



The American Legion

The Valdosta Post Number Thirteen, Inc. of The American Legion
Valdosta, Georgia

SEPTEMBER 2020

Commander
Rod Pedersen

**Sr. Vice
Commander**
Steve Blanton

**Jr. Vice
Commander**
Whit Chappell

**Jr. Vice
Commander**
Dan
McSwords

**Service
Officer**
Ed Kent

Chaplain
Bill
MacLaughlin

Sgt at Arms
Raymond
Meeks

Historian
Henrietta
Traynor

**Judge
Advocate**
Phil
Youngblood

Adjutant
Richard
Brown

**A/Sgt at
Arms**
Jimmy
Traynor

**PEC Mbr. at
Large**
Greg Rothfuss

**PEC Mbr. at
Large**
Timothy Oliver

**PEC Mbr. at
Large**
Bill Dimsdale

From The American Legion Post 13 Commander:

My Fellow American Legionnaires:

It's September 2020. Post 13 and its American Legion Family have not published a regular Newsletter since March this year and many have been asking for information. Much has transpired since.

For any who have been on another planet we are experiencing a worldwide pandemic making this American Legion Year a very unprecedented time. Post 13 and its Programs, the SAL, the ALR and the Auxiliary meetings as well as most functions involving the Post Home have been suspended since April. Nominations and Elections were cancelled and under the guidance and instructions of Department of Georgia, all accepting Officers of their respective Groups were reappointed. Department Convention and Fall Conference were cancelled.

Following the State of Georgia Governors ever-evolving Executive Orders, Post 13's Post Home was closed with the exception of "Essential Personnel" to maintain the building and property. We currently cannot allow access to the Post Home in compliance with GA Executive Orders for the prevention of COVID-19.

In spite of these restrictions we have managed to:

- **perform a transition to the FY 2021 Leadership,**
- **conduct a June 14th Flag Day Retirement,**
- **film a recent "We Honor Vets" video ceremony from our front porch steps,**
- **conduct a Post and Programs Audit of Finances,**
- **finance and feed Hospital First-Line COVID staff on four separate occasions,**
- **I'm even told that some local Veterans and Patriots placed Flags on a cemetery on Memorial Day, though I categorically deny any knowledge of such action by Post 13,**
- **Adjutant Brown and I ceremoniously presented outdoors an American Flag and plaque to a Valdosta-based assisted-living home, The Canopy at Azalea Grove which was video televised to its live-in Veterans,**

- donate toward Lindsay Gutierrez, Cmdr. GA Post 336 and 2nd Vice President AL Auxiliary Unit 336, as a Sponsorship for her in the Ms. US Continental pageant.

All of these were conducted within the ever-evolving restrictions of the GA Governor's Executive Orders' mandates.

We have had an unusual and unprecedented start of this Legion Year for Post 13 but please rest assured that there is discussion within the Post 13 leadership of continuing to operate as a viable American Legion Post yet also operate with the health and safety of our Members and Guests our priority.

If things go well, I hope within the first few weeks of September to conduct a round-robin discussion of Post 13's upcoming needs, issues and concerns with the Post Executive Committee and its Unit, Squadron and Chapter representatives. This meeting would need a considerable amount of time (and patience) to make up for the last many months.

If such meeting is legally possible within current COVID-19 mandates, it would require us to conduct ourselves in a parliamentary manner much as our Local, State and US Governments, such as speaking in turn at the podium, observing social distances of a minimum 6-feet and continuous wearing of masks. All areas of the building accessed (Entry Hall, Meeting Room, Hallway/Pool Room, Restrooms, etc.) must be sanitized before and after each use.

In normal times, the Membership was welcome to audit and/or speak at our Executive Committee meetings; however under these COVID-19 times and conditions this is not be possible so if you as a Member of the Post 13 Family have input, concerns or items to bring to our attention, I would ask you to contact an Officer of the Post, Unit, Squadron or Chapter so they might present this to us.

Finally, in closing, I ask one and all to remember that we as Americans and as American Legion Veterans have historically endured and overcome MUCH worse hardships. We as a Country, as Americans, as a People will get through this pandemic with our heads held up high. For God and Country!

Commander Rod Pedersen

rod.pedersen.1956@yahoo.com

Senior Vice Commander AL Post 13
Commander SAL Squadron 13

Salutations to the Post 13 American Legion Family:

An invisible virus has shut down Post 13 activities for the last 4 months of year 2019—2020 and 2 months and counting into 2020-2021. We have abided by directives from The American Legion National and Department of Georgia as well as State and local directives.

Most Post Family Officers have remained in place and some positions have new sworn in officers. I am continuing as Post 13 Sr. Vice Cmdr. and have assumed SAL Commander duties. I apologize for the lack of information and lack of Newsletters.

Due to group restrictions, a small group of individuals placed and removed flags for Memorial Day, no ceremony and only a 2 minute interview aired on WALB TV news to the public. Some may wonder why the effort if very few people would visit the cemetery and the answer is because we Legionnaires knew the graves of fallen and deceased veterans were honored and that honor is now shared with the Legion Family members that could not be there to honor those “Patriots” at rest in Sunset Hills.

A small group June 14th honored our unserviceable flags with a Flag Retirement Ceremony.

New Officers were sworn in the Post main hall limited to only those who needed to be present. Adjutants and Finance Officers have conducted Post business on different days.

We cannot not enter Hospice so a two-minute “We Honor Vets” video was made and given to Langdale Hospice to allow us to give the veteran being honored a hand salute after Hospice presents our Certificate of Honor and Challenge Coin. Several veterans received only the Hospice recognition before their Life’s Journey ended before a way was found.

Post 13 has 376 members with 161 members paid for 2021. The SAL has 61 members with 23 members paid for 2021. I am happy to report we have 23 WW II veterans in our membership.

I now ask Post 13 Legionnaires and SAL Squadron members to please pay your dues for 2020-2021 and solicit new members for Post 13 and SAL Squadron 13 so that when we return to activities at the Post we can serve the Nation, State and Community with our four pillars of service and most important serve our fellow veterans in need.

**Stephen Blanton
Sr. Vice Cmdr. Post 13
Cmdr. SAL Squadron 13**

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The American Legion Post 13 Service Officer

VA Surgery: Care Outperforms/Matches Neighboring Non-VA Hospitals

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on 20 JUL announced their hospitals outperform or match neighboring non-VA hospitals in surgical quality and overall patient safety satisfaction. The finding comes from a study conducted by VA and university researchers that was published 26 JUN, in the Journal of Surgical Research. “The prospect of having surgery can be stressful,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “For Veterans, who often have choices in where they receive care, it is in their best interest to make fully informed health care decisions. This study provides valuable information when faced with such an important choice.”

Researchers at the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire completed the study. They identified VA medical centers with at least one non-VA hospital within 25 miles in three U.S. regions: West-Southwest, New England and Deep South. With a sample of 34 VA facilities and 319 neighboring non-VA hospitals, the researchers used benchmarks created by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. They also used scores from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. The results showed VA facilities performed better or as good as non-VA hospitals in overall patient safety indicators (PSIs), which measure potential hospital complications and adverse events following surgeries and other procedures. VA hospitals performed much better in surgery specific PSIs. The researchers also found VA and non-VA hospitals were about equal in patient satisfaction with overall hospital experience. The data was collected from [Hospital Compare](#), a publicly available database that helps consumers decide where to seek health care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services runs the database. You can visit VA's Office of Research and Development at <https://www.research.va.gov>. [Source: VA Press Release | July 20, 2020]

VA C&P Exams: Resuming In some Locations

The COVID-19 pandemic halted VA’s practice of in-person C&P exams. Now, in select locations across the country, these disability compensation and pension exams have resumed. Naturally, Veterans have been asking not only [where](#) they are conducting exams, but what they are and who is completing them. For some Veterans, the C&P exam is a critical component of the VA disability claim [process](#). Though not all

Veterans need or receive an exam, it’s one of the ways VA evaluates the disability or medical condition a Veteran claims was caused or aggravated by active service. And for those already receiving compensation, a C&P exam is how VA evaluates changes to that existing service-connected disability. Veterans are able to submit an electronic claim at [VA.gov](#) by attaching Acceptable Clinical Evidence ([existing](#)

medical documents). Others can take advantage of a Tele-C&P exam. But for many claims, VA will need to conduct an in-person C&P exam using a VA contracted medical examination provider. Veterans need not worry about selecting which is right for them: VA will determine the type of exam that it needs. VA will notify you of what is needed and where, if necessary, to report.

For disability compensation -- Disability compensation exams help VA determine if your disability is related to your military service or if your existing service-connected disability rating should be updated due to changes in your condition.

For pension -- For pension claims, which are for wartime Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities and their survivors, this exam documents the level of disability experienced by the Veteran, regardless of whether the condition is related to military service. The examination is not a care appointment. The C&P examiner will only perform an examination necessary to evaluate disabilities claimed in your compensation or pension application. They will record the findings and provide them to a VA claims processor to complete the claim process. A C&P exam is not the same as a healthcare appointment. You won't receive treatment or medicine from the provider, but you will get your VA claim well on its way to completion. If VA determines that you require a C&P exam to complete a claim, don't worry, one of our medical examiners will reach out to you to get your in-person exam scheduled. Work with them. Even during COVID-19, we are scheduling and safely conducting exams all over the country through the assistance of contracted medical facilities established to ensure the safety of Veterans and providers. For more on the resumption of in-person C&P exams:

Watch a video about your exam at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgiFXnzUH0w&list=PLrrh23QvVvYhAJ6t3vr81YvDypkezZ2yI&index=2&t=0s>

Read more about C&P exams and find answers to common questions at <https://www.va.gov/disability/vaclaim-exam>.

[Source: Vantage Point | Brianna McFarland | July 29, 2020]

Korean War Anniversary: Trump Signs Proclamation Commemorating End

Sixty-seven years ago, the guns fell silent along the Korean demilitarized zone after more than three years of brutal fighting to defeat the expansion of communism on the Korean Peninsula, President Donald J. Trump said in a proclamation 24 JUL. National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day marks the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement on 27 July 1953 in Panmunjom, a border village inside the Demilitarized Zone that divides North and South Korea. "We pause to remember the uncommon courage and sacrifice of ordinary Americans who fought to defend freedom and protect the values we hold dear," Trump said about the historic day. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. When the conflict began, Americans were still rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of World

War II, enjoying the blessings of peace and looking toward a future filled with hope and prosperity, Trump noted. "When freedom and democracy were under threat on the Korean Peninsula, however, 2 million Americans left their homes, put on our nation's uniform, and answered their country's call to duty," he said. Their resolve was tried and tested in once obscure and unfamiliar places, such as Pork Chop Hill, Heartbreak Ridge, Chipyeong-ni, Pusan and the Chosin Reservoir, and in unnamed locations known only by grid coordinates or hilltop elevations, he said. "Alongside tens of thousands of coalition troops from our allies around the world, these individuals fought, bled, died, went missing, and suffered brutal captivity to defeat a determined foe amid the harshest of conditions, including sweltering heat, bone-numbing cold, and deep snow that buried valleys and rugged ridgelines," the president said. "Their unquestioned valor, determination, and patriotism halted communist aggression and restored liberty and dignity for the South Korean people," he said. "In our nation's capital, the black granite wall of the Korean War Veterans Memorial stands as a testament to their sacrifice, etched with the words 'Freedom is Not Free.'" In total, more than 36,000 Americans gave their lives in the Korean War, more than 103,000 were wounded, and nearly 8,000 went missing in action, he said. Today, South Korea, once decimated in the aftermath of the war, is one of the world's most vibrant, dynamic and economically prosperous democracies — and one of our strongest allies, he said. "Our armed forces continue to proudly serve side-by-side with our Korean military counterparts," Trump said. "This ironclad alliance, forged in war and reinforced by a shared love of liberty and deep ties of friendship, is vital to peace and stability in both Asia and the world." "As we commemorate the 67th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, we renew our commitment to the principles of liberty for which our Korean War veterans so valiantly fought," he said. "We are eternally grateful for the families that endured the unimaginable sacrifices and heartache of war, and we are thankful for all the men and women who helped change the fate of a nation. The 38 months of bloody warfare represent the honorable legacy of a selfless and courageous generation of American patriots." [Source: DOD New | David Vergun | July 25, 2020 ++]

James "Ed" Kent
AL Post 13 Veterans Service Officer

President of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 13

Greetings to all members of Auxiliary Unit 13:

We are no longer just ladies of the Auxiliary. I hope this message finds everyone well.

Another year has started and is time for you to pay your annual dues of \$30 so please pay by mail or online.

Covid-19 has certainly changed the way we are approaching the year 2020-2021.

No definite date has been decided on when the Post 13 Legion home will be re-opened for activities including meetings.

In the past there have been hurt feelings and disagreements that have affected our mission as Aux. Unit 13. Covid-19 has shown us that you never know how or what will affect you and this negative effect on our mission was beyond our control as we end the past year and start the new year and it will be an unusual year.

Please note that we have not been able to meet so our budget from 2019-2020 will be used for 2020-2021. We need a quorum from the membership to vote on this budget decision to keep the budget as is for 2020-2021. Members please call me on my cell phone to vote. 864 680-3774 There will be an audit of the books at a later date.

The Post will reopen but the date is unknown. Another Newsletter will be sent to inform the members of Aux. Unit 13 and all of the Legion Family when can return.

Please take care of yourselves and families. If you have questions about any issues concerning the Unit, then give me a call and leave a message and your phone number or email me. I will do my best to find the answer.

Sheila Blanton

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