



EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A STORY

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF

MARYLAND

A total of 137 posts, and some 50,000 members from across the state, make up the Maryland American Legion Family. That family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders, have a rich history of service to veterans, the community and state, and outstanding service to the national Legion organization. Oratorical, Boys State, Legion Baseball, camps and other youth programs have set high goals and made great achievements through their service. Maryland is "America in Miniature," and Chesapeake Bay is home to the famous blue crabs and rich seafood.



Homes away from home for youth

One of the most important responsibilities The American Legion and its members hold to themselves is that of care, protection and development of children – the next generation of citizens. The Department of Maryland has shared that responsibility throughout the years.

In November 1959, the Western Maryland District agreed to hold a free summer camp for low-income boys 9-12 on a trial basis. The first overnight encampment was held during the summer of 1960; 40 boys attended with an all-volunteer staff for one week at Camp Summit near Emmitsburg. From 1960 through 1971, various sites were used for encampments, and in 1972 the first two-week camp was held at the pres-

ent location: Camp West-Mar near Sabillasville. The district purchased the land and constructed the camp. The camp celebrated its 50th year of operation in 2010. In 2017, it had between 60 and 70 youths per day Monday-Friday, and hopes to increase that to over 100 per day in 2018.

The Southern Maryland District runs a youth camp of its own. Its aim is to provide camping and recreational facilities for young people, including those with disabilities. This camp was the dream of former Department Commander William Kesting. In 1981, he signed a 99-year lease with the State of Maryland for 30 acres of land in Cheltenham. Five cabins sleep 34 each, and much of the acreage is available for camping.



Legend
● Legion posts
● MD Legion Department Headquarters

■ In 2019, Francis Scott Key Post 11 in Frederick will have elected 100 different commanders to serve the post, each for a one-year term.

■ Dewey Lowman Post 109 is named for Arbutus native Dewey Nicholas Lowman, one of 306 lost at sea in 1918 aboard USS *Cyclops*.

■ The American Legion Riders are a diverse group of Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons members, motorcycle enthusiasts promoting the Four Pillars of The American Legion and united by patriotism. They answer the call to service for America's military, veterans and the children and youth of our country. The Riders from the Department of Maryland have been instrumental in collecting over \$60,000 in the past two years for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund on behalf of the department.



Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, Baltimore

Sitting on a small island in Baltimore Harbor is Fort McHenry, built in 1799 and bombarded in 1812 by the British fleet in Chesapeake Bay. A spectator, Francis Scott Key, who watched through the night was moved to write "The Star-Spangled Banner," which later became the U.S. national anthem.

Fort McHenry's most active time period in its long and varied history, though, was during World War I. It is hard to believe now, but it was U.S. Army Hospital #2. The fort was a very busy military base. A 3,000-bed receiving hospital was constructed around the old star fort. It was a facility through which more than 20,000 wounded and sick soldiers from the war would pass for treatment on their way back to duty or civilian life. Some patients stayed two weeks, others two years.



United States Naval Academy, Annapolis

The facility for the development of naval officers – founded in 1845 – includes the Armel-Leftwich Visitor Center, which provides guided walking and riding tours for the public and a variety of guided walking tours for pre-formed groups. And it maintains a museum on two floors in Preble Hall.



The insignia of the uniform cap worn by Maryland Legionnaires is that of the state flag. It is one of only four U.S. state flags that does not contain the color blue (the other three are Alabama, California and New Mexico). It is also the only state flag to be directly based on English heraldry.



1919

The Department of Maryland is chartered on May 24; James A. Gary Sr. is the first commander.

1919

By Sept. 1, there are 42 posts in the Department of Maryland.

1924

Space in the War Memorial Building in Baltimore is offered as the department HQ, where it remains today.

1930

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Post 81's Legion Baseball team wins the national championship.



1934

German H.H. Emory Post 8 hosts the first Sons of The American Legion squadron in Maryland, chartered on Jan. 4.

1946

The department wins the Legion WWII Membership Trophy, for greatest percentage of membership increase.

1947

The first Maryland Boys State is held at Fort George G. Meade, with 36 in attendance.

MD Legionnaires



Robert E.L. Eaton of Chevy Chase was elected Legion national commander in 1973, the first person from Maryland to attain that position.



Clarence M. Bacon of Hyattsville was elected national commander of The American Legion in 1984. He was a past commander of the Department of Maryland.



Richard J. Santos of Greenbelt was elected Legion national commander in 2001; he was in the Capitol building delivering testimony to Congress when the 9/11 attacks occurred.



Philip B. Onderdonk, a native of Parkville, retired in 2017 after 35 years of service as national judge advocate for The American Legion, working out of the organization's national headquarters in Indianapolis.

In addition to national commanders of The American Legion, Maryland has also produced national leaders of the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.

Auxiliary National Presidents
Ellen Randall, 1967-1968
Linda M. Newsome, 1994-1995
Sandi Dutton, 2004-2005

Sons National Commanders
James Hartman Jr., 1974
Charles "Chuck" Gannon, 1977
Richard League, 1988
William Matoska, 1997
William Sparwasser, 2005
Joseph Gladden, 2014



Sons: Proud of a priceless heritage

The Sons of the American Legion Department of Maryland donated an 18-passenger bus – with space for three passengers using wheelchairs – to Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in St. Mary's County, the only such home in the state where more than 400 veterans are served. It features two TVs that can play DVDs, a public-address system, seat belts, and a paint scheme that wraps an American flag around the bus with a bald eagle on the front.

The project was headed up by then-Detachment Commander Edward "Buddy" Mastin Jr. He worked

with several Legion organizations across the state to raise approximately \$95,000 for the bus through oyster roasts and other fundraisers. The remaining funds went toward an \$18,000 awning that will allow the veterans to wait outside for bus rides, under protection from the sun and weather.

The preamble of the Sons' national constitution begins, "Proud possessors of a priceless heritage" And the Maryland detachment take that responsibility to veterans of the past, present and future seriously.

Contact The American Legion of Maryland

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Did you know?

The first national American Legion Oratorical Contest was held in 1938, with 11 departments participating. Maryland had its first national finalist in 1958. Since then, the state has had six first-place national winners, putting it second only to California's eight.

Post-9/11 MD LEGION



“To me, The American Legion means continued service ... while my enlistment with the Marine Corps ended, the Legion allows me to continue to give back not just to my country, but to my community, my fellow veterans, and to help build our future leaders. More importantly, as a husband and father of three, it allows me to do all this and welcomes my family to help out too. Families are vital to the success of our mission.”

Alex Whitney Sr., an Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Marine Corps veteran who is the current commander of Carroll Post 31 in Westminster. He was awarded the "Outstanding Commander" award for membership outreach and growth in 2016-2017. He is also commander for Carroll County, and vice commander for Western Maryland District 1. His department appointments include Trophy/Awards and Public Relations chairman.

“[Being in The American Legion] has changed my life on veterans issues, particularly from an active-duty perspective.”

Carolyn Emrick, an Air Force communications tech sergeant currently serving at Joint Base Andrews in St. George's County. She is also 2017-2018 commander of Cummings-Behlke Post 226 in Mayo. In the Air Force since 2003, she joined the Legion in 2014.

A native of Portage, Wis., Emrick has resided in the Anne Arundel County area for more than eight years. During her tenure as commander, she and Post 226's executive board have developed innovative programs that are capturing the attention of Mayo and South County residents. These efforts include the "Dog Days of Summer," which from tips alone raised over \$2,000 for the community ASPCA; forming a work party to clean the Vietnam War Memorial; a flag-waving ceremony on Veterans Day on the South River Bridge; and a very popular golf tournament.



Join The American Legion

🌐 www.legion.org/join

1954

The Fort Cumberland Post 13 Legion Baseball team wins the national championship.

1957

Boys and Girls Staters appear on the department TV program "To Promote Good Will," which wins a national TV award.

1965

The department begins publication of the *Free State Warrior*, greatly affecting the department's growth.

1967

The department Sons detachment takes fourth place nationally, and is recognized as one of the foremost in the nation.

1990

The Mayo Post 226 Legion Baseball team wins the national championship.



1995

Robert M. "Bob" Johnson of Randolph Furey Post 170 is elected the first African-American department commander.



2014

Carolynn G. Baker of Harford Post 39 is elected the first female department commander.