With all the media headlining their breaking news and front page stories on the CoronaVirus (COVID-19), this is a challenging time where no one is exempt or immune to the coronavirus. As Legionnaires, we are at a higher risk of contracting the virus based on mean age and other underlying health conditions. However, we are also continuing to Serve Veterans in the best (and safest) manner possible. The practice of social and physical distancing is a means to not only protect oneself, but also those around us. Georgia is fortunate to have you on its Team. The Department is so grateful and appreciative for all you do to take care of the Veterans in Georgia. Our Veterans deserve our help and assistance. No greater service can we render than to continue to serve those who have served. However, no one is asking you to be a hero. Do not put yourself (or your love ones) in harm’s way. We ask you to follow the guidelines from your local and state leaders, professional healthcare officers and chief law enforcement personnel. At present, Georgia is under a “shelter-in-place” (stay home) directive. This does not mean you are under house arrest. You may go outside your home, but you cannot violate the social distancing order. In fact, stepping outside for a breath of fresh air or to exercise or to decompress is a good health measure. To each of you, be safe, be vigilant, and be in prayer for one another. Buddy check a fellow Legionnaire. Make sure he or she has daily essentials such as food, medicine, toilet paper, sanitizer, etc. You are NOT alone. Believe also that… “This, too, shall pass”

For God & Country...

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What to Do About Coronavirus? There is no vaccine for coronavirus, but the National Institute of Health is working on one and hopes to begin testing in the weeks ahead. To help prevent a coronavirus infection, do the same things you do to avoid the common cold:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep your hands and fingers away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are infected.
  You treat a coronavirus infection the same way you treat a cold:
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids.
- Contact your health care provider to arrange for testing
- Follow health careologist guidance for over-the-counter medicine for a sore throat and fever. Do not give aspirin to children or teens younger than 19; use ibuprofen or acetaminophen instead.
Corona Virus has affected our Nation our families and loved one’s health is at risk. The CDC has classified it as pandemic. We need to stay strong, stand in agreement praying for our families, active military. First Responders, health care Nurses, Doctors, truck drivers and Leaders of the nation. We are more than conquerors in God who gives us strength. This too shall pass! We had to cancel our Spring conference due to the spreading of the Covid-19 virus, our main concern is the health and well-being of our members.

We had to cancel our Spring Conference, we had so much to share and celebrate our accomplishments in the ALA Department of Georgia. However, using safe practices, social distancing has kept many of us apart. Over the past few weeks, I have been on conference calls with our American Legion Department Headquarters and National Headquarters on how we are going to proceed with future meetings held at local post/units Girls State/Boys State, Nominations, Elections and future Convention.

We received an email from National to follow your govern documents, hold steadfast to the directions of your local officials, follow the rules of the government. Updates on the Covid-19 Coronavirus: www.CDC.gov/coronavirus

As we continue to watch the flow from the CDC, the President of the United States, and our ALA National organization, we went from social distancing ourselves from 250 in a crowd down to 10 in a crown. From the closing down malls and beaches, limiting how to attend a funeral service. Many indoors restaurants have closed, only drive through services. Grocery stores are limiting how much food we can purchase, offering services to Seniors in the A.M. selected stores and times may vary, and even how we attend our church services has moved to online and drive-in worshiping.

Many businesses have closed their doors, and this will cause loss of jobs for many. Our Auxiliary members have resources through Auxiliary Emergency Funds, if your membership is current and has been for over the past few years, info available at www.alaforyveterans.org The Auxiliary is here to support the American Legion, take care of yourselves and your families. Use this time to do a wellness check on your members Keep everyone in your prayers.

For God & Country

Valerie Brown-Debro
ALA Department of GA
President 2019-2020
From Cliff Hall, Detachment Commander

As we enter our second month of the Coronavirus dangers, I want to thank all members of the Detachment of Georgia for their efforts to maintain distancing and yet keep the business of the Family running smoothly. Please read and comply with all the information from the CDC and the Department. Please do not spread any information, no matter how good it sounds, without first sending it to the Department headquarters for verification. We have enough to deal with without adding to the confusion. Be patient and keep going as we are, we will get through this. God bless the staff and EMS workers and God Bless the USA

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From the Department Service Officer (Mark Demers)

Fellow Legionnaires:

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) progresses within the State of Georgia we must encourage fellow veterans and their families to heed the warnings of our leaders and medical professionals to protect ourselves and our loved ones from this dangerous virus. Please take social-distancing and virus precautionary measures seriously. Here is the latest information for each VA Medical Center Georgians use: Atlanta VA HCS latest information https://www.atlanta.va.gov/, they ask that you call first if you have flu like symptoms before coming to the hospital (404) 329-2222- CBOCs are only open to tele-health appointments only; Carl Vinson VAMC https://www.dublin.va.gov/, they ask that you call first if you have flu like symptoms before coming to the hospital 800-595-5229; Charlie Norwood VAMC https://www.augusta.va.gov/, North Florida/South Georgia VA HCS https://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/index.asp, they ask that you call first if you have flu like symptoms before coming to the hospital 877-741-3400; Central Alabama VA HCS https://www.centralalabama.va.gov/index.asp, they ask that you call first if you have flu like symptoms before coming to the hospital 866-601-1079 or 800-214-8387; Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center https://www.charleston.va.gov/, they ask that you call first if you have flu like symptoms before coming to the hospital 843-789-6400 or 1-888-878-6884. Veterans who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will have priority for testing. See CDC webpage for symptomology https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html. For more information regarding the VA’s response to the virus see https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/

On the VA Benefits side, the Atlanta VA Regional Office is currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 crisis https://www.benefits.va.gov/Atlanta/ with the majority of all VA personnel teleworking. All hearings (RVS, RDO and BVA) have been suspended until after May 1, 2020 (tentative). All hearings that were scheduled for the month of April will be rescheduled for a later date. The VA has discontinued the use of private Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) for compensation claims. They now encourage veterans to submit their private physicians records and they will scheduled an exam from a VA contract physician for which some may be conducted via tele C&P https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_disabilityexams.asp. The VBA provided training to contract vendors on which DBQs may be appropriately completed through a tele-C&P exam. These changes assist with enhancing the integrity of exam information received and expanding the capabilities for conducting remote exams better positioning VA to continue processing disability compensation claims throughout the COVID crisis. VA compensation/pension payments and VA claims and appeals processing will not be disrupted during the COVID-19 crisis.

For those veterans using the GI Bill, the Senate and House passed S.3503 and the bill is headed to the President to sign, which will give VA the authority to continue GI Bill payments uninterrupted in the event of national emergencies. The new law allows VA to pay education benefits regardless of the fact that your program has changed from resident training to online training. Also, you will continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments that you received for resident training until 12/21/20, or until the school resumes normal operations of resident training. We’re working to immediately implement the new changes. Please see the VA Facebook page for the announcement https://www.facebook.com/gibillEducation/posts/10156900604201615?tn=-R

Stay Safe!
From the Desk of the
Department Commander
Eddie Asberry

Thanks for ACTING LEGION! This has been a rough year, but we will prevail. The COVID-19 has changed our lifestyle and had a devastating effect on our Legion Family. As I write this article, am happy to report to my knowledge, that there has been NO member lost to this disease. Our lives have been dictated by this disease. As members of this Great Organization we must comply with all Federal, State and local guidance. Because we vial to “maintain law and order”,

All Post should be closed as directed by Federal suggested stay order, Georgia State shelter in place order and the local government orders. So, with this said, I ask, “Have we done everything possible to cut our obligations during this time of little or no revenue?”

a. Is the Water cut off to your building?
b. Are all electronics disconnected from the wall?
c. Has your Cable bill been cut off or reduced to basic?
d. How about trash collection, lawn maintenance?

These are just a few items came to mind. It is time to bunker down.

Congress has passed several laws and bills to combat COVID-19 and stimulate the economy. They will benefit you, check them out.

I must remind of about doing our job. “Taking care of our Veterans, the community and families” To make sure you are able to do this you must follow the directions of the CDC guidance, i.e. Wash your hands, social distances.

Buddy checks are so important, “don’t leave anyone behind!”

I know our country is the greatest country in the world and we have overcome many challenges, We will overcome CONVID-19!

May you and your family continue to have good health, prosperity and blessings.

For God and Country....

Eddie Asberry
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CANCEL 2020 National Commander's Visit to Georgia Apr 19 – Apr 22
CANCEL 2020 Commander Project-Fundraiser, Augusta GA Apr 25 – Apr 25
PENDING 2020 National Spring Conf Meetings, Indianapolis May 04 – May 07
TBD 2020 Department Convention, Duluth GA Jun 19 – Jun 21
TBD 2020 National Convention, Louisville, KY Aug 28 – Sep 03

Ensure Your Members' Renewals are Promptly Credited

Posts are reminded to send their renewals to the Department for immediate processing. Many Legionnaires are finding that they have paid their renewals to the Post; but the Post has not forwarded the renewal. Also, these same members are receiving renewal notices and reminders from the National HQs. If your post or district has not met the milestones of membership renewals, keep your head up and keep on plowing and growing your membership. Become creative in your efforts to get new members, to renew current members, and to reclaim former members of the American Legion family. RENEW your membership today by mail, by credit debit card, and electronically (through the Post Adjutant using Post-e-Processing).

Membership Renewal Rankings
as of the End of Month March 2020

District 3: 1st Place. Jake Christman 103.43%
District 5: 2nd Place. Walt Cusick . 91.21%
District 1: 3rd Place. Dennis Fitzgerald 89.33%
District 10: 4th Place. Bob Stites. 89.01%

The Department Staff is still available to serve all of Team Georgia

For God and Country...

ZESTE C. DEBRO
Department Adjutant