

June 4, 2019

## Incoming Commanders Message

Good evening to all of our Post 18 members, honored guests, and our generous hosts tonight for this officer installation ceremony. I am very grateful for each and every one of you. Your support of Post 18 is essential to our continued success.

Your confidence in me as I assume the duties and responsibilities of post commander is an honor. I pledge to do all I can to continue the fine tradition of our beloved post. The future is still to be revealed. By recognizing every opportunity to enhance our ability to better serve our fellow veterans, their families and other veteran service organizations, our post can not only continue what we do, but improve and prosper. I believe, as a group, we can all do more to reach as many people as we can through a coordinated increased online presence, as well as our “boots on the ground” approach.

June 6 is the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. I am grateful for the thousands of troops that attempted such a mighty endeavor. Many gave the ultimate sacrifice. It is with honor and humility I accept the position of post commander. We are charged with a duty to never forget. The reverent, respectful commemoration of all of those who died shall remain one of the primary missions of our post.

As your commander I will strive to avoid any politicization that can divide veterans and other civic organizations.

We must always fight for the rights of each other, especially when we don't completely agree with their position. As veteran patriots, we experienced what most civilians never have, the precious gift of comradeship, love of country, the unforgettable moments that bind us together. An early American Legion founding member stated that;

“But (the Legion) will uphold what is right so firmly and forcefully that whatever party is wrong will learn to fear it. It is the brotherhood of men who have realized thoroughly their responsibility to the nation.”

*Brig. Gen. William G. Price*

This “fear” helps keep our politicians accountable to their constituency. We desire a welcoming post, active in the community, and answerable only to those tenets we hold close.

Our beloved organization always promotes Americanism as one of our four founding principles. When asked what is loyal Americanism? Many veterans would answer, “We showed up, the essential action that helped protect the world from tyranny and fascism!” Still true today, only by showing up for duty can our mission be accomplished. Simply paying dues without supplemental action cannot nourish the American Legion. The spiritual rewards we receive by helping others are far better than any we could ever receive by doing nothing! I am asking all of our members to recommit themselves to increasing their involvement in post activities. Become

the examples of right in each of our communities, and help to ensure the future of our post and the American Legion.

My experience participating in many of the worthy events has provided some of my most memorable moments. This past weekend I was honored to accept the duty as guardian for our member Billie Dietz on Honor Flight "Whiskey". Visiting the memorials of our past wars, being greeted by so many patriots, and meeting new friends was a truly unforgettable moment. It was truly a mission impossible; as without the National Park police escort one would not be able to visit so much in one day. Thank you to all of our members, and dear friends who braved the wee hours of the morning to show up to wish our veterans a bon voyage. The welcome home reception was equally impressive. I will never forget the trip!

These trips are expensive. This past Sunday was the sponsors', "Shawns Back Street Pub", annual fundraiser. I had the opportunity to attend this heartfelt and fun celebration of the veterans we honor for their courage and sacrifice. Going as a group with the American Legion Riders was appreciated by the pubs' owner. In addition to the solemn ceremony by Rolling Thunder, a bagpipe player performed as well as a police color guard from the Cranston Police Department. All this was followed with a live band with great music and fun for all who wanted it. George Ferrell the Honor Flight Director, as well as previous flight honorees welcomed everyone to enjoy themselves. In one word, fun!

It is almost a certainty that as I perform my new duties as Commander, I will make a mistake along the way. I encourage any member of our post to bring any errors, omissions, or breaches of protocol to my attention immediately. I promise to continue the oath I took on my 18th birthday before I stood on those "yellow footprints". This oath to defend the constitution never expires! The discipline and lessons I learned during my military service has served me well throughout the years. Accepting the challenge of becoming Commander aligns with that very oath. I am confident that the incoming adjutant will assist me with those duties most intimate and personal to our members. Our new Chaplain has his own everlasting commander to guide him as well as every other officer past and present. The outgoing Commander and Adjutant have more than earned a well deserved rest in the officiating and administration responsibilities. Let's let them know how much their efforts meant to us. Thank you. I hope that will encourage them to assume their new role of senior advisors, mentors and life long friends. Thank you both. Please enjoy the rest of our ceremony and celebration.

Thank you.