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Calendar of Events

UVA Military Appreciation Day – November 14, 2009 UVA Vs Boston College - \$25 Reserved Tickets Online

2009 Fall Conference October 30-November 1 - Holiday Inn, Hampton (\$71.00)

Veterans Day – November 11, 2009

2010 State Convention July 8-11 - Sheraton Richmond West, Richmond (\$99)

2010 Fall Conference October 29-31 Holiday Inn, Hampton (\$74)

2011 State Convention July 14-17 Roanoke Plaza Hotel & Holiday Inn, Roanoke

Just Because Summer is Over... Americanism is Not!

Some people think that now that the dog days of summer are gone, so is the season for Americanism. Well let me tell you that they couldn't be more wrong! Americanism is a year-round activity. November is quite an active month when it comes to Americanism.

November 3d is Election Day and what could be more American than going out to vote for a candidate or an issue or encouraging others to Get Out The Vote. If that doesn't do it for you, how about honoring those who have served and are currently serving on Veterans Day. Many folks think of the day as a day off of work but if you have ever been to Arlington National Cemetery or Quantico National Cemetery on Veterans Day, you will never forget the ceremonies and witnessing the President laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Now that is Americanism. If that still does not do it for you, how about honoring our teachers during American Education Week from November 14-21 or National Family Week from November 22-28. Lastly we celebrate Thanksgiving on November 26 where we give thanks for a bountiful harvest and all the blessings we have received over the last year.

I was happy to see everyone at the Fall Conference in Hampton, Virginia. I hope that everyone got to see the William Randolph Hearst Trophy at the Americanism meeting or at the Department Executive Meeting. This trophy was received as recognition for all of your efforts in the last year. Hopefully, seeing the Trophy will be an incentive for you to keep doing all that you do and for completing the year-end reports.



So please keep up doing what you are doing to support our veterans, children and communities. And while you're at, please remember to capture the information for your annual reports. Thank you for all you do!

John Kokernak
Department Americanism Chairman

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Post 325 Holds Political Forum

American Legion Post 325 held a political forum for the candidates for election to the Virginia House of Delegates. Post 325 has a long history of supporting community involvement in the political process. Delegate Danny Marshall and Seward Anderson spoke about issues that affect our community and were grateful to Post 325 for the opportunity to speak to members of the community. Shown are Post 325 Commander Ron Meadows, Seward Anderson, Delegate Danny Marshall and Post Forum Chairman Lee Mayberry.

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**Secretary Of Veterans Affairs Establishes Service Connection
In Association With Agent Orange**

VA Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Oct. 13, 2009

VA Extends "Agent Orange" Benefits to More Veterans - Parkinson's Disease, Two Other Illnesses Recognized

WASHINGTON -Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki decided to establish a service-connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to Agent Orange.

The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

Used in Vietnam to defoliate trees and remove concealment for the enemy, Agent Orange left a legacy of suffering and disability that continues to the present. Between January 1965 and April 1970, an estimated 2.6 million military personnel who served in Vietnam were potentially exposed to sprayed Agent Orange.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

The Secretary's decision brings to 15 the number of presumed illnesses recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will," Shinseki added. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

Other illnesses previously recognized under VA's "presumption" rule as being caused by exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War are:

- o Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy
- o AL Amyloidosis
- o Chloracne
- o Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- o Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)
- o Hodgkin's Disease
- o Multiple Myeloma
- o Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- o Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- o Prostate Cancer
- o Respiratory Cancers, and
- o Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed to the chemical are available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.



VIRGINIA CAVALIERS FOOTBALL | 2009

Military Appreciation Day

Saturday, November 14 vs. Boston College

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Virginia Post 110 Presents Honor and Remember Flag

On September 1st, 2009, American Legion Post 110 of Virginia Beach presented its sister organization, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 392, with an Honor and Remember Flag in appreciation for VFW Post 392's allowing Post 110 to utilize its facilities for its monthly meetings and programs.

On December 29, 2005, Corporal George Anthony "Tony" Lutz II, U.S. Marine Corps, was killed by a sniper's bullet while on patrol in Fallujah, Iraq. His father, George, a resident of Chesapeake, Virginia, began a quest to establish a universally recognized symbol that specifically acknowledges the American service men and women who never made it home. Thus the Honor and Remember Flag - a National Campaign of Remembrance - was conceived.

Along with the Honor and Remember Flag, VFW Post 392 was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Post 110 recognizing both Posts' on-going partnership in mutual helpfulness, a strong national security, taking care of veterans, mentoring youth, and promoting patriotism and honor.

House Resolution 1034, introduced by Congressman Randy Forbes, (VA-4th) seeks to amend Title 36, United States Code, to designate the Honor and Remember Flag as an official symbol to recognize and honor members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty. This is the same process by which The National League of Families POW/MIA Flag was designated as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing, and unaccounted for.

In March 2009, a resolution for endorsement began its way through the official channels of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Department of Virginia is also working towards adopting a resolution endorsing recognition of the Honor and Remember Flag by The American Legion. The Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Virginia are currently writing adoption legislation to formally endorse the Honor and Remember Flag. Ten cities in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, and North Carolina, have also adopted resolutions officially recognizing the Honor and Remember Flag.

Men and women have been serving in the United States military and dying for their country for more than 200 years. They represent a unique and distinct category of individuals, along with the families that sent them, that deserve a symbol of recognition, a visual emblem of honor.



Photo Left:

Joe Brady (left), Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 392, and Wes Latchford, Commander of American Legion Post 110, hold an Honor and Remember flag presented to VFW Post 392 by American Legion Post 110 in appreciation for allowing Post 110 to utilize its facilities for its monthly meetings and programs.



The American Legion Appeals to Congress for Compassionate Treatment of Women Veterans

WASHINGTON (Sept. 10, 2009) - In his first address before Congress, the newly elected leader of The American Legion has called upon lawmakers to "compassionately address" the needs of women veterans.

National Commander Clarence E. Hill, testifying before a joint session of the U.S. House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, urged lawmakers to acknowledge that service women deployed to today's theaters of war are, in fact, serving in combat zones.

"The demographic of the American veteran is changing," Hill said. "We now have a much more diverse veterans' population than in past generations. This diversity includes a growing and significant number of women veterans who sacrifice no less than their male counterparts. In this war without a front there are no safe areas. As such, women who historically were not severely wounded in previous conflicts are returning home with limbs missing, terribly burned, or blinded."

Hill, who began his one-year term as head of the nation's largest veterans service organization just two weeks, added that closer daily contact between male and female service members has "unfortunately led to military sexual trauma issues which must be addressed compassionately."

He also noted that the change in the military's makeup will require the meeting of new fiscal and logistical challenges in the service of those coming home. "Timely access to quality health care, the new G.I. Bill, and other veterans' benefit programs must adjust and adapt to the needs of this 'newest generation' of wartime veterans. Hundreds of thousands of OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) veterans are now using their VA health care benefits, increasing the workload of a health care system that was overburdened before the war began," Hill said. " It is a sacred and time honored obligation of The American Legion to make sure those veterans have the services they need and timely access to the care they have earned and deserve."

The Legion commander's testimony was presented to members of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., and the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by Senator Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, this morning. The forty page Legion presentation contained proposals for the Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2011 budget and applauded Filner for his proposal to require Medicare to reimburse VA for the treatment of eligible veterans' injuries, illnesses and conditions. The Legion also urged Congress to take measures to increase access to veterans health care, especially in rural areas, to redouble efforts to address the issues of an aging veteran population as well as veterans suffering the effects of Gulf War illness, traumatic brain injury, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and exposure to toxic substances such as Agent Orange.

The enormous backlog of unprocessed and partially processed veterans' claims was also noted in the Legion presentation with potential solutions advanced. Suggestions were also made to improve and make more equitable the terms of the newly enacted Post 9/11 GI Bill that is now providing educational benefits to new military veterans.

Testimony is presented annually to lawmakers by The American Legion shortly after Congress reconvenes for its fall session.

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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The American Legion Leader Outlines Priority Items for Congress

WASHINGTON (Sept. 10, 2009) - The newly elected leader of The American Legion has spelled out the veterans service organization's seven leading priorities for Congress.

National Commander Clarence E. Hill, just two weeks into his one-year term, testified before a joint session of the U.S. House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees this morning, succinctly outlining the Legion's continuing concern over funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs , VA's huge caseload backlog and the fate of VA medicine in light of impending changes in the nation's health care system.

Hill submitted 40 pages of written testimony to committee members, but also offered a few minutes of oral testimony in a packed Cannon House Office Building caucus room. Among the hundreds witnessing the commander's testimony were Legion leaders from across the nation who had made an annual pilgrimage to Washington to visit their congressional representatives as well as a contingent of wounded warriors from nearby Walter Reed Army Medical Center whose presence inspired two standing ovations.

Hill summarized his brief remarks by declaring seven "priority items" for congressional consideration. These included what he called "timely, predictable and sufficient" appropriations "to support the Department of Veterans Affairs' delivery of quality health care to the nation's veterans." The commander also reiterated the Legion's argument that VA health care be kept autonomous and not rolled into any national health care plan.

Hill also urged passage of twin House and Senate bills that would enable Medicare reimbursement to the VA for medical treatment of eligible veterans, plus improved screening of and treatment for traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder.

The Legion commander also urged changes in the newly enacted Post 9/11 G.I. Bill that would expand financial aid to include veterans who wish to pursue vocational and trade school educational opportunities rather than just those presented in colleges and universities. He also encouraged improved regulation of the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach (DVOP) programs at the state level to help bolster employment opportunities for veterans.

An oft-repeated topic of discussion during the commander's testimony was the huge backlog of unprocessed and partially processed VA disability claims. Some sources say the number of claims in the backlog now approach one-million. The Legion leader said that improved training and retention of case workers, plus the institution of measures to, as he put it, "get it right the first time," thus avoiding repeated and extensive processing of claims, will help free the logjam. Hill and the Legion drew praise for offering solutions to the vexing problem, rather than simply express alarm about it.

Praise was also offered by committee members to each other for their largely bipartisan efforts to address the needs of the nation's military veterans. The most passionate statement in this regard was made by Bernie Sanders, the Independent senator from Vermont. "I voted against the war in Iraq," he proclaimed, "but no matter whether you favor a war or oppose it, it is wrong to blame those who put on the uniform." His comment elicited loud applause. Testimony is presented annually to lawmakers by The American Legion's national commander shortly after Congress reconvenes in its fall session.

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Virginia Veterans Cemetery Amelia Establishes Memorial Garden

AMELIA, VA- Although most veterans receive in-ground burial or in-ground or above-ground inurnment, the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia also memorializes veterans who have no remains. Until earlier this month, 12 veterans were memorialized with granite markers in the cemeteries memorial garden section, located at the outskirts of the cemetery; however, in early September, with the permission of the families, the memorials were relocated to a more prominent location.

"The existing memorials garden section was to the right of the administration building, bordering the road to the maintenance compound," said Dan Kemano, Cemeteries Director for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. "Visitors rarely went into that area of the cemetery, so no one saw the memorials."

The new location of the memorial garden is at the main cemetery entrance, to the left of the U.S., State, and POW/MIA flags and at the beginning of the scenic woods walkway. Space for 50 memorials has been allocated for the new memorial garden. "This location provides visitors with a view of the chapel, flags, other gardens, and the woods walkway," pointed out Kemano.

Future plans for the cemetery call for a scatter garden where families can scatter the cremated remains of their loved ones. The woods walkway will be enhanced with additional trees and granite benches donated by family members. Kemano hopes veterans service organizations will eventually donate service-related memorials for placement within the wooded area along the walkway. "We want the woods walkway to be a peaceful place where families and friends can come for reflection," said Kemano.

The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia is one of two state-operated veterans cemeteries. A second cemetery, the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery is located in Suffolk. A third cemetery, located in Dublin, is in the early phase of construction. The cemeteries are operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services.

Service members who were honorably discharged qualify for burial in one of Virginia's veterans cemeteries. A grave site, opening and closing of the grave for the veteran, placement of a government grave marker, and perpetual care of the site are provided to the veteran at no charge. Veterans' spouses and eligible dependent children may be interred for a small fee, currently three hundred dollars. Ω



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