Legionnaires make masks for veterans during pandemic

By Josh Marshall

American Legion Department of Indiana 9th District Commander Jerry Melton and his wife Mary Lou are sewing masks, lots of masks, to help veterans in nursing homes.

The idea to make masks and donate them came to mind when they realized they had contacts within the nursing homes. The Melton’s through years of volunteering have made suits and prom dresses, and he’s always helped the guys sew on their patches on their vests. …It’s not hard to make these masks at all, it’s basic cutting, stitching, stitching. The only thing that’s complicated is getting the pleats in the masks after they’re done, and we’re well received. They appreciate you giving out to shut-ins and that has been appreciated,” a statement from Commandery National Commander James Koutz says “It’s something we needed to do with everything going on today. We at the American Legion don’t want to see anyone get sick, so it’s best that we canceled the department convention until this all blows over.”

Mary Lou estimates that they’ve donated half of the five-hundred masks so far. Holding back tears, Mary Lou explains it’s important to them “Because my husband is a veteran and these guys deserve it. And most of them are our age or in the general vicinity, and I learned to sew when my husband was a kid, and I learned to sew when I was a kid and I loved to make suits and prom dresses, and he’s always helped the guys sew on their patches on their vests. …It’s not hard to make these masks at all, it’s basic cutting, stitching, stitching. The only thing that’s complicated is getting the pleats in the masks after they’re done, and we’re making a difference.”

The Melton’s are assisted by their daughter who’s a Auxiliary member, and their granddaughter who’s a junior member. Mary Lou said the advice she would give others is to “Hang on, we’ll make it through this. We are a family. …Jerry’s been doing buddy checks and reaching out to shut-ins and that has been well received. They appreciate you giving them a call and checking on them. We’ve had positive responses from the buddy checks. Everyone needs to be their brothers neighbor and family and look out for each other. I hope we can save one person.” Tearing up again, she adds “What could be greater than helping to save somebody’s life.”
Greetings to all of our fellow Hoosier Legionnaires and American Legion Family.

This certainly wasn’t the way we expected to end our membership year. It was challenging and hard work to put together a schedule of events, something we had never been able to meet with everyone this spring but complete ungraded and uncoronavirus free things left in limbo. It’s been a year of looking back, knowing when we could continue with what we started. We know very well that this year has only started to come back. In the spring of 2021, it is time to focus on what we lost during the 2020 membership year. We can all agree that we have had a very challenging year filled with significant events that have changed our lives and the way we do things. We will be starting soon on the renovation of the Audio-Video equipment. We have collected all 11 Districts, and everyone has been so helpful. We just had our Christmas bingo at the Indiana Veterans Home and had a full house, and all the players were glad to see us again. We have a new schedule of events and will be starting soon on our Department Grand Scholarship. We have collected about $24,000 to date. We have moved forward with our plans to continue to grow and provide more benefits to our members and the programs we conduct. It really is an investment in our communities and the future of our country. We need to make for 2021. already made and the new ones that have reached 100% of their goal, we will receive official notice from the IRS to continue to serve American. You may not think about it, but thankfully we were all able to continue to serve the American Legion Family. We have confirmed that we will be the close of books date for the year, has received more than 95% of our members with official notice by this virus, but we are still going strong. We must continue to serve American and the programs we conduct. It really is an investment in our communities and the future of our country. 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It has been an interesting year to say the least. The last few months or so, the Coronavirus has shifted our meetings, commerce, and processes and has impacted our daily lives. It has been a challenging year for everyone and we, as a membership, have had to adapt and become more flexible in our thinking. But, we have also seen the need to remain connected and support each other during these trying times.

Our membership has continued to increase this year with our Regional Directors focusing on our local posts and reaching out to new prospects. Our membership growth has been significant and we continue to grow through the hard work of our volunteer leaders and members.

We have been “Limbo” for a long time. While I am not making a joke in this context, we have been waiting uncertain decisions by our government authorities who are acting on our behalf from advice from the best medical authorities. Our period of waiting has been an experience of being in the limbo of not knowing what to expect.

What we are going through and the processing is one of the biggest paradigm shifts of our lifetime. Each generation has these, and we must realize that new norms of lifestyle will result. COVID-19 will affect us in many ways as we traverse a future that is greatly altered from our past. Perhaps even in greater ways than AIDS, 9/11 and others that came to mind.

I like a snippet from SNL where Cecily Strong portraying Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, “We’re not out of the woods, we live in Michigan.” Anyone who has driven around our beautiful state understands this pun. The fact is that life is always changing and sometimes new norms of lifestyle are different. Anyone who studies history discovers key events that cause paradigm shifts in various cultures and countries.

Most of us have a comfort zone gained by choice, voluntary or unconscious. Or like the commercials recently that talk about becoming our parents. In our youth we strove to change those things of our parents we did not like, only to find when we raise our children, we sound just like them. As we age, we seem to move into their role of ever increasing speeds.

Change by choice is also possible. Think of all your friends on Facebook. How many of them have suddenly lost so much weight? We’ve never seen pictures of, “Hey, I found 260 pounds”! Change is possible. It is painful. One slogan of the Marathon of the Mind campaign is: “Pain is leaving the body.” To get to where we need to be, we must endure the pain of change. The upside is that the results are often very beneficial.

The uncertainty of change often causes fear. Fear can be disappointing and debilitating. It can lead to paralysis and robustness. It is comforting to know that there is a place of safety where we can go and rest. Some place where we can go to access and adjust. As of this moment, we’re in this together, and it’s meant to be that way. Everyone is uncertain and does not bring us the security we need. I find it comforting to turn to sacred scripture. One verse that comes to mind is, “I, the Lord do not change.”

In 2020, being confined to our house and family doesn’t have to mean being isolated. Take advantage of technology to keep in touch and find out if there is anything you can do to help. Don’t let social distancing prevent us from staying together.

We can see on our Facebook and Twitter and in our phone and want to have a hand in fighting this. The American Legion offers a web page hosting service that allows Posts to have a Legion page, as well as, pages for the Auxiliary, Sons and Daughters, to open their pages to Posts who, in turn, can open their page to their Auxiliary, Sons and Daughters like it.

This allows you to get web traffic through the National website and an easy and affordable way to bring a web page to your membership and family. You can talk about us becoming our organization’s story—our program into our local posts.

Trover, District Commanders will travel to the Indiana Vet home orders means using technology to keep in touch and find out if there is anything you can do to help. Don’t let social distancing prevent us from staying together. You can see on your Facebook and Twitter and in your phone and want to have a hand in fighting this. The American Legion offers a web page hosting service that allows Posts to have a Legion page, as well as, pages for the Auxiliary, Sons and Daughters, to open their pages to Posts who, in turn, can open their page to their Auxiliary, Sons and Daughters like it.

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Thank you for being a member of The American Legion Department of Indiana and being a volunteer in our organization. The American Legion is a service that allows Posts to conduct buddy checks. This can open their page to their Auxiliary, Sons and Daughters like it.

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Department Veterans Service Office reorganizes for improved service

By Josh Marshall

On the day I reached out to Mr. Garrett in late May, he had just come inside after working in his yard and was cleaning up before heading back out. From the sound of his hurried voice, I could tell he is a busy man. And I imagined that the home John “Jack” Garrett lives in is tidy and well maintained. I asked if he is a good time for him to be interviewed. “Well, you have me on now, it’s as good a time as any,” he says.

Mr. Garrett lives on Syl- van Lake in Rome City, Indiana, and is a Paid-Up-For-Life member of Post 381, also in Rome City. He served in the Navy as a Shipfitter 1st Class, he returned to the honor guard firing squad at his post. “We’re a very active Legion as for military funerals. We go. We have two funerals last year and a funeral, and then a funeral Wednesday coming up. Last year we had 57 funerals, and I think he made all of them." 

At one hundred years old, my uncle Mr. Garrett says “I only have over half of one ear, slow down how fast you speak” he warned me during our call, but he is sharp as a tack. “I don’t feel one hundred years old. I feel a little bit of work, I get exhausted quick. Other than that I think I’m in per- fect health.” Mr. Garrett still drives, but has considered not renewing his insurance when it’s up, and selling his car. But that’s for a worry of another day. From our short interview, I can tell he lives in the moment. Mr. Garrett is not one to dwell on the past or worry about the future. The task at hand is his only focus.

From our interview on the light cruis- er USS Saint Louis on Dec. 7, 1941, in Pearl Harbor in Hoosier Legionnaire Letters National Vietnam Veterans Day Vietnam Veterans Month 29th of each year is a designat- ed National Vietnam Veterans Day. Many Vietnam Veterans Day ceremonies were one of the first public displays of respect for those who fought the war amidst public pressure, the US military did not lose a battle of any consequence and the US military was not de- feated in Vietnam; the United States was not defeated in the communist domino theory in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and even South Vietnam and Thai- land as the Vietnamese ousted the soviets in 1966 because of the US commitment in Viet- nam. A National Vietnam Veter- ans Day is not implying that Vietnam Veterans are any bet- ter than others who have served and sacrificed for their country, they are just that they are as just as honorable and as other vet- erans while performing their service during very turbulent times. Thank you, Vietnam veterans and their families!

Before the Governor’s CO- VID-19 Stay-at-Home order, the Department Veterans Service Office reopens – hope- fully for the long-term. The office will reorganize for improved veterans’ services. We will move the individual caseload model with service officers specializing in their designated areas. In addition to improving review of VA deci- sions and providing a higher quality of appeals assistance, veterans will enjoy better con- tinuity of service by speaking with a single officer or service- office director, whenever there is a need. We will no longer be required to call on a certain day or time. Our ad- ministrative staff will place all phone calls on the office direc- tor’s return call list which will re- turn calls in the order of receipt. If we except for County Veterans Service Officers who will al- ways have priority in returned calls. Veterans are therefore encouraged to contact their lo- cals for questions. Approximately 152,000 Americans fled to Canada to avoid the draft; more than 1,800,000 Americans served in Vietnam while performing their service during very turbulent times. Thank you, Vietnam veterans and their families!

will forever not will (but have for- given), is when a manufactur- ing company personnel man- ager stated “we won’t hold that against you” when I mentioned my Vietnam service while ap- plying for a job. Hard times and adverse cir- cumstances often strengthen us. I am not a trimmer and I hesitate in quoting the Bible in a fear that I will get it wrong, but Romans 8:28 notes that all things work together for good for those who love God. Viet- nam veterans must therefore love God; they have worked tirelessly over the years to make sure returning veterans never endure what Vietnam veterans experienced after serving their country. Vietnam veterans accomplished most of this success by joining and participating in an organization that’s “For God and Country” – The American Legion. Re- turning veterans are now right- fully honored and provided the help they deserve. We most all know that over 50,000 United States service persons were killed while serv- ing in Vietnam. Here, however, are some interesting but not as well known statistics about Viet- nam veterans and the War. The United States was involved in the war for more than 19 years. In 1964, approximately 1,000 soldiers burned their draft cards in protest of the war. Approximately 125,000 American fled to Canada to avoid the draft; most about one half of them returned after am- nesty was granted; Millions of gallons of toxic herbicides, as Agent Orange, were used in Vietnam. In June 1969 US troops in Vietnam peaked at 533,000. In May 1969, 242 US troops were killed in a single week; The last US ground troops left Vietnam in August 1972; North Vietnam released nearly 6,000 Prison- ers of War in March 1973; The Vietnam War official ended for the US on March 29, 1973; At the war’s end ap-proximately 3,000,000 Americans had served in Vietnam with over 300,000 wounded, 58,000 dead, and more than 1,800 missing in Action; in Vietnam 1973, fighting renewed for North and South Vietnam, but the United States Congress prohibited any further US com- bat role: The South Vietnam Capitol, Saigon, was overrun in 1975, and the war officially ended for the United States on April 30, 1975. On July, 2, 1976, North and South Viet- nam reunited as a communist country. In 2019 it was esti- mated that only 774,000 United States veterans who served in Vietnam were then alive – fewerv today. The average lifespan of a Vietnam veteran is only 66 years; Although the United States had withdrawn from the war amid public pressure, the US military did not lose a battle of any consequence and the US military was not de- feated in Vietnam; the United States was not defeated in the communist domino theory in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and even South Vietnam and Thai- land as the Vietnamese ousted the soviets in 1966 because of the US commitment in Viet- nam. Vietnamese Veterans Day. Many Vietnam Veterans Day ceremonies were one of the first public displays of respect for those who fought the war amidst public pressure, the US military did not lose a battle of any consequence and the US military was not de- feated in Vietnam; the United States was not defeated in the communist domino theory in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and even South Vietnam and Thai- land as the Vietnamese ousted the soviets in 1966 because of the US commitment in Viet- nam. Vietnam Veterans Day is not implying that Vietnam Veterans are any bet- ter than others who have served and sacrificed for their country, they are just that they are as just as honorable and as other vet- erans while performing their service during very turbulent times. Thank you, Vietnam veterans and their families!

Once the Governor’s CO- VID-19 Stay-at-Home order, the Department Veterans Service Office reopens – hope- fully for the long-term. The office will reorganize for improved veterans’ services. We will move the individual caseload model with service officers specializing in their designated areas. In addition to improving review of VA deci- sions and providing a higher quality of appeals assistance, Vietnam veterans will enjoy better con- tinuity of service by speaking with a single officer or service- office director, whenever there is a need. We will no longer be required to call on a certain day or time. Our ad- ministrative staff will place all phone calls on the office direc- tor’s return call list which will re- turn calls in the order of receipt. If we except for County Veterans Service Officers who will al- ways have priority in returned calls. Veterans are therefore encouraged to contact their lo- cals for questions. Approximately 152,000 Americans fled to Canada to avoid the draft; more than 1,800,000 Americans served in Vietnam while performing their service during very turbulent times. Thank you, Vietnam veterans and their families!

For improved service

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Leader John Doxat

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For improved service

For improved service
Greetings from the 3rd District.

My how time flies, it just seems like yesterday that I was up on the stage getting my Commander's pin from Wayne Zeman, and now six months have passed by. Many of our members are having banquets, bands, and a lot of interment ceremonies. If you want to see what is happening in the 3rd District, be sure to visit our Facebook page, “The 3rd District – To Honor and Remember.”

Greetings from the 3rd District Commanders. We still have a few more meetings before the end of the year, and a lot of members have either moved, died, or are no longer able to attend. It has been a fun year, and we will be moving on to an even better one next year. We will be moving on to a better year next year. If you want to know more about us, feel free to visit our Facebook page.

From the District Commanders

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Greetings from the "Flying H" at 6th District Commanders.

We have all recently had stressful times with the current situation of the global pandemic, and we have lost many family members and friends in the community.

We would like to take this time to say a special thank you to all of you! All of our efforts will be recognized by them all. We will be there for our Post members.

We have many things to be thankful for. Please continue to support us in our efforts.

First of all, I'd like to congratulate all the posts in our 6th District. Our efforts paid off in helping to create a better world to live in.

Secondly, I want to express our gratitude to the 10th District for their services.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation for all of our officers and members.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.
The Commission met on January 11, 2020. Chairperson Ron Byrley opened the meeting and the following reports were given by respective committee chairman.

ROLL CALL
The executive committee meeting was opened by Chairperson Ron Byrley at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were accepted. The following areas were discussed:

1. Prospects for new teams.
2. Team insurance available January 15, 2020 on website.
3. Printing patch on uniforms.
4. Acceptance for Rockford, IL to host boys final last fall.
5. Indiana was looking near Ohio to recruit players from Ohio and release players to Ohio in July.

Chairperson
The meeting was opened by Chairperson Richard Brown at 10:30 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were read and accepted. Old business included the following:

1. 95% Streamers developed for graduating cadets – cost $10 per cadet.
2. Applications are to take cost ($500 each) for veterans to help offset cost.
3. Cadet of the year Application distributed to Districts. Efforts to give awards for graduating veterans.
4. New discussions developed for graduating veterans.
5. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson Roger Gillig at 1:00 p.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee highlighted changes in specific representatives.
6. The committee distributed the required meeting reports from the respective chairman.
7. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson Rex Ikemire at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The following items were discussed in the report:
8. There were no motions or additional resolutions accepted.
9. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson William Roper Jr. at 11:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee highlighted changes in specific representatives.
10. There was one other area of discussion:
   a. Pay-Everything
   b. Pay what you Can
   c. Family Pays

There were no resolutions or additional resolutions accepted for funding. Meeting adjourned.

Checks sent out:
2. Accepted state bid for $4,000 into $4,000
3. 3 Teams need to submit leadership application.
4. Need nominations for respective committee chairperson.
6. Meetings adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

JR. ROTC
Meeting was opened by Chairperson William Roper Jr. at 11:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee highlighted changes in specific representatives.

1. There were three candidates for the Squared Knot Award.
3. There were no resolutions or additional resolutions for funding for Boys State Enrollment.

National Security/Foreign Affairs
Meeting was open by Chairperson Ron Byrley at 1:20 p.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee outlined several ideas to take care of veterans and their families.

2. Accepted state bid for $4,000 into $4,000
3. 3 Teams need to submit leadership application.
4. Need nominations for respective committee chairperson.
6. Meetings adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

General Hospital
Meeting was opened by Chairperson Richard Brown at 10:30 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee included:
1. 95% Streamers developed for graduating cadets – cost $10 per cadet.
2. Applications are to take cost ($500 each) for veterans to help offset cost.
3. Cadet of the year Application distributed to Districts. Efforts to give awards for graduating veterans.
4. New discussions developed for graduating veterans.
5. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson Roger Gillig at 1:00 p.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee highlighted changes in specific representatives.
6. The committee distributed the required meeting reports from the respective chairman.
7. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson Rex Ikemire at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The following items were discussed in the report:
8. There were no motions or additional resolutions accepted.
9. The meeting was conducted by Chairperson William Roper Jr. at 11:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The committee highlighted changes in specific representatives.
10. There was one other area of discussion:
   a. Pay-Everything
   b. Pay what you Can
   c. Family Pays

There were no resolutions or additional resolutions accepted for funding. Meeting adjourned.

Byrley
The meeting was opened by Chairperson Richard Brown at 10:30 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were accepted. Old business included the following:

1. 95% Streamers distributed to Districts
2. Districts membership reports
3. 3 Announced March Operation Fall Courts (March 2020) would be a one-day event – material will be shipped March 10th to Districts.
4. DEPARTMENT Commission Reports
5. Membership trophgy presented to 11th District

There were no resolutions or additional resolutions accepted for funding. Meeting adjourned.

Nursing Home
Meeting opened temporary Galit Gail (Temporary replacement for James Graovac) at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. Several business items were brought up and are as follows:

1. Several orders were made for Mattresses – Soldier Angel.
2. 3 Types of Nursing Home
   a. Family Pays
   b. Pay what you Can
   c. Family Pays

New business included reports from Districts for next year.

Homeless Veteran
Meeting was opened by Chairperson Ann Aacdok at 12:00 noon on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The following items were discussed in the report:
2. Accepted state bid for $4,000 into $4,000
3. 3 Teams need to submit leadership application.
4. Need nominations for respective committee chairperson.
6. Meetings adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES
The Commission met on January 11, 2020. Chairperson James Judkins opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes accepted. The following areas were discussed:

1. How Scholarship funds are to be distributed to Districts. Efforts to give awards for graduating veterans.
2. Boys State Enrollment
   a. Cadet of the year Application distributed to Districts. Efforts to give awards for graduating veterans.

DEPARTMENT COMMISSION REPORTS
7
There were no resolutions or additional funding considered. Meeting adjourned.

CHILDREN & YOUTH from page 7

Meeting was opened by Chairperson Dave Sharber at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were approved. There was no old business discussed.

New business included: 3. Educator of the Year.

There were no resolutions or additional funding considered. Meeting adjourned.

Housekeeping

American Legion District 2

Meeting was opened by Chairperson Lauren Bowman at 10:00 o'clock on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, previous minutes were read and accepted.

There were no resolutions or additional requests for funding considered. Meeting adjourned.

Disbursements

To all my Legion Family for allowing me to serve this post, Monclova Post #103, and your 7th Dist Commander for the last 2 years. I have learned a lot and made many new friends through this service. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time and will not be able to devote the same time to serve as I have in the past forty years, have chosen not to be a part of the veterans who over the past forty years, have helped me to do something, I will not be able to devote the full extent this position requires. So thank you all! I would like to introduce your District 7 Commander Lonnie Sharber who has currently serving as the post commander for Raise your flag and not continue for a 3rd term as we have plans to do some traveling and I will not be able to devote me to the full extent this position requires. So thank you all! I would like to introduce our district representatives. Those reports included.

Your committee was to investigate an on-site CMP Level 1 coach certification course. There were no resolutions considered. Meeting adjourned.

Meeting was opened by Chairperson Jules Trahan at 11:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were approved. There was no old business discussed.

The following new business was considered and discussed by the Committee:

1. Plans for a coaching class
2. Open CMP course
3. CMP Level 1 coach certification course.

The current tournament date is March 14-2020 - snow date would be March 21, 2020. Two location were discussed to for the competition was Warren Normal Post of Northern tournament location - still need confirmed. Still looking into Concord High and Ruse Post.

There was one discussion that would re-occur. The meeting was last year had been delayed due to deluding ourselves that the veterans who over the past forty years, have helped me to do something, I will not be able to devote me to the full extent this position requires. So thank you all! I would like to introduce your District 7 Commander Lonnie Sharber who has currently serving as the post commander for Raise your flag and not continue for a 3rd term as we have plans to do some traveling and I will not be able to devote the full extent this position requires. So thank you all! I would like to introduce our district representatives. Those reports included.

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Meeting was opened by Chairperson Ida Mac with a roll call at 11:00 a.m. on January 11, 2020. Roll call was conducted, and previous minutes were approved. There was no old business discussed.

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INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) — Leading state lawmakers reached an agreement Wednesday, the American Legion’s State Commander Allen Connelly, said Indiana’s State Command post No. 31, chartered in 1919 by 40 World War I veterans, is now officially known as the Billy Crouse American Legion. Crouse was in his first six months living on the streets three years ago. Johnson said he spent six months there. A veteran Jeffery Alan Crouse, 22, and H. Crouse IV, 22, and Crouse American Legion. I veterans, is now official- ly known as the Billy Crouse American Legion. His mother, Nancy Siders of Fort Wayne, has two other sons, one who served in the U.S. Navy, a daughter and five grandchildren.

"I want you to know how much the veterans mean to me," Siders said Wednesday evening during the Legion event. "You guys are the friends of society." In naming the post after Crouse, said Indiana Legion’s State Commander Allen Connelly, LaGrange, the Angola Legion post continues to look to the future. "It’s a new century and these are the people that we have to attract," Connelly said. In its 100 years, Post No. 31 has marked times of youth and vibrancy, notably, said Connelly, when Charlie Green, a 1919 graduate who is now 108, was a member. "You are the friend of society." In naming the post after Crouse, said Indiana Americanism and children and youth.

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At a time when many Americans are suffering financially due to the coronavirus pandemic, relatively few military families have been helped through the various military relief societies. And the relief societies that serve the sea- service branches do have one steady paycheck still coming in — from the two incomes. An unknown number of families lost one income by the stop movement order and have seen a prominent change of station move.

It’s difficult to quantify the needs of military families during this unique, long-standing period, but some other nonprofits, such as the American Legion, Fraternal Order of Police and Penaful Foundation, have seen an upswing in the financial needs.

According to the week-end May 8 report being administered by the COVID-19 Military Support Initiative, about 1,234 $ service branch families were supported from the week ending March 31, 57 percent of the 1,234 military spouses who responded had lost the job or were unable to work due to the COVID-19 crisis, had to re- duc e their hours or were unable to work at all.

The relief societies are responding to COVID-related requests for assistance. AER, CGMA and NMCRS have all expanded their efforts to assist families. They have been able to partner with other organizations and service branches and are reaching out to more families.

All have long had procedures in place for service members to apply for assistance if they are facing financial difficulties coming in, many rely on two incomes. An un- known number of families lost one income by the stop movement order and have seen a prominent change of station move.

Many other nonprofits, including some of the coronavirus-related relief societies, have seen an upswing in the financial needs.

About 90 percent of those are active duty fami- lies, with over half being junior enlisted, said Alena Howard, chief of communications. About 10 percent are families who are waiting for an increase in pay for those who had secured an increase in pay due to their duty station before being ordered to stay in place at their current duty station. In many cases where families have had a decrease in pay due to changes in the duty station, the society has had to temporarily support families in need who don’t qualify under the stop movement order as per government relations director department for the National Military Family Associations. The COVID-related requests for assistance include housing, food, child care and education programs, and have been pushed out to more families.

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Patriotism, behind bars: Inmates make up Miami County’s last American Legion post

BUNKER HILL — American Legion Post 555 is located in a certain section of a county jail, with a bar on the front and a door on the side.

The inmate members of the American Legion Post 555 wear their Legion hats and, on special occasions, are allowed to change out of their uniforms to wear polo shirts, jeans and caps.

“Miami County is kind of a small, old-fashioned community. We’re not sure if there are any posts there outside the prison,” said the post commander, Ed Trice.

“Today, there are posts in up to 15 correctional facilities across the state, including an all-women’s prison in Madison. But Post 555 at Miami Correctional is still one of a kind,” Trice said.

“Miami County is kind of an old-fashioned community. We’re not sure if there are any posts there outside the prison,” he said. “It’s not unusual to have only one post in a county, and it’s at a prison. I’d say that’s the only one like it in the state.”

The post may be unusual, but to the 32 inmates who are members of it, the American Legion has been a godsend.

Army Veteran Walter Wakelin, who was incarcerated nine years ago at Miami Correctional and saw the camaraderie, decided to show up for a few meetings to see what it was all about. “Once I got in here and saw the camaraderie, I felt like it would be a good way to keep myself in line,” he said. And it has. In June, Allen was elected command- er of Post 555, which has members who are nicknamed the Triple Nickel — and now ranks as the post that has helped him to stay out of trouble for six years.

“All of us being part of the Legion, we try to hold ourselves to a higher standard,” he said. “We’re trying to keep post members on the inside,” he said. “It can really turn a man’s life around.”

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“This feature utilizes elec- tronic payment methods via MySAL.org. This feature utilizes elec- tronic payment methods via MySAL.org. This feature utilizes elec- tronic payment methods via MySAL.org. This feature utilizes elec- tronic payment methods via MySAL.org. This feature utilizes elec- tronic payment methods via MySAL.org.
Bikes and pies! Riders Chapter 341 shows gratitude to local hospital staff

By Josh Marshall

While the sight and sound of eight motorcycles roaring down the road - some with American Flags waving in the wind - would grab most people’s attention, these motorcycles were being eyed for another reason. They were delivering twenty assorted pies from Faye’s Northside Café to IU Tipton Hospital for the staff, nurses, and doctors to enjoy. American Legion Riders Chapter 341 from Cicero called ahead to ensure they followed proper procedures for delivering to the hospital. “That way the nurses could enjoy the pies, but also we weren’t bringing any contamination to the hospital,” said Jody Brown, Director of Riders Chapter 341. “We met at the backside of the hospital on the loading dock and we didn’t go inside. We exchanged everything with the hospital staff who was wearing all the proper safety equipment and we did it how their procedures dictated them to do it.”

Staying active in their community is important to the chapter. Last winter, 40-50 Legion Family members arrived on motorcycles and delivered Christmas gifts to 33 foster children. Giving back and serving others is important to 341 and they call on other Legionnaires to do the same. “I think it’s important for Legionnaires to volunteer in this time because, as a veteran, as a serviceman, we are dedicated to our country and community - what better time to show that dedication than during this pandemic,” says Brown. Doug Crouch was one of the employees who received the pies on the dock Wednesday. He appreciated that the pies were purchased locally in support of the Tipton community. But what touched him the most was seeing the eight veterans stepping up to support the hospital staff. “We really appreciate what the veterans have done for us,” says Crouch. For him, seeing the veterans show their support of the hospital was fitting, because IU Health Tipton Hospital used to be called Tipton County Memorial Hospital “and we have a long tie with veterans.”

Crouch is the third generation in his family that has worked at the hospital. “So it goes way back for me, and it’s heartwarming and very gratifying to know that the veterans appreciate what we’re doing.”

Right now, the scheduled events for Chapter 341 have been put on hold as they follow Governor Halcomb’s orders to stay home. But they hope to ride again soon so they can continue to serve their community. Legion Rider Chapter 341 on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/legionriderscicerochapter/