



Commander's Message

I hope you and your families have stayed well.

Congratulations! Thanks to your timely membership renewals, Lithuanian Post 154 met Department's 2025 100% membership goal of 75.

American Legion officer terms will be ending at the upcoming Department Convention in July. Prior to the Department Convention, we need to hold elections of officers for next year and select delegates to the convention. We will do so at the May 14th Post General Meeting. Please feel free to nominate yourself or another Lithuanian Post 154 member (with their permission) to any of the Post's offices or to be a convention delegate. The Post officers are: Commander, Vice-Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Service Officer, Chaplain, Sgt, At Arms, Historian, Judge Advocate and two Executive Committee members. Nominations are open from now until the May 14, 2025 meeting. Please contact me with nominee names.

If you have a high school family member graduating in 2025 and continuing studies in college or trade school, please ask them to apply for the Post's scholarship.

Enjoy the summer!

Gintaras Buivys
Commander

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. Scholarship application forms are available at Lithuanian Post 154 General Meetings or by contacting Joe Jankevicius. His contact information is on last page of this newsletter.

Completed applications must be received by July 15, 2025.

Lithuanian Independence Restoration



Father Bill Spacek and Post 154 Commander Gintaras Buivys watch Post 154 Color Guard (Vincent Dulys, Al Brauskas and Henry Gaidis) accompanied by Lithuanian "Mituva" Dancer Mindaugas Gudaitis with Lithuanian flag, present The Colors as KDLM Lithuanian Saturday Day School singers on stage sing the Lithuanian and American Anthems.

Lithuania was occupied by Russia prior to WWI. After WWI it fought for its independence and gained it on February 16, 1918. After WWII it was again occupied by Russia and became one of the Soviet Union countries. When Mikhail Gorbachev established the glasnost (meaning "transparency") policy reform for the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Lithuania took advantage of the reform movement and on March 11, 1990 became the first Soviet Block country to declare restoration of its independence, which contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse. The Soviet Union collapsed the following year on Christmas. Both Lithuanian independence and the restoration of independence are often celebrated on the same day sometime in March. This year, Lithuanian Communities from Baltimore and Washington celebrated Lithuania's Restoration of Independence at Lithuanian Hall on March 2, 2025.

Approximately two hundred attended the celebration including the representatives from the Lithuanian Embassy to the United States.

The audience was treated to dance and song entertainment. Children from the Kristijono Donelaičio Lituānistinė Mokykla (KDLM) Lithuanian School performed folk dances, played musical instruments and sang for the audience. The entertainment continued with Baltimore's Malūnas and Mituva Lithuanian dance groups performing several dances each.

Membership

Thank you for renewing your 2025 membership allowing Lithuanian Post 154 meet Department's membership goal.

F.Y. "2026" will start on July 01, 2025 and renewal notices from National will be mailed out at the end of June. Please 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 page 4 of this newsletter.

Gintaras Buivys

Happy Birthday

April

William Emerson
Michael Keiser
Errol Markowitz
Robert Parks
Vilius Ramunas
Edward Wilson III
Edward Yungaitis

May

William F. Dillon III
Joseph Jankevicius
Daniel Podlogar
Valentinas Raugas
Gary Thiele

June

Walter Cooper
David Cunningham
Anthony Leketa
Cynthia Leketa
John Matulonis
Juozas Naujokaitis
Albert Penkauskas

Taps

Lithuanian Post 154 and Baltimore's Lithuanian Community experienced a tremendous loss in March of 2025. Two leaders of Post 154 reported to the Supreme Commander.

Balys Brasauskas, age 100, passed away on March 20, 2025. He was a US Army veteran and active member of Lithuanian Post 154 since 1953. He was Commander of Lithuanian Post 154 from 1970-1972. Balys was also very active in Baltimore's Lithuanian Community serving in leadership positions at Lithuanian Hall and many of Baltimore's Lithuanian clubs. His biography was published in last quarter's Legionnaire. If you no longer have it, you can find it on Post 154's website www.lietuvis.net.

Lithuanian Post 154 conducted a Poppy Service for Balys on March 27th.

While still at Balys' visitation, we received word that Vincent Dulys collapsed, and attempts to revive him failed.

Vincent Dulys, age 77, passed away suddenly on March 27, 2025. He was a US Army veteran and active member of Lithuanian Post 154 since 1971. He was Commander of Lithuanian Post 1986-1988. Virtually all his free time was consumed by the American Legion and Lithuanian Post 154. He has served as Baltimore District Commander and on the Maryland Department Executive Committee representing our Post and District. He served as Post 154 Adjutant since 2004, the hardest job at the Post.

For over 20 years he kept Post 154 in good standing and out of trouble with American Legion Department, National and the IRS. Vince's knowledge of Legion procedures and his common sense was sought by other Posts and the Department. His passing has left a tremendous void in our Post.

Lithuanian Post 154 conducted a Poppy Service for Vince on April 4th.

Balys and Vince will be missed by Baltimore's Lithuanian Community Lithuanian Post 154 and there many friends.

Rest in peace my fellow Legionnaires.



American Legion Department of Maryland Convention

The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention will be held at the Ocean City Convention Center from July 15 - 18, 2025. The convention schedule is on page 4.

Lithuanian Post 154 will have a visitor Hospitality Suite at Bradley on the Bay Condominium, building A, unit 304, 3901 Ocean Highway. If you are in Ocean City on these dates and plan to visit, contact Commander Gintaras Buivys (410) 802-0001 prior to walking 3 flights of stairs to be certain it is open.

Lithuanian Festival

Baltimore's Lithuanian Community will have its Lithuanian Festival on Mother's Day weekend Saturday May 11th and 12th from 1 AM to 6 PM at Our Lady of Victory Church Hall, 4414 Wilkens Ave, Baltimore, MD 21229. The church has plenty of free parking and is located one mile east of Baltimore Beltway (695) exit 12, Wilkens Ave.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy delicious Lithuanian food and drink while watching Lithuanian folk dance performances.

THELDA E. STRUNGE STORY (Lithuanian Post 154 – First Female Legionnaire)

March is Women's History Month and the American Legion honors its women veterans for their distinguished service. Lithuanian Post 154 take great pleasure in remembering and honoring Thelda Strunge, nee Derr, our post's first female Legionnaire.

Thelda was born on August 21, 1907, in Baltimore, Maryland and raised in the city during her childhood. Her father died when she was young, and her mother remarried. In 1920 her family moved to Catonsville. In those days few females sought advanced education after high school, and many dropped out even sooner to earn money for their families. Thelda was among the few that continued her education and became a licensed nurse. Most of her early nursing work was performed in local Baltimore city hospitals. Like virtually all of the members of our nation's "Finest Generation" her life changed drastically on December 7, 1941, with America's entry into World War II.

Regrettably, Lithuanian Post 154 records no longer retain Thelma's DD-214 service record, and they are not available in the US Archives to the public because of existing HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) privacy regulations. Still, Thelma WWII service story can be compiled through period newspaper and military unit histories.

These sources document that the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was established as a permanent corps of the Medical Department by the Army Reorganization Act on February 2, 1901. At the beginning of the war, the corps had fewer than a thousand nurses in the Army Nurse Corps and seven hundred in the Navy Nurse Corps. All were women.

In many ways, it was harder to become a registered nurse than virtually any other position in the military. The ANC consisted entirely of Commissioned Officers with all applicants required to hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) and hold an unrestricted Registered Nurse (RN) license before commissioning. Thelma held both and was commissioned just before the cut off age requirement. She was among the first in Baltimore to answer her nation's call for Army Nurse Corps (ANC) officers. Like everyone who served in the military, she had to undergo and satisfactorily complete basic training and Officer Candidate School before being commissioned.

There are many Maryland war newspaper articles documenting the US Military's need for 60,000 Nurse Corps Volunteers. In July 1943, such newspaper articles began identifying and commending the State's ANC recruiter, Lieutenant Thelda Deer, began appearing as a speaker at military recruiting events, medical school graduation, and Red Cross Drives. Such articles ceased to be published in early 1944, but ANC unit histories document that Chief Nurse, Captain Thelda Derr was serving with the US Army, 93rd General Hospital, in England.

The history of the 93rd General Hospital reveals the unit was activated on June 25, 1943, and assigned to the European Theater of Operation (ETO) on May 14, 1944, in Blackmore Park, England, and remained operational until September 17, 1945, when the hospital was closed and the unit re-



turned to the United States. The 93rd General Hospital in addition to treating war related patients was the administrative center of a larger hospital complex located in Southwestern England. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the United States forces suffered 2,900 casualties, many of the wounded were evacuated to the 93rd General Hospital. Wounded Americans continued to be evacuated to Blackmore Park, England, until the end of the war.

Captain Thelda Derr returned to the United States aboard the Queen Mary Ocean Liner on November 1, 1945. Like the vast majority of our Greatest Generation, Thelda returned home and resumed her civilian nursing profession. She briefly worked in Washington, D.C. but soon returned to Baltimore and lived with her elderly mother at 132 Garrison Avenue. Little is known about how Thelda met Anthony George Strunge the son of Lithuanian immigrant parents. Known as Tony, he was the superintendent of Schneidereith & Son Printing Company for 49 years. His first wife Ann Petoski passed away in January 1953 leaving Tony a widower with three children, George, Tonia, and Nancy. Later that year Tony married Thelda, and the family lived at 251 South Hilton Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

Thelda Strunge joined the American Legion, Lithuanian Post 154, in December 1954 and remained a post member for 45 years. Her name was frequently cited in Post 154 newsletters as having been among the first to renew her yearly membership. Tony retired in 1966 and after a short illness passed away on December 16, 1969, at age 66. He was interned in Lorraine Park Cemetery. After Tony's death, Thelda moved to 1436 N Rolling Road, Catonsville, in 1986. Subsequently she moved to the Edenwald Senior Living Community, 800 Southerly Road, Towson, Maryland. Thelda lived a long and note worthy life and went to her reward on December 15, 1999 at age 92. She was also interned in Lorraine Park Cemetery. A faithful Legionnaire that is still remembered by her Lithuanian Post 154 members.

Henry Gaidis, Lithuanian Post 154 Historian

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Meeting Information**Lithuanian Post 154
General Meetings**

Post General Meeting 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

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

Calendar & Reminders**April**

Tue 01 April Fools' Day
Sun 06 US entered WW I (1917)
Sat 12 Passover begins at sundown
Sun 13 Palm Sunday
Tue 15 Income Tax Returns due
Fri 18 Good Friday
Sun 20 Easter Sunday
Sun 20 Passover ends at sundown
Wed 30 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
Nominations of Lithuanian Post 154 officers for 2025 -2026
Nominations of Lithuanian Post 154 Delegates and Alternates to The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention
Wed 30 Vietnam War ended (1975)

May

Thu 01 Boys State application submission deadline
Wed 07 Unconditional surrender of all WWII German forces signed (1945)
Thu 08 V-E Day, Victory in Europe celebrated by US and Britain (1945)
Sat 10 Lithuanian Festival - Our Lady of Victory - 11 AM
4414 Wilkens Ave, Baltimore, MD 21229
Sun 11 Lithuanian Festival - Our Lady of Victory - 11 AM
Sun 11 Mother's Day
Wed 14 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Nominations and election of Lithuanian Post 154 officers for 2025 -2026
Nominations and election of Lithuanian Post 154 Delegates and Alternates to The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention
Thu 15 Women's Army Corps Founded (1942)
Sat 17 Armed Forces Day
Sun 18 Department Executive Committee Meeting
Gold Star Post 191, 801 Prospect Rd, Mount Airy, MD 21771 - 1 PM
Mon 26 Memorial Day
Wed 28 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

June

Wed 11 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Sat 14 Flag Day
Sat 14 US Army Founded (1775)
Sun 15 Father's Day
Sun 15 Boys State Start
Fri 20 First Day of Summer
Sat 21 Boys State Ends
Wed 25 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

July

Wed 02 U.S Army Air Corps Established (1926)
Fri 04 Independence Day

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

Tue 15 Delegate Registration - 8 AM, Legion College classes
Wed 16 Convention meetings - 8 AM, Memorial Service - 7 PM
Thu 17 Convention meetings - 8 AM
Fri 18 Convention meetings - 8 AM, Department Officers Election

Wed 30 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM