scouting and community.

Have reached their 15th birthday and be enrolled in high school at the time of selection.

Applied through the department (state) in which their Scout unit is chartered.

Provide documentation of current BSA membership. (Membership must be valid for the year in which the Scout is applying.)

Any questions can be sent to scouting@legional.org.

Jeremy Blevins, Boy Scout Committee Chairman

Washington Conference

The annual national Washington conference for 2022 will be conducted in a virtual format. Commander Dillard will deliver his testimony to the Joint House and Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs by video. Below is the legislative agenda for the 117th Congress, 2nd session.

S.544 - "Buddy Check Week" Act
H.R. 1836 – Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021

H.R.3967 - Honoring Our Promise To Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act Of 2021

S.3003 - Comprehensive and Overdue Support for Troops (COST) of War Act of 2021

S.2533/H.R.4794 - the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act

H.R. 344 - Women Veterans TRUST Act

S.344 - Major Richard Star Act

H.R.1182/S. 3212 - Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act

S.J.Res.10 - Repeal the 1991 & 2002 Iraq AUMFs,

S.2391 - National Security Powers Act of 2021

S.1845 - Unwavering Support for our Coast Guard Act (USCG) Act

[Download the details at Legion.org.](https://www.legion.org)

Dept. of Alabama Commanders Cup

The American Legion, Department of Alabama Junior Shooting Sports Program hosts a Commanders Cup every spring in Anniston, AL at the Civilian Marksmanship Program Facility. Events include a 60 shot standing and 60 shot prone match, and a 3-Position Air Rifle (3x20) sanctioned match using electronic targets. Medals are presented to the top sporter and precision athletes and Commanders Cups are presented to the top shooting sporter and precision teams. The event has been attended by the Department Commander, Senior and Junior Vice, Adjutant, Division, District, and Post Commanders have all attended previous Commanders Cups. Come out and support these young athletes.



State Oratorical Competition

The 2022 state oratorical contest is set for March 12 at 10 A.M. at the Department of Alabama Archives and History located at 624 Washington Ave, Montgomery, AL. The winner from each division will compete for scholarship awards. Other important suggested contest completion dates:

County/Zone/Post Contest: 5 Feb 2022;

District Contest: 19 Feb 2022;

Division Contest: 5 Mar 2022;

Locate detailed information on how to conduct an oratorical contest online at www.legional.org/oratorical-competition and contest videos are available at www.legion.org/oratorical.

Please ensure that your contestant has their biographical sketch filled completely out and that it follows them throughout the contest.

Editable certificates for each level of competition (Post, District, and Division) are available for you to download and print.. Please contact the Department Chairman at least two days before your competition to receive certificates via email.

There were several question abouts eligibly at the Mid-Winter conference. here is the eligibility requirements again: Eligible participants must **be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States**. All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any students under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said school is of high school level commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. The three finalists of the National Contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

Also please ensure that your contestants and their parents understand that "in order to receive the **first-place award at any level** within the Department of Alabama, the winner must represent the American Legion at the next level of the contest"

If there are any questions, please contact Department Chairman Willie Roger or one of the following commission members, Richard Kaster - 205-243-0763; George Krigbaum - 256-797-5149; Jeff Gibson - 334-614-4777; Gladys Leonard - 703-283-6909.

State Baseball Program

Frequently asked questions about American Legion Baseball

When forming an American Legion Baseball team start by selecting the appropriate division. There are three divisions of American Legion Baseball in the state of Alabama. The lowest level, Junior Varsity, services players that would likely play junior varsity sports or below in high school. Players are rising 10th grade or younger. Most of the players are 15 years old or younger. Next level, Varsity, services players that have at least one year of high school sport eligibility remaining during the Summer season. Last, 19U, services the recent high school graduate and below player. Some players from the previous year's graduation class may be eligible to play.

Register your team on the Alabama website:

alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com

Then contact your area commissioner or State director for next steps.

Fees are paid online at the time of registration. Estimated Costs:

National fees for senior team (19U) cost \$50 and junior team cost \$25; National admin fee runs \$35 for each team; State fee runs \$275 per team; General Liability Insurance \$120 for senior team and \$82 for junior team; Health & Accident Insurance - Seasonal \$130 for senior team and \$110 for junior team. The total cost of \$635 per senior team and \$552 per junior team.

State tourney registration fees are paid separately); approximately \$400 per team.

Team and individual fees vary greatly. Each team determines that cost. Most teams will charge fees between \$150-\$500 per player.

Each coach must register and submit a background check through the National American Legion website. All are vetted by a third- party agency. Also, each coach must complete a certification course for working with players in American Legion baseball.

Each player must register on the Alabama website. Each team selects players through a process. Some teams will conduct a skills evaluation. Teams consist of no more than 18 players.

Each player's jersey must have a number and an American Legion baseball patch on the left sleeve or left chest, a baseball hat and baseball pants. Duplicate jersey numbers are not permitted.

Visit the Department baseball website or contact the Department Baseball Commissioner for more information or details.