



Commander's Message

I hope you have stayed healthy and had an enjoyable Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year with loved ones and friends.

I wish to thank the regular attendees to our Post 154 meetings for their support and those that can't make it to Baltimore for participating remotely via zoom. I wish to give a shout out and job well done to Adjutant Vincent Dulys, Vince is the hardest worker in our Post. He is the glue that keeps our Post's administrative obligations with Department in good standing. He represents our Post at Department Executive Committee Meetings.

Thanks also to Henry Gaidis who constantly promotes Post 154 during his frequent visits to the Lithuanian Embassy and to visitors to the Lithuanian Museum on the 3rd floor of Lithuanian Hall where he maintains a Post 154 display.

Post 154 encourages our youth to better prepare for their careers by perusing higher education. To help with the cost, the Post has annually been awarding two \$1,000 scholarships and will do so again in 2025. These scholarships are available to high school seniors who have a family association with a Post 154 member. (Eligibility criteria is on page 2). Sadly, we did not have any scholarship applicants last year. Encourage your family's high school youth to apply.

Vice-commander Jankevicius, had two of his grandsons attend the Boys State program a few years ago. They found it to be an excellent life experience and civics lesson. Their endorsement of Boys State prompted Post 154 to include Boys State information on page 2. There is also a similar Girls State program. If you know of a boy or girl who will finish their junior year of high school this summer, please ask them to discuss the program with their High School guidance counselor and apply. Our country needs knowledgeable citizens. Attending Boys/Girls State will most likely provide a better civics education than they received in High School.

Baltimore Lithuanian Community's Lithuanian Independence Celebration will take place at Lithuanian Hall on March 2nd at 2 PM. Post 154 has been invited to present The Colors. Please arrive 30 minutes early wearing your Post 154 uniform and participate.

Also mark your calendars for the upcoming Windmills International Dance Festival on April 26th at noon at Lithuanian Hall. It promises to provide a great afternoon of entertainment by various ethnic dance groups. Also note that the Lithuanian Festival will again be held at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Arbutus. It will be on May 10 and 11, 2025.

On behalf of the officers of Lithuanian Post 154, I wish you and your family a safe, happy, healthy and prosperous 2025.

Gintaras Buivys
Lithuanian Post 154 Commander

Back to God Mass

On Sunday, November 30, 2024 Lithuanian Post 154 members met at Our Lady of Victory Church in Arbutus to continue the Post's traditional annual Back to God Mass program.

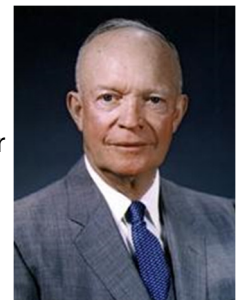
The American Legion in the 1950s took a strong McCarthyist stance. There was an anti-Communist "crusade" to discourage Communist influence and bring the American people closer to God. The American Legion, consistent with the Legion's purpose as stated in the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution which begins with "For God and Country..." at its 1951 convention in Miami, Florida, formally endorsed a "Back to God" movement in a resolution. Prompted by the American Legion's endorsement, Lithuanian Post 154's "Back to God Mass" was started by Father Dranginis in 1953. With only a few exceptions, it has been held every year since.

During his radio broadcast on February 7, 1954, President Eisenhower made the nation aware and strongly endorsed the American Legion "Back to God" program. He said "As a former soldier, I am delighted that our veterans are sponsoring a movement to increase our awareness of God in our daily lives. In battle, they learned a great truth - that there are no atheists in the foxholes. They know that in time of test and trial, we instinctively turn to God for new courage and peace of mind. All the history of America bears witness to this truth."

The American Legion's National Commander in 1952, Lewis K. Gough, promoted "regular church attendance, daily family prayer, and the religious training of children." Also, The American Legion endorsed the passage of state bills requiring U.S. loyalty oaths of school teachers. Something that would certainly be challenged in our courts today. We are living in a different country.



Legionnaires Gintaras Buivys, Augustinas Uleckas and Henry Gaidis in Our Lady of Victory Church's vestibule prior to entering.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

Membership

If you have not yet paid your 2025 dues, please do so now. The old 2024 membership card became invalid on December 31, 2024.

You can renew your membership by going to the Lithuanian Post 154 website <http://www.lietuvis.net> and clicking on "Online Membership Renewal." If you wish to renew by mail, make a \$38 check payable to "The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154" and mail it to my address that is on the last page of this newsletter.

Vincent Dulys,
Membership Chairman

Happy Birthday

December

Balys Brasauskas
Dr. Bernard Karpers Jr
Alfred Kyliavas
Yvette Muhammed

January

Patrick Dohlus
William Morrison
Stephen Mueller
John Potts
Ronald Price
Vytautas Ramunas

February

Kirk Bauer
Jeffrey Burton

March

Richard Leffler
Gediminas Naujokaitis
Augustinas Uleckas
Thomas Willis

Boys State Applications Available Now

The American Legion 2025 MD Boys State Program will be held at McDaniel College, Westminster, Maryland from June 15 to 21, 2025 (date and location are subject to change). The program is a Nationally recognized program in leadership, government, and political sciences. Young men that are Juniors during the 2024-2025 High School year with at least 1 semester remaining in Senior Year are eligible to apply.

Tuition for the program for accepted Boys is fully funded by The American Legion, Department of Maryland Posts. Lithuanian Post 154 will sponsor boys recommended by Post 14 members.

The program's aim is to expose current high school juniors to the United States Constitutional form of government. Experienced instructors at Boys State offer the students an opportunity of a lifetime to immerse themselves into the creation of a government among equal citizens selected from the finest young men in high school. The challenge of creating a functioning City and State government allows the young men to focus their talents in areas seldom explored in a normal classroom environment. Presenters include politicians and leaders from local and State government.

During the week-long event, attendees will reside in a McDaniel College dormitory. In some respects, it will be like a mini basic training experience that we went through when we joined the US military. Participant will learn how to live together sharing a room and work together to accomplish shared goals. Boys State is not a rest and recreation camp. It may be the hardest work the candidate has experienced. The experience in the program will test the boy's ability to participate and adapt to a structured environment.

Use of tobacco, vaping, or use of contraband

at Boys State is not allowed. The boys will not be allowed to bring distractions such as electronic equipment including but not limited to cell phone, computers, iPods', etc. The boys are not to bring reading material (other than religious), food, candy, gum, knives, stuffed animals, etc. The boys will require someone to bring them to Boys State and pick them up after graduation on June 21st. The boys will be exhausted after a week of long intensely active days and will be too tired to drive. Most likely they will fall asleep in the car a few minutes after being picked up.

Having graduated from Boys State is an excellent addition to the boys professional resume and college application. It is a highly coveted entry on applications to Service Academies.

If you know of a boy who will finish his junior year of high school this summer who would like to attend, ask him to go to The American Legion Department of Maryland website <http://www.mdlegion.org/boysstate> for more information and to apply online by clicking on the "Apply Today" button. Applications have to be submitted by May 1, 2025.

There is a companion program MD Girls State program held at Salisbury State University during the same dates conducted by The American Legion Auxiliary for young women completing their Junior year in high school. A link for more information about the program and an application is also on www.mdlegion.org/boysstate. Though Lithuanian Post 154 no longer has an Auxiliary, the Post will pay the tuition for girls recommended by Post 154 members to Girls State.

Please ask the boy or girl to print and send a copy of their completed application to Vincent Dulys so that Post 154 could pay American Legion Department of Maryland Legion or Auxiliary the tuition.

Source:
American Legion Department of Maryland

Two \$1,000 College Scholarships

Lithuanian Post 154 will grant two 1,000 scholarships in 2025. 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 2025. Contact Joe Jankevicius at (410) 259-5032 or email Joe at joejankevicius@gmail.com for an application. Completed applications must be received by July 15, 2025.

Happy 100th Birthday

Congratulations to Balys Brasauskas, Post 154's oldest member. On December 15, 2025, Baltimore's Lithuanian Community celebrated Balys J. Brasauskas birthday with a gala party and dinner. Balys was told that he was being taken to a Lithuanian Post 154 meeting and was greatly surprised to see a roomful of Lithuanian community friends when he entered the Maple Room. Many American Legion, Lithuanian Post 154, members were in attendance, and some were directly involved in the planning of the event. Post Commander Gintaras Buivys provided acoustic, a visual life photo presentation, and assisted Lithuanian Hall President Rytis Grybauskas as Master of Ceremony.



Surprised Balys entering Maple Room.



The program included congratulation letters presented by Giedrė Šidagyte-Gudaitiene, the First Secretary of the Lithuanian Embassy and from Brandon M. Scott, the Mayor of Baltimore. The Lithuanian Folk Dancing Group "Malunas" provided a dancing program followed by a scrumptious Lithuanian dinner.

Balys was born on December 14, 1924, in Kaunas, Lithuania. Like millions of Lithuanians, his childhood was turned asunder by the successive invasions of Lithuania by Russian and German armies. Not willing to live under Communist occupation, he joined thousands of Lithuanians who fled from the returning Russian forces in 1944. At the end of the war, Balys found himself living in one of the many US military established Displaced Person Camps in Germany. Being a healthy single male, Balys was able to find employment with the U.S. Army, Baltic Labor Service, where he worked during the 1946-1948 era guarding vital American security installations, repairing war torn Germany airfields and roads, and transporting supplies.

When he realized there was no hope of returning to a free and independent Lithuania, Balys like most others in these DP Camps sought a better way of life. Balys eventually obtained an American DP sponsor and was able to immigrate to the United States. He departed via a United States Line vessel sailing from Hamburg, Germany to Boston and began working on a farm in Connecticut to repay his sponsor's expenses. With the communist invasion of South Korea, Balys was inducted into the US Army. Because of this language skills and knowledge of Europe, rather than Korea, the Army sent him to Germany. Balys spent his Korean War years' service in Germany rising in rank to a Sergeant. Upon separating from the service, Balys settled in the Baltimore area during the 1952-53 era. He soon found employment with D&H Distributors for RCA, Baltimore, Maryland, as a Technical Representative and later Regional Manager until his retirement.

While living in Baltimore, Balys quickly became active in Baltimore Lithuanian American Community activities. Lithuanian Folk Dancing had waned in Baltimore during the World War II years so Balys became heavily involved in reviving Baltimore's Lithuanian Folk Dancing. He established and served as the dancing instructor in the Lithuanian Language Saturday grammar school "Ratelis" Folk Dancing Group.



Lithuanian Community gathers to celebrate Balys' birthday.



Malunas Dance Group take a break after their performance.

The majority of Balys' many notably activities revolved around the Baltimore Lithuanian Hall Association. He actively supported Lithuanian Hall events such as the annual Lithuanian Independence Day celebration and Baltimore's Lithuanian Festival. He served as Lithuanian Hall manager, member of the board of directors, trustee and president. For his decades of services to the Lithuanian Hall, Balys was made an Honorary Life Member of the Lithuanian Board of Directors.



Legionnaires Henry Gaidis, Joe Jankevicius and Vince Dulys present Balys Brasauskas a photo collage with pictures of him participating in Legion activities over the years. One of the photos is at the Lithuanian Festival in 2007 with Lithuania's Past President Professor Vytautas Landsbergis.

Besides the Hall, Balys participated in other Lithuanian organizations. He was the first Baltimore Chapter President of the Lithuanian American Community, and active member of the American Legion, Lithuanian Post 154. Balys served in a number of different Lithuanian Post 154 positions including Post Commander from 1970-1972. He has been a continuous member of the Post 154 for 72 years.

Work was not all of Balys' pastime. He has had a lifelong interest in Lithuanian Philatelic collecting including being an active member in the Lithuania Philatelic Society and contributed to its Lithuanian stamp collecting journal. Over the years, Balys assembled one of the finest Lithuanian stamp collections in the United States.

One of his most interesting contributions is having been given special recognition by the American Red Cross for donating over 18 gallons blood. Besides the Lithuania blood he passed along to his family, Balys' Lithuanian blood has flowed through countless Americans surely saving many of their lives.

Henry Gaidis
lituva@verizon.net

Contacts

COMMANDER

Gintaras Buivys
804 Warwick Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21229
(410) 802-0001
gbuivys@hotmail.com

ADJUTANT

Vincent T. Dulys
616 Cedarwood Lane
Crownsville, MD 21032
(410) 960-7874
Vincentas@verizon.net

SERVICE OFFICER

Patrick Dohlus
1920 Nipmuck Path
Hanover, MD 21076
(410) 551-2369
Sulbud@comcast.net

EDITOR

Joe Jankevicius
2911 Cox Neck Road East
Chester, MD 21619
(410) 259-5032
JoeJankevicius@gmail.com

Meeting Information

General Meetings

The Post General meetings will be held at
Lithuanian Hall,
851 Hollins Street.
Baltimore, MD 21201
at 11 AM on the 2nd Wednesday of January, March, May, June, August, September and November.

Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee meetings will be held on the last Wednesday of every month except November and December at 1 PM, Meetings will be at Spirits West Country Club, 2601 Wilkens Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21223.

Calendar & Reminders

January, 2025

Wed	01	New Year's Day
Wed	08	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Fri	17	Persian Gulf War Began (1991)
Mon	20	President Trump's Inauguration
Mon	20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Mon	27	Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)
Tue	28	US - Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)
Wed	29	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

February

Sat	01	National Freedom Day
Sun	02	Groundhog Day
Sun	02	Four Chaplains Service - Dewey Lowman Post 109 - Arbutus - 10am
Sat	08	Boy Scouts of America founded (1910)
Wed	12	Lincoln's Birthday
Fri	14	St. Valentine's Day
Sun	16	Department Executive Committee Meeting - Greenbelt Post 136 6900 Greenbelt Rd., Greenbelt, MD 20770 - 1 PM
Mon	17	Presidents' Day
Mon	17	George Washington's Birthday Observed
Sat	22	George Washington's Birthday
Wed	26	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

March

Sun	02	Lithuanian Independence Celebration Lithuanian Hall - 2 PM - Post 154 invited to present <i>The Colors</i> . Please arrive in Post 154 uniform at 1:30.
Mon	03	"The Star Spangled Banner" made US National Anthem (1931)
Wed	05	Ash Wednesday
Sun	09	Daylight Saving Time Begins - Set clock ahead one hour
Wed	12	Girl Scouts of America founded (1912)
Wed	12	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Sat	15	National Commander's Banquet - Harford Post 39 - 5:30 -10 PM ,500 Hickory Ave. - Bel-Air, MD
Mon	17	St. Patrick's Day
Wed	19	Iraq War began (2003)
Thu	20	Spring begins
Wed	26	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

April

Tue	01	April Fools' Day
Sun	06	US entered WW I (1917)
Sat	12	Passover begins
Sun	13	Palm Sunday
Tue	15	Income Tax Returns due
Fri	18	Good Friday
Sun	20	Easter Sunday
Sun	20	Passover ends
Sat	26	Windmills International Dance Festival - Lithuanian Hall - Noon
Wed	30	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM