



Bryan Lankford
VFW Maryland State Commander

Comrades,

Folded Flags are for old warriors, not my friends or my friend's children! I grew up in a house where children's toys were war relics from years long gone by. World War I veterans who never spoke of the horrors of trench warfare, only to find pictures in a foot locker 90 years later. But Doughboy gasmasks, e-tools that dug trenches in Europe and a sword that served under President Lincoln were played with as children as children's toys. As soon as I was able, I joined the Marine Corps. Great Uncles who served in WWII, who I had rode to church with as a child, now saw a darkness in me after my first couple of deployments. They could speak to me after remaining silent for a generation and not sharing with their own children. Tears over no ammo, bone chilling cold, being told to fix bayonets, and landing on the beaches of Okinawa where the enemy was covered in another's blood hoping you would walk by only to shoot or stab you in the back. Imagine keeping that to yourself for a whole generation. Most WWI veterans did the same for a life time not sharing their stories. Now on to the next generation young

men sent away only to return home to unimaginable conditions and lack of respect from a nation. Which did not speak until now in their mid to late 70s. They speak of drinking water with dead bodies floating in the water and hiding under best friends' dead body just to live. Shell Shock, Combat fatigue, and PTSD it does not matter what fancy name they give it, it has always been here. Now on to me and my generation, most lived in denial for years a sign of weakness to not be ok. Three broken marriages the common factor was me. Finally, to seek help mainly because of the constant ring or whistle in my ears enough to cause constant

head aches and sleepless nights. Only to be diagnosed with PTSD, TBI, hearing aides at 32, knees, hands, and toes that no longer work properly, constant pain due to nerve damage just to name a few. War does not end with war as Combat veterans we must be here for each other and most are but 22 a day is unacceptable and must be zero. War truly only ends with death. We will carry what we carry until death. Signs are there however do we recognize them, not always. Those that knew you prior to your military service will see it immediately and recognize that you're not the same person they knew. The Darkness I spoke of, others will say demons, most including myself will turn to excessive use of alcohol at times. Some turn to the VA and end up addicted to opioids and pain killers. Only when their prescription ends to turn to illegal drugs. It is

The Maryland VFW Combat Veteran

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WEBSITE

www.vfwmd.org



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



Hello Comrades,

A note from the Dept of MD JR Vice. Welcome to 2023!! I hope you and your families are enjoying winter and staying safe and warm. My number is 240-321-4120 and my email addresses are bhensle@live.com and bobhensley1966@gmail.com. Please DO NOT use my old email bob.hensley@t-mobile as I am no longer affiliated with that address.

I would like to take a moment and commend Commander Lankford on the outstanding job he is doing. I hope I can be half the Commander he has shown to be. He leads and does not have an issue to follow as well. I think the New Quartermaster has done a very efficient job to date. Its not an easy position to hold but Ralph has taken the reigns and is whipping it in to shape. Membership is always a must and should take precedence over most other things.

Without the numbers needed to fight congress, there may be issues for the younger Veterans down the road. We need to put our heads together and come up with a way to attract younger Veterans from 1990 to date that will interest them into joining the finest organization out there for Veterans. If you have not done so and need assistance, please reach out to our new Service Officer Joseph Thornton Jr @ joseph.thornton@va.gov very responsive gentleman and very glad he is a part of our team.

I want to address what I have spoken about at the past few C of A meetings. Getting every VFW member to join the 1 Tribe Foundation. As I have stated this is the same team that started 22 ADAY. Just changed the name, they exist to combat suicide and support our nations bravest as we all should be doing!! We can never forget our brothers and sisters from any conflict, most importantly here at home. If you look deep enough, you will realize we are one tribe. Different backgrounds, skin tone, but we all did the same exact thing that intitled us to join a great organization as the VFW, to have one another's back until we no longer roam these lands. If you are struggling, please reach out to your brothers and sisters before its to late. We need to put a stop to the suicide rate on the home front. Not only veterans but our first responders as well.

If you have not already done so, please investigate the PACT ACT that was passed. I have a busy fall coming up with a lot of travel in

the plans. I ask all Post and Districts to dig deep and donate to Commander Lankford's special projects this year, and all other projects needing donations. I hope with the changes coming, it will be the best year and benefit our Dept as it should for now and going forward. Just a reminder again, if you have something and you would like me to attend just reach out and I will do the best I can to attend. Please NO short notice as it results in a no show because of the time it takes me to get to most Post from my HOR. Don't forget to take time for yourself to re-boot and get a fresh start periodically. I am always here for anyone that needs assistance. If you would like me to join a Post or District function please send me a request by text, email. Remember we are here to assist our brothers and sisters anyway we can.

Best regards,
Robert Hensley
Dept of MD JR Vice



Wayne LaFleur
President - Department Of Maryland

Dear Comrades, Sisters and Brothers,

Sisters and Brothers of the great Department of Maryland. I hope you have had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year's holiday. I had a very nice break from work and am now ready to tackle the New Year. If you have any feedback on how we are sending out the information or the type of information we are sending out, please let us know on how we can do a better job.

Please report on the hard work that each and every one of you are doing. My chairman are still reporting that they are not 100% reported in their programs. You are doing the work, all you need to do is fill out the reports and brag about your accomplishments. If you have any questions on what is reportable please feel free to reach out to the chairman. They will be more than happy to guide you.

To my District Presidents, you are all doing great work in keeping your auxiliaries active. Keep up the great work District Presidents. I am relying on you to

be my eyes and ears around the department. Keep in mind I cannot address an issue that I am unaware of. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any other department officer if you need anything.

I would like to give a big shout out to VFW and Auxiliary 5118. The warm welcome and great hospitality you provide for our department winter convention was outstanding. Speaking of outstanding you cook is a gift to the kitchen. I have had a few meals there and everyone has been excellent. Debbie and Betty Ann did a phenomenal job with planning and holding the Christmas convention. I am sure you have already relayed how pleased everyone was to your committee.

I would like to give a big thank you to all the auxiliaries that are working with their post in supporting the Scholarship program. By this I am talking about the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy. As of the writing of this piece I am still awaiting to hear who the winners are for the Department. Jan 29th we will hold the Department Patriotic Pen and Voice of Democracy awards ceremony at the State headquarters.

We still have two more scholarship programs to get ready for. Let us focus on the 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest (YACPAC). More information can be found in the Scholarship Chair's promotions. The State Commander and My joint project is raising funds for the scholarship programs. The money raised from this will allow the winners to get more money at state level. This is for all four of our programs Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy, YACPAC 2D and 3D. Please send any donations to our Department Treasurer, Jackie Kimball, and earmark it for State Joint Project.

Our Membership Chair has recently reached out to the VFW to have them identify and sign up new members. In the Post that I am a member of we greet anyone entering our post. If we don't

self-destructive behavior either way you look at it. The demons are real some remain quiet while others laugh and have a good time, others appear to be fine and always happy. Some have wives who wake us up to tell us you are counting in your sleep again, or disappear into the garage to drink a few beers and listen to music in hopes that our ears will stop ringing and maybe an old combat buddy will call and gets it. I took off the uniform in 2003 but the brotherhood comradeship is still here. Sometimes we miss the signs, sometimes we give the wrong answers with here is a beer let's talk. We as combat veterans always need to be available. Problems are problems if you let them be. Be the solution! Death is final there is no fixing anything. You are here because the society we live in needs the Veteran more than ever. The past is the past tomorrow is a blessing put not promised, you are needed more than ever and can make a difference. Sometimes we treat those closest to us the worst. Our immediate family is our closest and best support system, just as our Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen were while on active duty. We sometimes hold those closest to us to a higher standard and demand excellence, but forgive a stranger and accept mediocrity. We know the meaning of sacrifice, family, and those that did not make it back alive. The ones we owe to live out life, just as surrender was never an option suicide is never an option. I have stood at the grave side of too many individuals that made it home only to give up, enough is enough we must be better at what we do, answer the phone return calls, and truly check in on one another. Folded Flags are for old warriors, not our friends or our friends' children.

National Inspection of the Department went well. Our Adjutant and Quartermaster are doing an outstanding job. Congratulations on a job well done. Also, our new Department Service Officer is doing great things, if you have not filed a claim with the VA yet please reach out to him. Joseph Thornton JR. 410-230-4480 or joseph.thornton@va.gov If you see any of these gentlemen be sure to thank them.

Lastly, as Commander I must address that as a Department, we must look unified on the National or Eastern Conference Level. Two individuals from one state should never run for the same office other than at the state level. Individual ego or pride must be put aside for what is best for the Department. This is leadership 101 if we play stupid games, we win stupid prizes. Just because you try to be the loudest in the room or repeat something over and over does not make it true. When electing or nominating an officer do your research find out who they are and what they have done. Most of us stand on the shoulders of giants and have no problem giving them credit!

Comrades we are looking forward to a successful Awards Ceremony at Department HQ January 29 Legislative Conference in DC March, followed by the Commanders and Presidents Testimonial March 11 in Delmar.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to veterans and their families.

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recognize them we strike up a conversation with them and at some point ask if they are a member and try to recruit them if they aren't. I have started the process of signing up many Post members in my time there, the same is true for Post members signing up Auxiliary members at our post. As the State Commander and I have said all along we are one team. We are very close to our goal of 105%. I am sure we can do it. If all Auxiliaries were to make at least 100% that would have the department at almost 102%. I know you will get more information from Debbie Sturgis.

I know this is repetitive, however the message is very important. We need to all remember why we joined the Auxiliary in the first place. I know for me, it was to serve the veterans. I am pretty sure that is true with most of you. For me, this is never about personal recognition; I am focused on how we can best serve those that need us. Please keep that in the back of your mind when you are having a tough time seeing eye to eye with each other. We all should have that in common. With that commonality, we should be able to build very strong and enduring bonds with members from the both the VFW and the Auxiliary.

You can always go to the Department website to get the latest information, Department directory, program report forms, calendar of events to list a few of the resources. Our Department Secretary, Libby Dalla Tezza, does a phenomenal job at updating the website. Please go to <https://vfwauxmd.org/> and do some looking around. There is a lot of great information that I find every time I go on that site.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you that continue to volunteer in the hospitals and the community. It really warms my heart when I talk to you and find out some of the great things that you do day after day. This is why we, the Department of Maryland, will always be the "Beast from the East".

Wayne LaFleur

Department President 2022-2023

Department of Maryland VFW Auxiliary

"Let the Good Times Roll With the Veterans"



SOMEONE NEEDS BLOOD EVERY FEW SECONDS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND MORE THAN 4.5 MILLION AMERICANS WOULD DIE EVERY YEAR WITHOUT LIFE-SAVING BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS. WON'T YOU CONSIDER CONTACTING YOUR LOCAL BLOOD BANK AND MAKE A LIFESAVING DONATION.

Comrades,

Hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday. The New Year is already here. Everyone is doing well on the dashboard. Reports are coming in on time. All our programs are finishing up. Our last hurdle is membership, so keep recruiting and reporting. Stay safe over the holidays and see you at the next meeting.

Thomas C. Williams, Adjutant
Department of Maryland



SURGEON'S CORNER

Comrades,

Hope everyone is doing well over the winter. With COVID and Flu and RSV still infecting people we need to be careful when getting together with family and friends. Make sure all your vaccinations are up to date, don't go out if you're feeling sick, and wash your hands often. Winter brings shortages of blood and each post should have a blood drive. The Red Cross does all the work and all you have to do is provide the space. Stay well. See you soon.

Thomas C. Williams, Surgeon
Department of Maryland

SCAM BLANK IMAGE PHISHING SCAMS

Most email providers have security filters that check emails for malicious links or attachments. You may feel like you can rely on these filters and, as a result, trust that emails sent to your inbox are safe. Unfortunately, cybercriminals can take advantage of this trust by using blank image phishing to bypass security filters.

The scam starts with a fake email that appears to be from DocuSign. The email asks you to review and sign a document as soon as possible and contains an HTML attachment. Instead of an important document, the attachment is a blank SVG with malicious code. Because this code is hidden inside the attachment, the email can bypass security filters. If you download the attachment, the code will redirect you to a malicious website that will prompt you to enter sensitive information. If you enter this information, cybercriminals can use it for their own purposes.

Follow the tips below to stay safe from similar scams:

- Always think before you download an attachment. This type of cyberattack is designed to trick you into downloading attachments impulsively.
- Never click a link or download an attachment in an email that you aren't expecting. While this attack targets DocuSign users, this scam could be used with any organization that manages electronic agreements.

Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) on your accounts when it is available. MFA adds an extra layer of security and lowers the chance of cybercriminals logging in to your account.

Stop, Look, and Think. Don't be fooled.

WORD SEARCH

STREAMING

Every word listed is contained within the group of letters. Words can be found in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. They may read either forward or backward.

AMAZON PRIME

EPISODES

NETFLIX

SERIES

APPLE MUSIC

FEES

ORIGINAL

SLINGTV

BINGE WATCH

HOUSE OF CARDS

PANDORA

SMART TV

COMEDY

HULU

PODCAST

SPECIAL

CONSOLE

INTERNET

PREMIUM

SPODIFY

CORD CUTTER

LISTEN

RELEASE

STREAMING

DOWNLOAD

MEDIA

RENEWED

SUBSCRIPTION

DRAMA

MUSIC

SEASON

VIDEO

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| F | F | B | L | D | O | W | N | L | O | A | D | I | P | O | K | L | Q | R |
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| E | M | Z | A | B | G | O | M | O | S | O | R | V | I | W | Z | Z | C | D |
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| Q | T | O | T | U | G | X | N | I | L | E | C | I | O | O | J | A | D | E |
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| M | U | R | C | A | T | E | M | T | E | R | D | A | A | A | W | I | J | S |
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| D | M | U | I | M | E | R | P | H | S | E | P | A | D | L | V | U | S | P |
| I | P | O | D | C | A | S | T | K | L | S | S | L | A | E | G | T | L | E |
| A | R | T | Z | G | B | U | F | G | N | I | M | A | E | R | T | S | H | U |

Slips & Falls



During the winter season, weather changes can cause slips and falls. Around the state we are beginning to experience more rain and snow changes, so be aware of your surroundings when you are walking:

- ♦ Curbs can become slippery in the rain, so be sure of your footing before stepping up onto or down from a curb.
- ♦ As leaves begin to fall and accumulate, they can be slippery (particularly when they are wet), so avoid large accumulations of leaves when walking.
- ♦ Choose appropriate footwear when it is raining or snowing. Smooth soles and high heels are not conducive when walking in a slippery environment; choose a flat shoe with rubber-type soles with grips for better footing.
- ♦ When you enter a building , wipe your feet well to get the excess water and snow off of your shoes. Excess water on shoes will cause slips and falls on tile floors.

WORD SEARCH

STREAMING (ANSWERS)

