



AMERICAN LEGION NEWSLETTER December, 2015, January, February, 2016  
Commander's Message to Our Legion Family:

Hello my fellow Legionnaires;

In 6 months as your Commander, I must say that I am very proud of the job everyone is doing for the Post. The Post looks great! Thank you.

We need to focus on membership. We are close to 75%. Help get it to 100%. **We can do it!** Get your checkbook out and pay your dues.

A good time was had by all at the Halloween Party. Thanks for coming out.

We will be having Karaoke/DJ on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every month starting Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 7pm – 11 pm. All Star Entertainment will be hosting.

This year's Christmas Party is Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 1 pm to 4 pm. We also will be having a band, "Nasty Habits" for the New Year's Eve party.

Lastly, congratulations to our own Auxiliary member, Elinore Frush for being awarded the Citizen of the Year Award from the Lineboro-Manchester Lions Club. Great job, Elinore! We are very proud of you.

For God and Country,  
Cid Reyes, Commander

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**Our Flag does not fly because the wind moves it;  
It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it.**  
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### Thoughts of Iwo Jima in February



The Pacific Island of Iwo Jima is about a third the size of Manhattan. Comprised mostly of black powdery volcanic ash, the island is a forbidding place. The smell of sulfur is everywhere, emanating from hundreds of tiny vents that penetrate the surface, which is why the island is named Iwo Jim, meaning "Sulfur Island".

There is a simple inscription on the granite base of an iconic monument on Iwo Jima: "We pray together that our sacrifices will also always be remembered and never repeated."

The monument commemorates what was, for the United States, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. A third of the 70,000 marines who stormed ashore on February 19, 1945 were killed, wounded or are missing in action.

From the start of the invasion, one of the main American objectives was Mt. Suribachi. It was there, after less than a week of heavy fighting, that an Associated Press photographer took one of the most famous pictures in history, showing six marines hoisting the American flag.

When a handful of Japanese and American survivors gathered to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing on February 19, 2005, one of them said: "It's an ugly place. But at least it's safe now. That makes a big difference."

This month we mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Iwo Jima. Pray for the peace that has been purchased at a great price. Risks are necessary to maintain it. May we be willing instruments of that peace.

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## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NEWSLETTER    December 2015 – February 2016

Well, summer is over and fall is right behind. Hopefully the fall and winter won't be too bad.

Membership is 291 and growing. If you have paid and receive a notice from Department, please disregard the notice.

Another busy 3 months:

- . Annual Sub Sale – we sold a record of 265 subs and made a profit of \$556.80. Thanks to all who purchased subs.
- . The Fund Raiser at Greenmount Station netted us a profit of \$572.00. Thanks to all who came out to support us. We are planning another one in the spring.
- . The chairs in the hall are getting in poor condition, some are torn and some frames need repairs, and a few have pretty well seen their days. We have held quite a few raffles, and asked for donations and we have now reached our goal and will be purchasing all new ones for the hall. We will be replacing the ones in the lounge and back room that are getting pretty bad.
- . November 9<sup>th</sup> we sponsored the monthly Birthday party at Long View Nursing Home. Each month is sponsored by an organization and November is ours.
- . The Commander's Feed was a very nice day – thanks to all who attended to boost membership and bring their dues up to date.
- . The Veteran's Day Lunch was a great success and we hope all enjoyed.
- . Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> Tree Lighting at the War Memorial – request forms are in the lounge and you can place an order for \$5.00 in memory/honor of a loved one.
- . Dec. 6 – Senior Christmas Party 1-3 and Children's Party 4-6. There will be Elizabeth, the Balloon Lady, crafts, and of course a visit from the big guy dressed in red.
- . Essay Contest - entry forms will be distributed to Elementary and Middle Schools in Hampstead/Manchester area in November. Please encourage your children or grand children to participate in this program. There are monetary prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places.
- . Dec.13 – Provide luncheon for SAL District Meeting
- . Feb. 27 – Shrimp Feed – 4-7 p.m. See flyer inside for more information

**Congratulations to Beverly Martin** for winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place in this year's Fall Conference challenge to each Unit in the Department to design a flower arrangement that follows the membership theme of butterflies and flowers.

**NESAP NEEDS OUR HELP:** – please help them by filling the collection boxes in the lobby for:

- . 2016 Calendars for the Veterans
- . New or slightly used books
- . Non-perishable food items

**DID YOU KNOW:** Some of the best things in life are unexpected and free!

**FOR GOD and COUNTRY**

**Mary Jane Wickline**

**President**



## **SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION NEWSLETTER** **December, 2015, January, February, 2016**

If you have stopped by the Post and wondered what the crates sitting in the parking lot are for – well, that's the metal for our pavilion roof. Soon it will be taking on a whole new look. And if you take a look down over the hill next to the cook shed you will see a brand new swing set. Thank you to Brady Bowen for making this his Eagle Scout project. All of this and with the new tile in the foyer and new chairs that are coming for the upstairs hall, there is a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Christmas is the Season for Giving and GIVE is what we do. Not only money, but in numerous volunteer hours as well. A few examples of how we give are...

The senior and children's Christmas Party, Golf Tournaments, Military lunch and dinner at Camp Fretterd, Md. Special Olympics, The USO, Camp West-Mar, Toys for Tots, McVets, Fisher House, Casey-Cares Foundation, Hero's Haven and much much more. This is the reason I am always asking for you to come out and support our events and raffles and would like to sincerely thank those of you that do.

The winner of our M&M Meats 'Fill Your Freezer' raffle was Patty Mazzone. Congratulations!

Plum Crazy is still going strong. Currently in addition to one \$500 winner when the plum is found, there will be seven Lucky Losers of \$100 (# of lucky losers can increase each week) so come on out every Wednesday night at 7:30 and get in on the action.

Our membership at this time is at 48%, so if you have not paid your dues – now is the time to do so.

Dates to remember...

Western Maryland District Meeting – December 13<sup>th</sup> @1:00 – Hampstead Post 200

Squadron Officers Training & Draw Down–January 30, 2016 – Ocean City Post 166

Winter D.E.C. – January 31<sup>st</sup> @ 12:00 Ocean City #166

Western MD District Meeting – February 13<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 – Clear Spring #222

For God and Country

Roger Mazzone  
SAL Commander



Newsletter for December, 2015, January, February, 2016

- On December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm, we will hold our annual Christmas party for members and their families. Please bring a dish to share.
- We are planning a Memorial Ride in memory of Mike "Maddog" Sater in the spring. Details will be announced later on the TV in the lounge or in the next newsletter.
- The American Legion Riders would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

Ron Burton, Director

**Note:** Conrad Sigmon's story for this newsletter was edited and composed by Auxiliary Historian, Elinore Frush. His interview was done by Elinore and Auxiliary President, Mary Jane Wickline. Our "Story" pages began several years ago when past commanders and past presidents were featured in "Where Are They Now?" As time passed, veterans and/or their families have approached us to tell their stories and feedback has been positive. If you or you know someone who would like to share their story, contact Mary Jane at 410-374-9014 or [maryjanewickline@comcast.net](mailto:maryjanewickline@comcast.net) or Elinore at 410-374-4466 or [efrush@live.com](mailto:efrush@live.com) or Liz at 410-239-4203 or [larmacos@qis.net](mailto:larmacos@qis.net)

[Conrad had a few more things to add to his story.](#)  
[There were 145,000 Armed Guard who served on 6,236 American and Allied ships. 1,810 lost their lives; 833 ships were sunk.](#)  
[You had to volunteer to get into the Armed Guard.](#)

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### **Become a Member**

Encourage your friends who have served or are related to one who has served to become a member of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion.

The following dates qualify you to be a member. You need a copy of your DD214 and a completed application. That's it!

**April 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918 (World War I)**  
**Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946 (World War II)**  
**June 25, 1950 to Jan. 31, 1955 (Korean War)**  
**Feb. 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 (Vietnam War)**  
**Aug. 24, 1982 to July 31, 1984 (Lebanon / Grenada)**  
**Dec. 20, 1989 to Jan. 31, 1990 (Panama)**  
**Aug. 2, 1990 to today (Gulf War / War On Terrorism)**

We have lots going on here at the post where we meet our friends for fun and fellowship.

**We would love to have you as a member.**

**Attention: Note about Legion Membership**  
If at all possible, those who have not yet paid their dues for 2016, please pay them by January 1<sup>st</sup>. The National and the Department of Maryland dues have gone up. Paying them before January 1<sup>st</sup> will save Post 200 \$5 per member. Thank you. If you have any questions, please call 410-833-1600.

Bill Nash, Membership Chairman

### **Hall Rental**

Do you need a place to host a birthday party, wedding or wedding reception, reunion or any other gathering for about 100 people? The price to rent the hall is \$300 + \$50 deposit. There are added charges if alcohol is to be served. Call Marvin or Elinore at 410-374-4466.

**When a member dies....**The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary provide a funeral service for members when they pass away. This service usually takes place at the funeral home. It is not mandatory or automatic and the family has to notify the Post of the desire for the service. It is with honor that we do this for our members who enter into Post Everlasting.

Remember our friends and members who have gone on to Post Everlasting since our last newsletter.

**Charles "Blizz" Blizzard**

**Marvin S.Hale, Sr.**

**John "Dutch" Wayne Poole**

**Arabelle Engle**

We were blessed by their presence and will miss them. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Please remember to pray for our sick:

**Joan Wilson**

that they may be healed.

### **Veteran's Day Tributes**

There were many events around the area as well as free meals at restaurants for our veterans. We hope that you took advantage of one or more of these. The breakfast at the North Carroll High School was very well done. The entire school stood and applauded as the veterans and their guests entered the auditorium before and after the program...and what a great program it was. This was just one of the salutes to veterans held in our area.

We honor our veterans for their service and sacrifice on behalf of our country. It is our pleasure each year to extend to veterans the invitation to a free dinner. We feel that it is a small way to show our appreciation for the gift that they gave to us. Make every day Veterans Day. Let them know that you appreciate their sacrifice.

**Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but gets you nowhere!**

## Signalman 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, Conrad Sigmon United States Navy Armed Guard World War II 1944 - 1946

Little remembered today, the Navy Armed Guard was a service branch of the United States Navy that was responsible for defending United States and Allied merchant ships from attack by enemy aircraft, submarines and surface ships during WW II. The men of the Armed Guard served primarily as gunners, signal men and radio operators on cargo ships, tankers, troop ships and other merchant vessels.



The origins of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard date to World War I, during which some 384 U.S. merchant vessels carried guns and Navy personnel. This earlier version of the Armed Guard was disbanded following World War I and its modest scope hardly resembled that of the Armed Guard of World War II. Late in the war, many experienced Armed Guard sailors were reassigned from duty aboard merchant vessels to serve as gunners on warships of the U.S. fleet, where their training and experience made them particularly valuable. With the end of World War II the Navy Armed Guard, like other military units, was rapidly drawn down in size as men were discharged from service. Small numbers of Armed Guard personnel were kept aboard merchant vessels to maintain the guns until the weapons were removed from the ships and returned to the Navy. The disarming of merchant ships continued into 1946. Like the Armed Guard with whom they sailed, the men of the merchant marine helped make possible the Allied victory in World War II.

Conrad Sigmon was born in Rocky Mount, Virginia on November 23, 1925 to Lorton and Blanch Sigmon. After he graduated from high school, he enlisted in the Navy in April of 1944 and went on to Boot Camp at Camp Perry in Virginia and from there to Bainbridge, Maryland to Signalman School. While in school, he and another trainee were using semaphore flags across a pond from one another to send messages about an instructor that they weren't fond of. Little did they know that the instructor was watching them and he understood the messages very well. Needless to say, they gave up their liberty. Another time, his brother who was in the Army in Tennessee was going overseas and he wanted to see Conrad before he left. He asked his commanding officer if he could have a leave to meet him at Camp Meade and was denied. He never got to see his brother before he left for overseas and he never forgot that. His brother made it home as a decorated soldier.

Conrad was assigned to the Liberty Ship, S.S. George Westinghouse and was on his way to Le Havre, France. Liberty ships were built in the U.S. during WWII. They were cheap and quick to build. The quickest ever built was launched in four days, fifteen and a half hours after the keel was laid. They served their purpose even though they were not the prettiest ships in the fleet.

December 15, 1944 began as a beautiful morning as they headed up the English Channel to South Hampton where they would load ballast for one of their trips back to the states. As they crossed the channel, the strongest storm ever to hit there came up causing a very strong undertow and heavy winds. High waves caused some 15 empty ships in the channel to rock uncontrollably into one another. Damage to the S.S. George Westinghouse caused a hole in the side of the ship which was high enough for them to continue, but all their life boats were lost. The next morning, they saw no ships in the channel and headed into South Hampton, loaded ballast and had the hole patched up. They finally made contact with a convoy of 86 ships that would head back to the states. The convoy was supposed to have 101 ships, but 15 of them sustained heavy damage or were sunk during the storm. Thirty-two Armed Guard members perished during the storm. Conrad also heard that the same storm was the one that claimed the life of Big Band Leader, Glen Miller when his plane disappeared and was never found.

Two days later on their way back, a destroyer escort came alongside their ship and started rolling depth charges to try to destroy a suspected German U-Boat riding underneath the Westinghouse. This caused their steering to break rendering them dead in the water. The destroyer stayed behind with them until repairs could be made and they eventually caught up with the rest of the convoy.

On the way back to the states, the crew could hear cracking and popping. That sound ended up coming from the welds breaking on the Westinghouse and he wondered if they would make it back. They finally made it back to New York for a 2 week rest while the ship was being wrapped with new metal. Then it was off to Portuguese South Africa by way of Trinidad for a trip without an escort that was pretty uneventful, except that President Roosevelt had died and the Germans surrendered. He remembers the fishing was really good there and that they

brought back two cheetahs from Africa that were to go to a zoo in the United States. Conrad said that ratio wise, the Armed Guard lost more men than the Army during WWII. Once while on a practice mission, where their ships were firing their weapons, one shell went off course and struck a British ship killing two British sailors. The Westinghouse ended up being close enough to watch the burial at sea. Conrad still vividly remembers this experience. Once while in New York, he saw actor, Mickey Rooney and singer, Bobby Breen when they were entertaining Italian POW's. Another one of Conrad's remembrances was about a cook in service on the Merchant Marine ship who spent an excessive amount of time in the kitchen baking cookies and treats for the men on board. When asked why he did that, he said, "I have a boy in the service and I hope someone is treating him well too." Conrad received many ribbons for his service and was discharged in April of 1946.



He took advantage of the GI Bill and learned carpentry where he worked in the building business for most of his adult life until he retired. One of the things that Conrad shared with us was a priceless album put together by the town where he grew up containing pictures and information for everyone who served, those who were lost and the Gold Star Mothers from that area. A man with a sense of humor, when asked if he had ever been shot at during the war, his answer was; "If they did, they missed!" A member of Hampstead American Legion Post 200, he and his wife, Margaret L. (Frock) live in the Manchester area. He has two sons and one stepdaughter. We enjoyed spending time with him and we thank him for his service to our country.

Conrad wrote this poem about Memorial Day and it was read at the service at the War Memorial.

#### **"Just Lived Too Long"**

As I look out my window on this chilly Memorial Day,  
to look at the American flags, flying on display.  
Some are tattered and worn as though they had been at Omaha Beach,  
Some are hanging improperly, but still they look so neat.  
I guess us World War Vets have just lived too long.  
The glory in Old Glory is almost gone.  
They throw her on the ground and burn her in the street.  
Supreme Court says, "It's an expression of free speech."  
We carried her through World Wars One and Two.  
So proud were we of that red, white and blue.  
So many sons and daughters made the supreme sacrifice.  
They gave of their bodies and yes, their life.  
She was carried across the Pacific into Tojo land;  
It was on Mt. Suribachi that she made her stand.  
She traveled across the Atlantic, in the ice, snow and rain.  
She was flying high when she brought down Hitler's reign.  
Soon there would be Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm.  
New pride in her was once again born.  
We fought for the freedom of people everywhere,  
so on Memorial Day, please show that you care.  
Just keep in mind if you decide to throw her on the ground,  
a veteran might be nearby who would gladly take you down.  
Now they build us a monument that will be something to behold,  
but most World War II vet's bodies have long been cold.  
They say it's for future generations to know of our sacrifice,  
to be seen by those who gave so much would have been nice.  
So come on America, let's unite and become one  
to guard against missiles, which one day will surely come.  
To be united like we were during World War Two,  
There's nothing in this world that American cannot do!  
God Bless America!



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