



The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154
For God and Country



2nd Quarter 2017

Legionnaire

Commander's Message

Lithuanian Post 154 had a busy first quarter. Post members attended Baltimore District's Four Chaplains Service at Saint Alphonsus Church, our Color Guard Presented Colors at the Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration at Lithuanian Hall and several of us attended The American Legion National Commander's Reception in Halethorpe, MD. I would like to thank all Post members who attended these events and especially thank those who took part.

While Googling the Internet about the Baltimore District Four Chaplains Service and Father Dranginis, I stumbled on a *Congressional Record* about Father Dranginis stating that he was invited to say the opening prayer at a session of Congress in 1989. The *Congressional Record* also included his biography. This find was news to me and I suspect it will be news to most of you. The prayer he gave in Congress urging them to support Lithuanian independence is below and his biography is on page 3.

Baltimore's 45th Annual Lithuanian Festival this year will be held at Lithuanian Hall rather than at the Catonsville Armory as in the past. The Festival will be on Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11 from 11 AM to 12 PM on Saturday and from 11 AM to 6 PM on Sunday. Lithuanian Post 154 will participate by Presenting the Colors on Sunday at noon. As in the past, we will have an information table about our Post and US military services. Hopefully we will be able to recruit a new member or two.

Nominations of Lithuanian Post 154 Officers for 2017 - 2018 will take place at the April and May Post General Meetings with elections at the May meeting. Nominations for Delegates to the American Legion Department of Maryland Convention in Ocean City will take place at the May and June Post General Meetings with elections at the June meeting. I urge you to attend.

I hope you have a safe, fun-filled summer.

Joe Jankevicius
 Commander

Four Chaplains Service

The American Legion Baltimore District held its annual Four Chaplains Service at St. Alphonsus Church on Sunday, February 5th. The service honored the brave deeds of four Army chaplains aboard USAT Dorchester who perished while comforting fellow passengers as their ship, torpedoed by a U-boat, was sinking.



Gintaras Buivy's and Howard Koontz placed the POW/MIA flag on empty chair.

The Baltimore District Four Chaplains Service was started in 1963. It was initially held at the War Memorial in downtown Baltimore. Father Dranginis moved it to St. Alphonsus Church in 1978.

Though this was an American Legion Baltimore District sponsored event, Lithuanian Post 154 Legionnaires played significant roles at the service. Our Adjutant, Vincent Dulys was the Chairman, Master of Ceremonies and conducted the POW/MIA Service. Past Lithuanian Post 154 Commander John Maskavich was the Lector. Lithuanian Post members Gintaras Buivy's and Howard Koontz participated in the POW/MIA Service.

Chaplains Corner

"O Heavenly Father, we are proud to be Americans and not ashamed to admit that we are Lithuanians. Dear God, keep us mindful, that liberty is not only to be loved and enjoyed but also to be lived, that freedom does not mean the right to do as we please, but rather the responsibility to do what is right. Grant, O Lord, that these United States of America may always be a fortress of hope and freedom for all the enslaved nations of the world, that the leaders of our country would lead us in the ways of peace and continue to work with courage and wisdom for the freedom of Lithuania and all the enslaved peoples. Amen."

Rev. Anthony Dranginis, pastor, St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, MD, offered the above prayer at the *US House of Representatives, February 22, 1989.*

Membership

As of March 10, our Post membership was 91. Our Department goal is 99. If you have not paid your 2017 dues, please do so now.

Fiscal Year 2018 will start on July 1, 2017. You should be getting a reminder letter to renew your membership for 2018 from National in May. Please send me your \$30 renewal check made out to The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154 as soon as you can. My address is on the last page.

Vincent Dulys
Membership
Chairman

Happy Birthday

April

William Emerson
Michael Keiser
Errol Markowitz
John Maskavich Jr.
Algirdas Paplonskis
Robert Parks
Vilius Ramunas
Algirdas Siaurusaitis
Edward Wilson III
Edward Yungaitis

May

William F. Dillon III
Bernard Galinaitis
Joseph Jankevicius
Valentinas Raugas

June

Walter Cooper
David Cunningham
Gintaras Dambrava
Stasys Kligys
Anthony Leketa
Cynthia Leketa
John Matulonis
Gilbert Miller
Albert Penkauskas

Lithuanian Independence Day



On March 4, 2017, Baltimore's Lithuanian Community celebrated Lithuanian Independence Day at Lithuanian Hall. Post 154 Present the Colors at the celebration. I wish to thank Balys Brasauskas, Gintaras Buivys, Vincent Dulys, Howard Koontz and Toivo Tagamets for volunteering for the Color Guard.

The Independence Day Celebration included a discussion of Lithuanian History, and the role Baltimore's Lithuanian Community played in soliciting US political support for Lithuania's independence effort. The celebration concluded with live entertainment that extended into the night.

Joe Jankevicius
Commander

National Commander Reception

On March 18, 2017, Lithuanian Post 154 members Vincent Dulys, Joe Jankevicius, Howard Koontz, John Maskavich and Augustinas Uleckas attended a dinner reception honoring National Commander Charles Schmidt at Dewey Lowman Post 109 in Halethorpe, MD.

In his remarks after dinner, National Commander Schmidt summarized the support that The American Legion "family" of 4.4 million members provides to veterans and their communities. The Legion "family" includes members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Riders. These organizations donate millions of volunteer hours and millions of dollars helping veterans and their community. American Legion sponsored programs such as The American Legion Boys State, Boy Scouts of America and Legion-sponsored sports activities teach kids to compete, cooperate and lead, guiding them to become good citizens.



Vincent Dulys presented National Commander Schmidt the US flag that flew over Ft. McHenry in his honor.

TWO \$1,000 College Scholarships

Lithuanian Post 154 will grant two \$1,000 scholarships in 2017. The scholarships will be available to children, grandchildren, stepchildren, step grandchildren, nephews, nieces and adopted children of Lithuanian Post 154 members in good standing or deceased members who were in good standing at time of death.

The students must be graduating from high school in 2017 and entering college this Fall. Application forms are available at Post General Meetings or can be mailed to you. Contact Education Chairman John Maskavich at (410) 747-9628 or email John at jmaskavich@gmail.com. Completed applications must be received by July 15, 2017.

FATHER ANTHONY S. DRANGINIS

Most of us knew Father Dranginis as an energetic pastor of St. Alphonsus Church who officiated the weddings of some of us and baptized our children. He was also an active member of Lithuanian Post 154 and served as Post Commander 1949 - 1951. Father Tony also served as our Post Chaplain and The American Legion Department of Maryland Chaplain. The Department of Maryland has established the *Reverend Anthony Dranginis Memorial Trophy* in his memory, which is awarded at the Department Convention.



Father
Anthony Dranginis

Father Dranginis's biography from the Congressional Record is below.

Joe Jankevicius

Representative Frank Annuzio of Illinois introduced Fr. Dranginis to the February 22, 1989 session of Congress after Fr. Dranginis offered the opening prayer.

"Mr. ANNUNZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is a genuine pleasure for me to welcome to our Nation's Capitol Father Anthony S. Dranginis, pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore, MD, who offered the opening prayer.

Father Dranginis has dedicated his life in service to our country and to his church. He received his bachelor of arts degree in history from Marianapolis College in Thompson, CT, in 1939, and received a scholarship to attend Kaunas University in Lithuania in the fall of 1939. However, the beginning of World War II prohibited him from pursuing his studies in Lithuania. Instead he became a chemist assistant, and later entered the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943. He served our country with distinction in Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa until the end of the war.

In 1947, he came to Baltimore, where he became very active in the Lithuanian community, assisting Lithuanian immigrants in resettling in the United States. He also was active in Lithuanian Post 154 of the American Legion, and became commander of that post in 1949. As commander, he helped develop the Post Everlasting Services at the installation of new officers, which is still part of the American Legion State Convention every year.

While working with the Lithuanian community, Father Dranginis saw his true calling. In 1951, he entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary and was ordained as a priest on May 26, 1956. Assigned to St. Alphonsus Parish, he spent 32 years of his priesthood in service to this church, first as

Baltimore VA Medical Center Garage Closure

Beginning Monday, April 10, 2017, the parking garage at the Baltimore VA Medical Center will be closed due to construction. The construction project is scheduled to be completed by end of May 2017.

During the closure, patients visiting the Baltimore VA Medical Center will be able to park at the Metro West garage located two blocks away at 610 W. Saratoga Street. A fleet of handicap accessible shuttle buses will transport patients, employees and volunteers between the inside of the Metro West garage and the breezeway of the Baltimore VA Medical Center, with regular pickups and drop-offs at both locations. Free valet service will be available for patient use at the Metro West garage.

Source: Baltimore VA Medical Center

The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention

July 11 - 14
Ocean City, Maryland

Accommodations for delegates and alternates are available at "Bradley on the Bay" condominium building A, unit 304, 3901 Ocean Highway.
Contact Adjutant Vincent Dulys to coordinate accommodations.
(410) 960-7874

Stop by the condominium, even if you don't go to the convention but just decide to visit Ocean City during that week.

On Monday, the day before the official Convention starts, there will be a Fish Fry behind the Convention building at 4 PM.

assistant pastor and now as pastor. Also, he writes a column for a weekly Lithuanian newspaper, and his column, "The Chaplain's Corner," appears in several publications, including the Free State Warrior, the American Legion magazine, and the Department of Maryland Monthly Journal.

I want to thank Father Dranginis for being with us today, and to wish him continuing success in his dedicated work both in the church and in the community."

February 22, 1989
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD-HOUSE 2499

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Meetings Information

Post General Meeting

Second Wednesday of
the month except July
at 8 PM
Lithuanian Hall
851 Hollins Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Exec. Committee Meeting

Fourth Wednesday of the
month at 1 PM
Spirits West Country Club
2601 Wilkens Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21223

Calendar & Reminders

April

- Sat 01 April Fools' Day
- Sat 01 Windmills International Dance Festival - Lithuanian Hall - Noon
- Thu 06 US entered WW I (1917)
- Mon 10 Passover begins in the evening
- Wed 12 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
Initial nominations of Lithuanian Post 154 officers for 2017 -2018
- Fri 14 Good Friday
- Sun 16 Easter Sunday
- Tue 18 Income Tax Returns due
- Tue 18 Passover ends in the evening
- Wed 26 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -
Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
- Sun 30 Vietnam War ended (1975)

May

- Sun 07 Unconditional surrender of all WWII German forces signed (1945)
- Mon 08 V-E Day, Victory in Europe celebrated by US and Britain (1945)
- Wed 10 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
Nominations and election of Lithuanian Post 154 officers for 2017 -2018
Initial nominations of Lithuanian Post 154 Delegates and Alternates to
The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention
- Sun 14 Mother's Day
- Mon 15 Women's Army Corps Founded (1942)
- Sat 20 Armed Forces Day
- Wed 24 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -
Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
- Mon 29 Memorial Day - The American Legion Baltimore District Service at
The National Cemetery - Frederick Ave. - Catonsville, MD - 10:30 AM

June

- Sat 10 Lithuanian Festival at Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM to 6 PM
- Sun 11 Lithuanian Festival at Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM to 6 PM
Formal Ceremony at noon - Lithuanian Post 154 will present Colors
- Wed 14 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
Nominations and election of Lithuanian Post 154 Delegates and
Alternates to The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention
- Wed 14 Flag Day
- Wed 14 US Army Founded (1775)
- Sun 18 Father's Day
- Wed 28 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -
Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

July

- Tue 04 Independence Day

The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention - Ocean City, MD Convention Itinerary:

- Mon 10 Golf Tournament - Deer Run Golf Course, Berlin, MD - 8 AM
Fish Fry behind Convention Center - 4 - 6 PM
- Tue 11 Legion College classes at Convention Center - 8 AM - 12 Noon
Official Opening of Convention - 8 PM
- Wed 12 Convention meetings - 8 AM, Memorial Service - 8 PM
- Thu 13 Convention meetings - 8 AM
- Fri 14 Convention meetings - 8 AM

- Wed 12 **No Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting**
- Wed 26 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -
Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM