

Fall 2020

Blue Ridge Bugle

Scholarship Essay Themes:

The 2020-2021 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Harold J. "Hal" Roesch, II. The Voice of Democracy theme will be "Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?" and the Patriot's Pen theme will be "What is Patriotism to Me?"

Legacy Life Membership

Go to www.vfw.org, click on JOIN, scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life Members and is now available in memoriam for past Life Members.

There are three levels of membership, each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.



A true hero isn't measured by the size of his or her strength, but by strength of their heart.

VFW Music Resumes with Concerts, Jams

What better way could there be to spend a Saturday night, especially during these trying times?

Charles McMillian brought his band of talented veteran and youthful musicians to Hillsville August 15 for the second show of the VFW Summer Concert Series and, despite horrendous weather conditions for most of the day, a fine and enthusiastic crowd gave them a warm welcome.

High Country Grass came up the mountain from Cana and Mount Airy to provide an exciting mix of bluegrass, gospel and country tunes. After more than two hours of performing, the band responded to two encores and the crowd was thrilled with the announcement that they will be coming back for another show October 10.

McMillian on the banjo was joined by Jerry Utt and Jimmy Gregory while talented youngsters Brody and Mallie York kept the crowd enthralled.

The show was planned for outdoors but was moved inside due to the weather.

VFW's summer season began nearly one month earlier when The Dennis Tolbert Band kicked off the schedule on Saturday, July 22.

DTB came back for another show August 22, followed by shows with The New Piedmont Logrollers August 29 and The Coalfield Bluegrass Express September 4.

Concerts at the Hillsville VFW are held Saturday nights at 7:30. Plans are to have shows outside under the stars, weather permitting. Tickets are sold at the gate or at the door for \$7 and the proceeds after paying the band are designed to help the VFW operating fund.

While the VFW Summer Concert Series is finally rolling, the Monday Night Music Jam got off to a slow start in terms of drawing musicians. Fans coming to enjoy live music have actually outnumbered the pickers each week since jams resumed July 13.

The VFW is looking for a few good men – ladies, too! Musicians needed and urgently invited.

The weekly music jams are held at 6:30 p.m. each Monday and are free to the public. They are held outside at the picnic shelter in back of the VFW parking lot. Although benches are available, guests should bring their own chairs and plan for social distancing. Light snacks are available for sale by the VFW.

Musicians and fans are invited to come out and support the local Veterans. VFW members with any musical talent are urged to bring their instruments and join the festivities, or just show up and enjoy the music.

Chaplain's Message

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:10-11)

Lucian Truscott was serious about the challenge of military command. Born in 1895, he rose through the ranks to become one of the major American military leaders of the twentieth century. Among his accomplishments, he led the Northern Attack Group in the assault of Morocco in November 1942, and the 6th Corps that entered Rome on June 4, 1944. He became Commander of the 5th Army, and succeeded George Patton as 3rd Army Commander. Later, he served as Military Governor of Bavaria in September 1945.

Based on his studies of battles, coupled with his personal experience, Truscott came to the conclusion that it was not armies that won wars, but individuals. He observed, "One of the first lessons that battle impresses on one is that no matter how large the force engaged, every battle is made up of small actions by individuals and small units." He knew that victory depended on the dedication, skill and contributions of each soldier. This same principle applies to the spiritual realm. We are involved in spiritual warfare, and each Believer is called to play a role in God's army. Each person has been given unique gifts and resources, and has a special assignment. And each assignment is important. If we are to win, we all need to do our part. Today, do not sit on the sidelines, or think that you do not matter. Remember that you are special to God. He has given you time, talent, and treasure, and opportunities to serve Him. He has chosen you, with a special assignment just for you. Seek to be faithful, and that your life is bearing fruit.

AMEN



VFW National Commander Pays a Visit



Mother Nature gave the National Commander a 21-gun salute when he made a goodwill and VFW business trek through Southwest Virginia.

With thunderstorms booming all around them, Hal Roesch along with members of his staff and officers from the Department of Virginia visited with many Veterans in the area with stops including Hillsville, Galax and Independence.

Some two dozen members of Post 1115, Pulaski Post 1184, and other VFW Posts greeted him for a brief visit and reception in our own Post Home Thursday afternoon, August 13.

Hal J. Roesch II of Hampton is the first Veteran from Virginia ever to be elected VFW National Commander-in-Chief, the highest position in the organization, and he remarked, "It took the VFW 121 years for Virginia to have a Commander-in-Chief and I want to thank everyone here for helping me and Virginia get to that point. It's truly an honor."

A 20-year Veteran of the United States Air Force who served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Roesch was installed as the 112th VFW National Commander July 24 in Kansas City.

"The VFW is the only organization that decided to roll up its sleeves and continue business as normal during this pandemic," he proudly told the Hillsville gathering.

Roesch said he signed an executive order that enables VFW Posts to do full electronic meetings if they can, "but we still want to meet in person to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship."

He continued, "Most all of our members are Vietnam Veterans. There was a 20-year gap of eligibility after Vietnam before the next crop of eligible Veterans. We have a new generation and people are seeing things differently so it is hard to recruit the younger ones.

"The VFW has not always been such an inclusive organization. For example, it took us until 1971 to allow women into this organization. They were fighting long before that. This organization is open to every eligible Veteran. I don't care what color they are...what age...what religion...what sexual orientation they are. Everyone who signed that blank check to the country is eligible. We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment in this organization."

Roesch addressed the issue of infighting among members, such as he has seen at some VFW Posts: "If you are a member and can't treat every other member with respect, I don't need you...get out! If we can fight together, bleed together, die together or come home together, we can still serve together in our community.

The Commander closed his remarks on a positive note: "These are trying times. It's like being in a war zone all over again (but) we will get through this together. We will carry on. I'd like to say we are going to get bigger and better. I hope so, but I can't do it without everybody's help."

Roesch served in the Air Force from 1982 to 2002. He received three Meritorious Service Medals, two Air Force Commendation Medals, two Air Force Achievement Medals, plus numerous other awards and decorations. He joined the VFW in 1991 at VFW Post 3034 in Sumter, South Carolina and became a Post Commander at VFW Post 4542 in Spring Lake, North Carolina. He now maintains a Gold Legacy Life Membership in VFW Post 3219 in Phoebus, Virginia.

The new National Commander had served as Commander of the Department of Virginia (2008-2009) and has been a strong supporter of our own Grover King VFW Post 1115 for many years.



Oscar Hall, Dedicated to the VFW and Moose

By Donald Trausneck



Every once in a while there comes a person almost too valuable to replace. One such person is Navy Veteran, Post 1115 and Galax Moose Lodge member Oscar Hall of Galax. Oscar has done so much for so many years as one of the driving forces for the Old Fiddlers Convention, sponsored by the Moose. As valuable as he is in the music community, he has also been a dedicated, hardworking member of Post 1115, which he has served as Commander and in many other positions.

A Carroll County native, Oscar grew up on the outskirts of Hillsville and developed an early love of the traditional music which has always been a big part of local culture. He joined the Moose Lodge in 1965 and immediately became immersed in work for the Old Fiddlers Convention which had been going on already for 30 years. For the Fiddlers Convention, he has been the jack-of-all-trades – and master of most – ever since.

“Oscar has been one of the most faithful members of the Galax Moose Lodge for over 50 years,” according to Tom Jones, Moose officer, and publicity chairman and one of the main coordinators for the Fiddlers’ Convention. “He is always willing to help on any project no matter how small or large to bring it to a successful ending. He has spent many hours to help build a strong Moose fraternity. As a member of the Old Fiddlers Convention committee, he has been a part of all aspects of preparing for and bringing the Convention to a success for the past 50 plus years. As a faithful committee member, he works on and promotes the Old Fiddlers Convention year-round.”

Last year was Oscar’s 54th year working with the Fiddlers Convention and he is looking forward to his 55th – which should have been this year but now will hopefully be in 2021. The next Fiddlers Convention will be number 85 overall. The Fiddlers Convention has continued to grow in size and popularity “because we are trying to keep alive the traditional and old time music,” Oscar said. “It’s not this modern bluegrass music. It’s the same music Bill Monroe started. “When I first started, there wasn’t but one band category for bluegrass and old time together. Now there are two different (band) categories and several more (instrumental categories),” Oscar added. Due to his involvement in the event, Oscar has personally met many of the great personalities in traditional music – Johnny Cash, Doc Watson, Janette Carter, Ricky Scaggs, and others. Oscar’s love of traditional music is infectious and it has spilled over to his following generations.

In 1955, he wed Larmie, from a musical family in her own right, who would be his wife for 62 years until he lost her just a few years ago. The union produced three children, all of whom would be involved heavily in music: Dennis, Dallas and Doris. The boys have been in bands, with Dennis currently a musician in the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters, one of the more talented and more popular local old time bands, Dallas in several bands, and Doris a talented flatfoot dancer.

Though not now active in bands himself, friends recall Oscar to be a talented guitar player, “and he plays a wicked harmonica,” according to longtime friend Rosemary Searcy. The widow of Past VFW Post 1115 Commander Squire Searcy, one of Oscar’s many friends, Rosemary added, “he is a great music historian. He can tell you stories about all the area’s musicians and he knows probably every old time song ever written.

“You can spend many hours listening to his fabulous stories,” she added, “and he knows every road around here and every tale.”

Enlisting in the United States Navy in the mid-40s, near the end of World War Two, Oscar served in the European Theater of Operations at the end of the war and was Honorably Discharged in 1947.

For the VFW, he continues to perform many important duties, even at the age of 92.

He has held several different officer positions, including Post Commander around 10 years ago. In fact, he was the Commander the same year he served as Governor of the Moose Lodge. He is believed to be the only person ever to hold both important positions the same year. He is currently a Post Trustee, Commander of the Funeral Detail, Post Judge Advocate for legal affairs and procedures, unofficial Historian, and volunteer maintenance coordinator, the job which he performs diligently due to his expertise in many areas of maintenance work.

“I can tell you my job would be harder to do if I could not go to Oscar for an answer or guidance,” according to Commander Sandra Terry. “Oscar is one of the members of which you can say he cannot be replaced. He’s our head maintenance guy. If something goes wrong, he can tell you where to look and how to fix it. Oscar is our go-to guy if we have a question about our By-Laws and S.O.P. He will be the first to let us know we are doing something wrong. “We can always depend on Oscar to be at every Military Funeral we are called on to do unless he is sick or something comes up preventing him to come,” the Commander added. Despite physical ailments which have become worse in recent years, Oscar performs all these chores without complaint and with a big smile. Oscar is very well liked by everyone in the VFW and at the Moose Lodge. He is a friend to all.

Upcoming Activities:

October 5 – Hillsville Fire Department parade.

October 10 – High Country Grass Concert 7:30pm

October 12 – VFW & Auxiliary meet 10am

October 12 – Music jam, 6:30pm

October 19 – Music jam, 6:30pm.

October 23-24 – Indoor yard sale.

October 24 – Dennis Tolbert Band concert, 7:30pm.

October 26 – Music jam, 6:30pm.

November 2 – Outdoor or indoor music jam, 6:30.

November 9 – VFW & Auxiliary meets, 10 a.m.

November 9 – Music jam, 6:30pm.

November 11 – VETERANS DAY

November 13-14 –Indoor yard sale.

November 16 – American Red Cross Bloodmobile.

November 16 – Music jam, 6:30pm.

November 23 – Outdoor or indoor music jam, 6:30pm

November 26 – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Auxiliary Officers:

President:

Marcia Semones

Sr Vice President:

Donna Minton

Jr. Vice President:

Patty Baskett

Treasurer:

Debra Newell

Secretary: Patty Baskett

Conductress:

Echo Baskett

Chaplain:

Emily Dobbins

Guard: Oleta Bauman

Patriotic Instructor:

Donna Minton

3 Year Trustee:

Christine Martin

2 Year Trustee:

Elsie Wylie

1 Year Trustee:

Emma Edwards

Message from the Auxiliary

Hello my Brothers and Sisters,

We are back to having our Auxiliary meetings. We now meet on the second Mondays at 10:00 am.

We invite everyone to attend our meetings.

We are collecting our annual dues, please make your check out for \$20.00 and mail it to Debbie Newell at 2146 Laurel Fork Road, Laurel Fork, Va. 24352. All those that pay their dues by Oct. 31st, will have their name put in a drawing for a chance at a Life Membership. Sharon Alexander won the Life Membership last year.

Another drawing will be for \$100.00 for everyone that attends a meeting, their name will be placed in a pot. At the end of our physical year, a name will be drawn. The more meetings you attend the more chances you will have a chance to win \$100.00.

For fun, each month members attending the meeting are asked to put a quarter in a container for a chance to win . Every name of our Auxiliary members will be placed in a box then, at every meeting we will draw a name. If you are present at the meeting and your name is drawn you will win the pot, if no one wins the money it will carry over every month until we have a winner.

We've begun working on our programs. We all need to put an effort into participating in our National Programs.

We are saddened to Drape our Charter in loving memory of our Sisters: Mabel Dalton, Mary Weeks, Wilma Showalters, Ruby Cockerham, Una Brewer, Polly Jenkins, Billy Taylor, Patricia Webb, Goldie Austin, and Annie Mae Horton. We have lost so many precious members and wonderful Ladies in 2 months.

We must try to recruit new members and rejoin members we have lost by the wayside. I know we all know people that are eligible to join our Auxiliary, we must make a great effort.

I do ask everyone to stay safe and healthy.

With love, Marcia.