



## American Legion Post 13 November 2022 Newsletter

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**2022-2023**

### **Officers**

Commander: Stephen Blanton  
Jr Vice: Clayton Roberts  
Judge Adv: Phil Youngblood  
Sgt @ Arms: Ray Meeks  
Chaplain Bill McLaughlin

Sr Vice: Bill Dimsdale  
Jr Vice: RD Martin  
Serv. Off: Ed Kent  
Asst Sgt @ Arms Jimmy Traynor  
Members @ Large: Don Van Pelt; Rod Pedersen and Tim Oliver

Adjutant: Clayton Roberts  
Fin. Off.: Richard Brown  
Historian: Tabora Temple

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### **COMMANDER'S CORNER:**

#### Salutations to the Post 13 Family

November is here and we will not have a Post membership meeting this month. November 11th is Veterans Day and we will have our Veterans Day program at Lowndes County High School in the new auditorium. I encourage our members and their family to come and participate to be honored for their service to Country and to inspire some of the High School students to serve in our military. Lowndes High School AFJROTC lead by Lt Col Peter Dominicus, USAF (Ret) and Valdosta High School NJROTC lead by Senior Chief Sheldon USN (RET) will participate in the Veterans Day program. Featured speaker will be from Moody AFB. The program will start at 10 AM, come early to ensure time to find this new auditorium's location. Go to main office for direction. After the program please come back to Post 13 for our BBQ meal that will be served until all are fed or until the food runs out.

We are having a Trivia contest on Thursday nights in the Lounge. Teams of two will compete against other teams so fame or blame can be shared depending if you win or lose. The bar is up and running so drop by Thursday through Saturday 5 pm till 9 pm and bring and sign in a guest or two. Karaoke is in the works possibly in January. Keep in mind if your membership card date ends in 2022 it expires on Dec. 31st. Please pay online, pay in person or mail your dues to American Legion Post 13, PO Box 1005, Valdosta GA 31604.

There is a Christmas Party being planned for Saturday Dec. 10th. Social hour starts at 6 pm to 7 pm: Ticket for 1 free soft or adult beverage will be given at the sign in table in the front

Foyer. Additional soft or adult beverages are at member prices. Meal will be served around 7:15 pm. Please RSVP between November 21st and November 30th by calling Post phone 229 242-7616 and leave name and number of family attending. Phone will be checked frequently during that time. Name and number of guests in message will be transferred to a list so we have a head count. If the message box is full, call the next day. There will be gift drawings at party and music will be Christmas themed I as background music. Post membership meetings will resume on Tuesday 10 Jan. 2022.

For God and Country

Stephen Blanton, Commander.

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## **Adjutant**

Clayton Roberts     [croberts22@hotmail.com](mailto:croberts22@hotmail.com)

Membership renewals are doing great, also during a recent membership push with the Dept of GA Commander we have an additionally transferred in approximately 30 more individuals. We conducted our Annual Early Bird Drawing and congratulations to Joseph T Williams for being drawn from the basket, a check should be on the way just in time for Christmas shopping..

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## **Service Officer**

Ed Kent                    kentj2@bellsouth.net

### **Military ID Cards: New Deadline for Some Military Retirees, Dependents**

Retirees and military family members who have identification cards with no expiration date can choose to upgrade to the new Next Generation Uniform Services Identification, or USID, cards whenever it's convenient -- as long as it's done within the next four years, according to the Defense Department. There is no looming deadline for use of those old non-active duty cards without expiration dates, but the department expects to completely phase out and replace them with the next-generation IDs, which are more durable and have enhanced security features, by 2026, Maj. Charlie Dietz, a spokesman. In the meantime, cards with expiration dates are required to be replaced within 90 days of elapsing. The Defense

Department began the effort to update all those IDs to the new format in July 2020, but the changeover hit delays caused by the pandemic. "DoD plans to phase out and cancel the existing card forms in 2026 when all existing cards with an actual expiration date will have expired," Dietz wrote in an email. "After then, only the USID card will be accepted for installation and benefits access." The USID format for military retirees and dependents represents the first change to those identification cards in nearly 30 years; the last update was in 1993. The new design closely resembles the Common Access Card, or CAC, format issued to active-duty troops and department civilians. But there was uncertainty among those with cards that list the expiration as indefinite. The IDs are needed to access military facilities and to confirm eligibility for various military benefits, so missing a deadline or losing the identification could disrupt cardholders' lives. Expired cards can be confiscated at base gates. Those with cards with no expiration dates "may have the card replaced at their convenience," according to Dietz. The department recommends they go to the ID Card Office Online and use the office locator to find a site that issues the new cards and book an appointment. Retirees and their dependents, dependents of active-duty troops, reserve members and Medal of Honor recipients are among those who will receive the USID cards. A description of the new cards and a complete list of who is eligible can be found at <https://www.cac.mil/Next-Generation-Uniformed-Services-ID-Card>. At the onset of the pandemic in April 2020, the Defense Department extended the deadlines for replacing expiring cards in an attempt to keep the military community from gathering in issuance offices and spreading COVID-19. By February 2021, more than 200,000 of the new IDs

had been issued. For more info, contact your local Military ID Card Issuing Center.

#### VA Home Loans: Pest Inspection Rule Changed

VA buyers everywhere can now pay for pest inspections to keep their loan moving

forward. Veterans buying homes in areas prone to termite infestation typically need a pest

inspection to satisfy the VA's property condition guidelines, known as the Minimum Property Requirements. Over the years, only VA buyers in certain areas of the U.S. have been allowed to pay for the inspection. For everyone else, the seller or another party to the transaction had to cover this cost. That distinction put some buyers at a disadvantage,

especially in a competitive housing market where sellers were choosing between multiple offers. The VA loan program encourages buyers to negotiate with sellers regarding payment of the inspection fee and any repairs needed. Current and discharged Space Force Guardians finally have liftoff for mortgages backed by the VA. The VA loan program announced last month that its certificate of eligibility (COE) now includes members and former members of the U.S. Space Force. A COE proves veterans meet the

length-of-service and character-of-service requirements to be eligible for a VA loan. Lenders often get the COE for prospective buyers early in the loan process. A VA loan can't close without a COE in the file. Guardians have closed on VA loans since the Space Force's creation, but their eligibility came from service in another branch, typically the Air Force. This update ensures service members who start their military careers in the Space Force can tap into this key benefit, which features no down payment requirement and typically comes with

the industry's lowest average rates for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. Surviving spouses of Space Force veterans may also have VA loan eligibility.

### VA Application Share Rises Slightly

The VA share of all U.S. mortgage applications rose during the first week of July to 11.2% from 11.1% in the prior week, the Mortgage Bankers Association said in a July 13 report. On the purchase side, the VA share of applications was 11.8%, up from 11.5% the week prior. VA's share of refinance applications was at 9.7%, down from 10.2% the week before. The combo of surging home prices and fast-rising interest rates has crimped demand year over year. The number of VA purchase applications in July's first week dropped 5.8%, compared to the same period a year ago, while refinance applications were down a whopping 80.9%, compared to last year.

### Caregiver Program: Expansion to All Eras of Service Set for October

With about two months left until a congressional deadline, Veterans Affairs officials said plans to expand the caregiver support program to veterans of all eras remain on schedule, even if fixes to other aspects of the program are still in limbo. Currently, the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers:

— which provides a monthly stipend to qualified full-time caregivers of seriously ill or injured veterans

— is open only to veterans who served before 1975 or after 2001. But per a mandate from Congress, the program must be opened to all families by Oct. 1 of this year.

In comments to reporters on Wednesday, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said department leaders are on track to do that. "We're going to expand in October," he said. "We're committed to that. It should have already been done by now, but we'll get it done by October." About 33,000 families are enrolled in the 11-year-old program. Doubts about VA's ability to expand it have surfaced in recent months amid other caregiver program turmoil. In 2021, in anticipation of the upcoming expansion, VA officials rewrote eligibility criteria and reviewed about 19,000 legacy participants to see if they still qualified for the benefit. Specific payout totals based on where veterans live, but

generally amount to about \$3,000 a month for the full level two stipend and \$1,800 for the partial level one stipend. In the spring, following months of outcry from advocates that too many families were being purged from the program, VA leaders suspended all program dismissals. Officials later acknowledged that under the new eligibility criteria as many as 90% of the legacy participants could have been stripped of caregiver benefits. Since then, McDonough has publicly vowed to rewrite the eligibility criteria to better reflect the needs of injured veterans and their families. However, no timetable has been set for when that work will be completed. "We still don't have those new criteria established, but the establishment of new criteria will not impact the launch of the expansion," he said. VA officials have said that once those criteria are developed, they will be applied to existing program participants to see if the program participants still qualify for stipends. However, all current participants are guaranteed to continue receiving benefits until April 2023, under past promises by leaders. Outside groups have complained that even after McDonough announced the pause in

program dismissals, local officials have continued to review families cases and warn that they could lose eligibility in the future, even though the new program criteria still have not been developed. Past analysis of the program have estimated that the upcoming expansion plans could nearly double participation in it. At the VA web site [https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support\\_benefits.asp](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support_benefits.asp) more information on the program is available.

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## Auxiliary News:

### Our meeting for Oct. 11th, 2022

Topics Discussed during our meeting:

- We still need volunteers to make desserts for our next dinner. January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Membership dues can now be paid for the 2022-2023 year. Dues are \$30.00.
  - o Pay online: [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org)
  - o Pay by phone: 317-569-4570
  - o Pay by mail: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 13, PO Box 5019, Valdosta, GA 31603
- November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day. The ladies will help serve the meals to veterans at the American Legion, we will meet at 9:30am. We still need volunteers.
- Christmas is right around the corner, we will need help in decorating the Post. We will meet at the Post at 10:30am on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will be fun!
- Christmas Party will be on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Time will be announced next month. Great time for fun, fellowship, and a delicious meal.
- We voted on purchasing 10 Wreaths Across America for \$150. These wreaths will be placed on grave markers in Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia on December 17<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit the website: <https://www.wcreathsacrossamerica.org/>
- January 10<sup>th</sup>, our board meeting at 5pm, dinner at 6pm, & Auxiliary meeting at 7pm.

If you need anything, my cell number is 229-560-8523 and my email is [221sandra.martin@gmail.com](mailto:221sandra.martin@gmail.com).

We would like to take this time and thank all members for your continued support. We cannot do anything without your support. If you would like to volunteer for anything please call me at 229-560-8523.

We know everyone cannot make the meetings. We still want you to feel like you are part of this amazing organization. If you have any suggestions or just want to let us know how you are doing, please email me and I will let everyone know at the next meeting.

Please keep in prayers:

- Penny Kent
- Diane Hughes
- Shelia and Steve Blanton
- Yvonne Youngblood

- Barbara Milhous
- Phyllis Judge: her son, Anthony Judge passed away this month
- Lenora and Don VanPelt
- Brenda Champagne

If you would like to be listed, please send me a text or email so that I may add your name/s to the prayer list.

Please join us for our next meeting on **January 10, 2023**. Our supper will be at 6 pm and the meeting at 7 pm. We look forward to fellowship! We have new members joining so let's make them feel welcomed.

Sandra,  
President, Aux. Unit 13

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### **From the Squadron 13 Adjutant:**

The Squadron is currently sitting 32 paid members out 50, just a reminder that 2022 membership is valid until 31 December, don't be a statistic, renew before it expires!

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### **From the Desk of Tim Oliver, Member-at-Large and Military Living Historian:**

During a recent trip north to attend a Georgia District Kiwanis training conference near Athens, I happened to stop right along the route to visit the state historic marker honoring Moina Michael, the "Poppy Lady", near Good Hope, Georgia.

For those unfamiliar with her story, Moina was a young volunteer in New York City in 1918 at the YMCA HQ training volunteers going to France to provide relief and comfort to our soldiers there. While in New York, Moina read a poem in the Ladies Home Journal penned in 1915 by Canadian Lt Col John McCrae entitled "We Shall Not Sleep". We know this poem today as "In Flanders Fields". Moina was so taken by the message in the poem about compassion and patriotism that she soon composed her own poem, "We Shall Keep The Faith". She was particularly inspired by the symbolism of the Poppy and began a campaign to make the Poppy the "national memorial symbol" for veterans of the Great War.

At the time of the first American Legion Convention in Paris in the spring of 1919, Moina returned to her previous employment at the University of Georgia to teach classes for disabled WW1 veterans. She wanted to help them and their dependents reintegrate into society. When the American Legion Department of Georgia held its first annual convention in Atlanta in August 1920, Moina wrote letters asking the GA Dept. to adopt the Poppy as the

official flower of remembrance. Liking the idea, the GA Dept. approved the resolution and brought a similar proposal to the September 1920 American Legion National Convention in Cleveland. The American Legion passed the resolution and the idea soon spread to France, England and its commonwealth countries. The Poppy thus became a fundraising symbol to help all war veterans and to help repair the destruction in France.

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## \*\*\*\*Post Christmas Party 10 December 2022

Please RSVP to the Post, 229 242-7616 nlt 1 December. Please leave name and number of guests attending on the message, we need an accurate headcount for the meal. Social will begin at 6pm and dinner around 7pm.

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