



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
LITHUANIAN POST 154
75TH ANNIVERSARY
1943 - 2018**

Remembering Lithuanian Americans who served in the U.S. military.



**WE DEDICATE THIS COMMEMORATIVE
PLAQUE IN SOLEMN RECOGNITION AND
REMEMBRANCE OF THE COURAGEOUS
AMERICAN MEN AND WOMEN OF
LITHUANIAN DESCENT WHO, SINCE
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,
HAVE SERVED VALIANTLY IN THE
ARMED SERVICES OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
GOD BLESS THEM AND OUR NATION.**

THE AMERICAN LEGION LITHUANIAN POST 154.

2018



The American Legion
Lithuanian Post 154
851 Hollins Street
Baltimore, MD 21201



September 16, 2018

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154, the Post found it fitting to remember the many men and women of Lithuanian descent who served in the US armed services. The Post decided to dedicate a commemorative plaque in their honor and to publish this booklet about them. This booklet documents the Post's unique history and describes the assistance Lithuanian volunteers gave to the American Revolution. The Post also attempted to identify and pay tribute to the men and women of Lithuanian descent from Maryland who served in the U.S. military during the Great War and WW II.

I wish to thank Lithuanian Post 154 Historian Henry Gaidis for composing and spending hundreds of hours researching the material for this booklet. I also wish to thank Lithuanian Hall Association, Inc. for allowing Lithuanian Post 154 to mount our commemorative plaque in the Hall's foyer.

*Joe Jankevicius
Commander
Lithuanian Post 154*

HISTORY OF LITHUANIAN POST 154
LEST WE FORGET
By Henry Gaidis

Though Lithuanian Post 154 is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2018, its roots can be traced back to the late 1800s.

Prior to the 20th century, immigrants arriving to the United States did not find the government social support programs available to immigrants of today. There was no Unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc. to help them in case of disability or job loss. To obtain a degree of security in case of hard times, immigrants formed mutual aid societies based on religious, occupational, or other common interest. Veterans who arrived in Baltimore achieved this mutual aid goal by forming two Lithuanian American veteran fraternal societies that became the root organizations for The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154. The Knights of St. Casimir was formed in 1887 and the Knights of St. George was formed in 1903. Both organizations proudly wore their organization's uniforms during community, religious and patriotic events. Both organizations supported America's Great War effort and many of their members quickly volunteered for military service when WW I was declared. They and their families proudly served their new country in the military and civilian war effort with distinction. Sizable Lithuanian American Communities in other U.S. cities also formed veteran mutual aid societies, volunteered for military service and supported the war effort in similar fashion.

After WW I ended, most of the returning Lithuanian American veterans rejoined their earlier military fraternal organizations, but now with a new prospective and expanded goal. Knowing that their friends and relatives in their ancestral homeland were fighting a bloody three pronged war against

Czarist White Russians, Communist Russians, and Polish forces for Lithuanian independence, many of these veterans were spurred into action. They had seen first-hand the hardship of life under foreign occupation (Russian Czar). After experiencing freedom and democracy in America, these veterans felt duty bound to help their families and friends in Lithuania fight to achieve the same freedoms.

President Wilson's call for the restoration of freedom to all people of Europe was heard by every immigrant in the United States. Even before the smoke of First World War battles had dissipated, Lithuanian American war veterans, upon returning home, began to seek ways to help their homeland. As a result, most Lithuanian American veterans chose to avoid joining the newly established American Legion in favor of forming their own veteran organizations with objectives that included not only caring for their fellow veteran comrades, but also helping the struggle for Lithuanian independence. Small groups of Lithuanian American veterans, such as the Freedom Guards, the American Lithuanian Legion and the Alliance of American Lithuanian Soldiers were formed with the goal of returning to Lithuania and fighting for its independence. By early 1919, a Lithuanian American Brigade had been formed with an estimated 10,000 volunteers across the United States. They were already American military trained and eager to go to Lithuania to fight for its independence.



Although these veterans anticipated full support from the American government for their expedition to Lithuania, the U.S. government would not authorize such action. Instead, the U.S. sought to establish some type of joint allied military policy for Eastern Europe. The U.S. government's attempt to curtail these veterans



Members of the Lithuanian American Brigade in Kaunas, Lithuania 1920.

from returning to Lithuania did not deter them. They found other ways to achieve their goal. Ignoring the imposed American restriction, the unit staff and over 500 Lithuanian American volunteers clandestinely traveled via Canada to Lithuania to take part in Lithuania's 1918-1920 War of Independence.

LITHUANIAN LEGION OF AMERICA

After Lithuania achieved its independence, many of the Lithuanian American Brigade volunteers started forming small local veterans groups. On February 16, 1930, under the leadership of Peter Jurgela, Lithuanian veteran groups from New York, Boston, Chicago, New Britain, Bridgeport, Waterbury, Hartford, New Haven, and Baltimore met in New York. They decided to join together and establish the national Lithuanian Legion of America organization. The organization was incorporated on December 19, 1934, and established its headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Its first Commander was Baltimorean Dr. John A. Buchness (Bucnis) who had served as a Captain in the American Army during the WW I. Buchness subsequently served as the organization's National Surgeon and was one of Lithuanian Post 154's charter members.

Although the Lithuanian Legion of America remained a separate organization from The American Legion, its basic goals and dedication to God and Country were virtually identical. The primary difference was that Lithuanian Legion of America accepted all former soldiers, sailors, and marines of Lithuanian extraction, regardless in which country's armed forces they had served. The American Legion admitted only U.S. veterans. With its rich cultural and ethnic pride, membership in the Lithuanian Legion of America increased. By 1938, the Lithuanian Legion of America had nine posts with hundreds of members. The largest posts were in Chicago and New York.

The Japanese December 7, 1941. attack on Pearl Harbor quickly changed the independent thinking of Lithuanian Legion of America members. Although they continued to be very proud of their ancestral heritage, they were Americans first and foremost. As a result, these proud Lithuanian Legion of America members pledged their support to the American war effort and sought membership in The American Legion. Fifteen Lithuanian Legion of America members from Baltimore applied to The American Legion for permission to form a post in Baltimore.



**Lithuanian Legion of America
Preparing for NY World Fair
Parade 9/1/1939**



**Lithuanian Legion
of America
Honor Badge**

The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154

On March 19, 1943, these fifteen Lithuanian Legion of America Baltimore Post veterans were delighted to learn that their request to form an American Legion Post had been approved and they had been issued a Temporary American Legion Charter. To their added joy, these old veterans also learned that The American Legion had authorized their new Post to use its “Lithuanian Post” designation as its official name and to carry the Lithuanian National Flag during official functions. It is believed that Lithuanian Post 154 is the only American Legion Post authorized to bear such an ethnic designation in its official name. Post members worked diligently recruiting other Lithuanian American veterans. By June 19, 1944 when they received their permanent American Legion Charter, the Post’s membership had grown to fifty two.



**Dr. Adalbert Zelwis
First Commander of
Lithuanian
Post 154**

Our founding Post members quickly realizing, that to be successful, they needed help to fully participate in all of the various American Legion programs. They encouraged their wives, daughters and sisters to form an Auxiliary Unit. The women enthusiastically responded to the call in the same way they had supported the war effort. As a result, Lithuanian Auxiliary Unit 154 was formed and chartered in 1946. The auxiliary unit was of invaluable assistance to Lithuanian Post 154 for several decades. Unfortunately, many of its members moved away or transferred to Post Everlasting and the unit had to cease its activities.

As the years passed, the older Legionnaires faded away and younger veterans of World War II, the Korea Conflict and Vietnam took their places. These younger veterans continued to work with the same dedication displayed by the Post's founders.

Although Post membership has never been large, the Post has participated in many State and National American Legion Programs. Their achievements and work was not in vain. Many trophies, plaques and citations were awarded to the Post for a job well done by Baltimore District, Department of Maryland and National Headquarters. Among the Post's especially treasured awards are the Americanism Citation and the Special Service Certificate from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for service rendered during World War II.

Deeply concerned about the future of their country and knowing that the leaders of tomorrow are the youth of today, the Post has sponsored many young men to Boys State. Boys State is an excellent one week program where boys learn leadership skills and how U.S. local governments function. At the Post's annual Installation of Officers Ceremony, the Post awards two Freshmen College scholarships. Also at this annual ceremony, the Post encourages community service by recognizing a police officer, firefighter, and teacher for their extraordinary service to the community.

In all their activities, the members of Lithuanian Post 154 have never forgotten God. After the splendid "Back to God" movement was formally endorsed by The American Legion at its 1951 convention, the Post embraced the movement by praying as a group in church. The Post has continued to annually participate as a group in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at St. Alphonsus Church on the first Sunday of November.

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.”



**Lithuanian Post 154 Participating in the
Back To God Service at Saint Alphonsus Church.**

One of the Post’s former Commanders and Chaplain was the Reverend Anthony Dranginis. Father Tony served as a combat marine during World War II and participated in the Battle of Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. He became a priest after surviving these conflicts and returning home. Beside Father Dranginis’ service to Lithuanian Post 154 and the Baltimore Lithuanian Community, he also served as The American Legion Department of Maryland Chaplain. In his honor, the Department of Maryland has established *The Reverend Anthony Dranginis Memorial Trophy*, which is awarded annually at the Department Convention to a Post Chaplain.

Nor did the Post forget those brave men and women who gave their lives in battle. While the war was still raging in Europe and the Pacific, on May 30, 1943, the newly established Post 154 participated in its first Baltimore District Memorial Day Service. The Post continues to annually takes part in the Baltimore District Memorial Day Service or, on occasion, has conducted its own Service at Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery.

To keep alive the memory of Post and Unit members who had reported to the Supreme Commander, Lithuanian Post 154 Adjutant John Stefura introduced the Post Everlasting Service at the Post's Installation of Officers Ceremony in September of 1950. This impressive and solemn ceremony has become part of our Post's officers installation program ever since. Following Post 154's example, The American Legion Baltimore District introduced the Post Everlasting Service to The American Legion Department of Maryland Convention held at the Lord Baltimore Hotel in 1951. The Service was incorporated into subsequent conventions and continues to this day to be a highlight of the Department of Maryland Conventions.



Burning List of Departed Comrade Names at Post Everlasting Service

The Veterans in our Veterans Hospitals, nursing homes, and other hospital facilities, have not been forgotten by the members of Post 154. The Post contributes generously to these institutions and Post members enthusiastically donate blood during Red Cross Blood Drives. Post members have spent many hours visiting veterans and transporting them for treatment and doctor appointments. Legionnaire John Cuculis was cited for having volunteered 800 hours at Perry Point Veterans Hospital.

Past Post Chaplain Fredrick T. Kaminski volunteered one day a week transporting veterans to and from the Veterans Administration clinic in Glen Burnie for medical treatment. Fred was issued a special citation in 2013 for volunteering over 2,500 hours.

The Post is also extremely proud of its award winning newsletter the *Legionnaire*, which began being published in May 1948. The *Legionnaire* has only become better and better over the passing years through the services rendered by Lee Eddy Budelis, John Mazz, Gintaras Buivys, John Maskavich, Alexander Radzius and by Joseph Jankevicius, its present editor. The Post's *Legionnaire* newsletter has often won The American Legion Department of Maryland *John Sloan Newsletter Trophy*.

The *Legionnaire* is the primary method of communication with Post members. Unlike most American Legion Posts that are neighborhood social gather centers, most Lithuanian Post 154 members belong to the Post because of their Lithuanian heritage and not the neighborhood. Most have moved away but still have interest in Baltimore's Lithuanian Community and have a desire to be associated with Lithuanian Post 154. Only three percent of Post members live in the same postal code as Lithuanian Post 154's "Home." Only fifteen percent of Lithuanian Post 154 members live in Baltimore, and thirty percent live outside of Maryland. For this reason, besides items about The American Legion and Post activities, the *Legionnaire* often contain interesting news about Lithuanian Community activities.

In keeping with our founding fathers desire to promote pride in the Post's Lithuanian heritage, the Post continues to maintain a relationship with the Republic of Lithuania Embassy. The Ambassador and military attachés have often attended the Post's Installation of Officers Ceremony.

Two of the Post's current members have been decorated by the Republic of Lithuania for service to that nation. Joseph Gaila was awarded the Order of Gediminas for his service to the Restored Lithuanian Republic after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union. Henry Gaidis was awarded the Lithuanian NATO Commemorative Badge in 2002, for his assistance to Lithuania in obtaining admittance to NATO. Henry was



**Order Of
Gediminas**



**Meritorious
Civilian
Service**

also awarded the Lithuanian Military Meritorious Civilian Service Medal in 2015 for his continuing contribution to cooperative activities between American and Lithuanian Armed Forces.

As our old veterans fade away, new veterans have come forward to continue the Post's service to the nation. Today the Post includes Lithuanian American veterans who have served in U.S. wars and conflicts since WW II. Lithuanian Post members include not only veterans, but also active duty members of the American Armed Forces. Like their fore fathers, the current generation of Lithuanian American veterans are proud to have served in the U.S. military and are proud to wear the American Legion cap. These younger veterans continue the Post's work with the same dedication displayed by past generations of Lithuanian Post 154 Legionnaires.

Today's Lithuanian Post 154 members are proud of their past and continue to stand alongside fellow legionnaires across the nation in keeping the American Legion tradition of God and Country foremost. Each and every member is a worthy successor to their Lithuanian Legion of America founding fathers.

LITHUANIAN POST 154 COMMANDERS

From - To	Commander
1942 - 1944	Dr. Adalbert Zelwis
1944 - 1945	Charles F. Ozel
1945 - 1946	William L. Kwedar
1946 - 1947	Reynold J. Penn
1947 - 1948	John A. Bush
1948 - 1949	Paul Gurklis
1949 - 1951	Anthony S. Dranginis
1951 - 1952	John A. Bush
1952 - 1954	John M. Stefura
1954 - 1955	John W. Mazz
1955 - 1956	William J. Ruskell
1956 - 1958	Anthony A. Kicas
1958 - 1959	William Lacs
1959 - 1960	John W. Mazz
1960 - 1962	Roland V. Miller
1962 - 1964	Henry T. Beaudet
1964 - 1966	Vaclovas Laukaitis
1966 - 1968	John J. Mox, Sr.
1968 - 1970	Algirdas Bucevicius
1970 - 1972	Balys Brasauskas
1972 - 1974	Peter S. Okas
1974 - 1975	Walter P. Hicks
1975 - 1977	John W. Kemmer, Jr.
1977 - 1979	Michael L. Cavanaugh
1979 - 1981	Charles V. Sarpalis
1981 - 1983	Edmond Bartas
1983 - 1984	John P. Urlock
1984 - 1985	Charles V. Sarpalis
1985 - 1986	Peter S. Okas
1986 - 1988	Vincentas T. Dulys
1988 - 1990	Kestutis Galeckas
1990 - 1995	Vincentas T. Dulys
1995 - 1996	John F. Maskavich
1996 - 1998	Fred Kaminski
1998 - 2002	Gintaras Buivys
2002 - 2004	Walter J. Cooper
2004 - 2013	John F. Maskavich
2013 - 2019	Joseph S. Jankevicius

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILARY, LITHUANIAN UNIT 154

Charter Members

Mildred (Kicas) Sutt
Margaret Ambrose
Catherine Kwedera
Patricia Sinkus
Catherine Kwedar
Madelyn Allen
Petrona Dumsha
Ursula Karper
Eva Maslauskas
Anastasia Boudris
Adele Bush
Anna Kripas
Anna (Meris) Rekus
Anna Ozel
Mildred Bush
Marie Krenevienas

Gold Star Members

Lillian Baker
Amelia Gray
Bertha Mitchell
Agnes Nasaukaitis
Julia Rastenis

Unit Presidents

1946 - 1947	Mildred (Kicas) Sutt
1947 - 1949	Eva Kraus
1949 - 1952	Frances A. Velzis
1952 - 1954	Julia Rastenis
1954 - 1956	Nellie Miller
1956 - 1959	Marie Mazz
1959 - 1960	Mildred (Kicas) Sutt
1960 - 1962	Isabell (Kicas) Zirbs
1962 - 1964	Evelyn Brooks
1964 - 1965	Mildred (Kicas) Sutt
1965 - 1968	Shirley Colley
1968 - 1970	Eva Kraus
1971 - 1978	Francis Karpers,
1979 - 1981	Eugenia Paznekas
1982 - 1992	Mary C. Byrnes

COMRADES TRANSFERRED TO POST EVERLASTING

Alphonse A. Adams
 Joseph Akulis
 Joseph A. Allen
 Robert P. Ambrose
 * **Vincent Ambrose**
 C. Warren Andrews, Jr.
 Joseph Antoniak
 Joseph Anzula
 William Appleby
 Harry E. Baker
 Albert P. Bakutis
 Simon P. Baranosky
 Peter Barciauskas
 Edmond V. Bartas
 Phillip Battaglia
 Kenneth Bauer
 * **Joseph Bayoras**
 Jennings S. Beaty
 James Beaudet
 Thomas Beaudet
 Joseph G. Beelat
 Joseph Benesch
 Stanley Beneshunas
 William H. Bessling
 Donald L. Beyer
 Edward Bistriski
 Peter Bradley
 John Brandis
 Boniface Brazaitis
 Edward M. Briggs
 Alfred J. Bucevicius
 Algirdas Bucevicius
 * **Dr. John A. Buchness**
 Edward R. Buda
 Edward M. Budelis
 Alexander W. Burke
 John A. Bush
 Charles P. Byrne
 Robert W. Carre
 Leo M. Cavanaugh
 Albert Chepaitis
 H. Marshall Chetalat
 Walter P. Cherivitch
 Leon M. Cooper

Walter S. Cooper
 William Coursey
 Fletcher M. Crockett
 Edward D. Daniels
 Martin J. Demattei
 Adolph G. Denbin
 Authur N. DeRoche
 Charles Dikinis
 Harry L. Doxzen
 Rev. Anthony S.
 Dranginis
 * **Frank Dubinskis**
 Albert Dumsha
 Vytautas Eringis
 Floyd Franklin
 Emery I. Frost, Sr.
 Frank Gabranski
 Kestutis Galeckas
 Bernard Galinaitis
 Alexander Gasunas
 Frank Giannino
 Charles C. Grams
 Thomas N. Green
 Earl C. Gross
 Joseph Grybe
 * **Paul Gurklis**
 Harry Hay
 Walter Preston Hicks
 Ernest F. Hill
 Frank J. Jacobs
 John Jarosinski
 Edward J. Jarcewski
 Albert C. Jasaitis
 Alexander J. Jersey
 Ellsworth Johnson
 John Jukas
 Albert J. Juskus
 William J. Kamansky
 * **Frank Karciouzkas**
 Anthony Kasulen
 August Kazlauski
 John W. Kemmer, Jr.
 Joseph Keydash
 Edward J. Kicas



Anthony A. Kicas
 Anthony A. Kicas, Sr.
 Alfred M. King
 Stanley Kiturakis
 Joseph J. Kleinota, Jr.
 John J. Kozlowski
 Vincent Krievienas
 William Kwedar
 * **William G. Lacs**
 Louis F. Landau
 Dominick J. Lasseth
 Vaclovas Laukaitis
 Dr. Adolph T. Levickas
 Herbert J. Levickas
 William A. Lewis
 Edward J. Lipton
 Peter Litwin
 Lester H. Lock
 John P. Lockwich
 Alexander W. Luckton
 John G. Makauskas
 Bruno Malinauskas
 Thomas G. Marcin
 * **Frank Maslauskas**
 Albert A. Matalonis
 Gordon J. Matulonis
 John W. Mazz
 Michael Mazz
 Harvey Meadows
 Msgr. Louis J. Mendelis
 William Meris
 Paul F. Metz
 Anthony V. Milauskas

* **Designates a Charter Member**

COMRADES TRANSFERRED TO POST EVERLASTING



Gilbert H. Miller
 Michael J. Miller
 Robert J. Miller
 Roland V. Miller
 Stanley F. Milunaitis
 Joseph L. Minnich, Jr
 Vernard M. Monroe
 Joseph Muzdakias
 Watson A. Naravas
 George Nasukaitis
 * **Vincent S. Niemur**
 Ramunas J. Noreika
 Herman W. Noweck
 James B. Novick
 Peter S. Okas
 Joseph Olevich
 * **Charles F. Ozel**
 John A. Parkent
 James Parr
 Joseph Pastarnokas
 Frank Pecker
 Charles E. Peddicord

James W. Peddicord
 Edward Penn
 Reynold J. Penn
 Richard Petruska
 Earl G. Pfeifer
 Vernon I. Pfeifer
 Charles M. Pinder
 Ellwood V. Price
 John Quinn
 Olgard Rackus
 Joseph J. Rakowsky
 Nadas Rastenis
 John C. Raynor
 Casimir V. Razulis
 William T. Robinson
 Albert D. Rocks
 Walter Rogers
 Stanley M. Ruby
 John C. Ruff
 William J. Ruskell
 * **Felix Rutkus**
 * **Anthony G. Sackalosky**

Anthony V. Sakie
 Charles V. Sarpalis
 Joseph A. Sauers
 Joseph Saurusaitis
 Anthony Schakus
 John Rafi Sharif
 John V. Sciukas
 John Rafi Sharif
 Alphonse Silanskas
 Joseph Skrelunas
 Algirdas Skudzinskas
 Clifton J. Smith
 Oliver W. Smith, Sr.
 William K. Smith
 Anthony S. Snipas
 Albert J. Soukup
 John Stefura
 Leroy M. Steiner
 John Stez
 Albert A. Stripitis
 Michael Sutt
 George W. Sweeny
 William Eldridge Trott
 * **Ignacy Urnezius**
 John P. Urlock
 * **Vincent J. Velzis**
 Vincent J. Velzis Jr.
 James H. Venker
 Donald K. Vieraitis
 James Wakefield
 Alexander Walunas
 John S. Watson
 Leo. J. Weisengoff
 Walter H. Wellsworth
 Samuel S. Werner
 Victor J. Wisnauskas
 Christian M. Wolfe
 William York
 Clarence A. Zalegaris
 Anthony B. Zeider
 * **Dr. Adalbert Zelwis**
 Frederick C. Ziemer
 Egidijus J. Zilionis
 Adam Zurowsky

* **Designates a Charter Member**

Honoring Lithuanians who fought in the American Revolution and Civil War

History documents that Lithuanians were among the early immigrants who came to America during the colonial era settling in New Amsterdam and Pennsylvania. Most of these immigrants were single males seeking fame and fortunes in the new world with the intent of returning to Lithuania rich to live happily ever after. Some returned, others assimilated through marriage into German and English families without establishing any lasting Lithuanian American ethnic communities. Although small in numbers, these early arriving Lithuanian immigrants and their American born children took an active part in fighting for the liberty and freedom of their newly adopted homeland. Lithuanian Americans served honorably in the nation's armed forces during the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection.

The most famous of these early Lithuanian American immigrants were Generals Thaddeus Kosciusko and Casimir Pulaski. They came to America with small cadres of ethnic staff officers to fight for American Independence. Pulaski gave his life in a cavalry charge during the Battle of Savanna. He is considered to be the Father of the American Cavalry.

Among those who accompanied Kosciusko was his personal friend and secretary, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, who later served as a liaison between friend Thomas Jefferson and Revolutionary leaders in France. France was an American ally helping fight the British. Other Lithuanian officers and enlisted men arrived and served in the French Luzerne Legion. Lithuanian Captains Joseph Baldesque-Baldique, Count Katskotski, Matthias Rogouski and John de Zielinski served in the Pulaski Legion.

Lithuanian Captain John Quitrin Meszkowski (Meskauskas) and Lieutenant Michael Grabowski (Grabauskas) saw action with Armand Louis de Gontaut Biron, Duke de Lauzun's French Foreign Marine Legion, which fought alongside American units in Connecticut, New York, and the Siege at Yorktown.

Andrew Thaddeus Bonaventure Kosciuszko was the most famous Lithuanian to join the American Revolution. He was born on February 12, 1746, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, part of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth. Thaddeus studied at the Polish-Lithuanian Military Academy in Warsaw from 1765-1769. He subsequently spent several years studying engineering, painting, military and political science in France, Germany and Italy.

Kosciuszko became enthusiastic about the cause of American freedom and offered his services in America's struggle for independence. In 1776, Kosciuszko sailed for America. On October 30, 1776 the Continental Congress granted Kosciuszko a brevet commission as Colonel of Engineers.

Kosciuszko's engineering skills proved invaluable to the American war effort. The fortifications he built at Bemis Heights proved crucial in winning the Battle of Saratoga. This battle is considered to have been the turning point in the War of Independence and directly led to France joining in the conflict.

General Washington considered West Point, the plateau overlooking the Hudson River, an important strategic position. In 1778, Washington sent Kosciuszko to that location to design defense fortifications. On this plateau Kosciuszko built a series of forts that prevented the British from taking control of the river and dividing New York from New England.



In 2010, Lithuanian Post 154 was invited to attend the annual Kosciuszko Commemoration at West Point. Lithuanian Post 154 Commander John Maskavich placed a wreath at Kosciuszko Monument.

Had the British been able to seize control of the river, they would have been able to freely obtain reinforcements and supplies from Canada. It was on this same plateau at West Point that the United States established its military academy in 1802 which today is the oldest continuously garrisoned military post in the country. For his service, Kosciuszko was belatedly promoted to the rank of Brigadier General.

The initial Lithuanian colonial immigrants were followed by additional waves of single male Lithuanian immigrants. Many found it prudent to flee Lithuania after their attempts in 1812, 1821, 1831 and 1863-1864 to liberate their homeland from Czarist Russian occupation failed. It was only during the late 1860s and 1870-1880s that Lithuanian male and female immigrants began arriving in the United States in sufficient numbers to establish lasting ethnic communities. These Lithuanian immigrants and their offspring served honorably in U.S. military services. They fought, and many were killed, during WW I and subsequent conflicts.

Captain Alexander Bielski, a Lithuanian officer who fought with great distinction in the Lithuanian 1831 Insurrection, became a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln. He was killed in action in 1861 during the Battle of Belmont while carrying the American flag in a charge onto a position held by Confederate artillery. Lithuanian American born, Confederate Colonel Julius Christian Sosnowski served as a Surgeon with the Confederate Medical Corps. He is credited with saving countless Confederate and Union lives on the battle fields of the Civil War.

Remembering WW I Lithuanian Americans who served in U.S. military

By the time of World War One, there were sufficient Lithuanian Americans in the country to show their political strength and loyalty to both the United States and Lithuania. On October 1, 1914, a Lithuanian American National Convention was convened in Brooklyn, New York to coordinate the various war relief programs for Lithuania. The goal of the convention was war relief for Lithuanians suffering as a result of the fighting between Germany and Russia on the Eastern front. The convention also established a Lithuanian Information Bureau in Washington, D.C. to coordinate Lithuanian American support to the U.S. during the war in Europe.



With the United States entry into World War I, over 30,000 Lithuanian Americans answered the call to duty. These newly arrived immigrants and their children served valiantly in the armed forces of their new country and many died proving they had truly become Americans.

Since all fifteen of American Legion, Lithuanian Post 154 Temporary Charter members were World War I Veterans, the Post in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Great War, initiated a project to identify every Maryland Lithuanian American veteran who served in that conflict. This proved to be a daunting task. The official records, compiled by the State of Maryland after the war, made no effort to identify veterans by ethnic origin. This identification problem was further complicated by the fact that Lithuania had been an equal partner in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1795, the commonwealth was wiped off the face of world maps and divided between Russia and Prussia. Since the U.S. government did not recognize Lithuania as a separate nation, these early arriving Lithuanian immigrants were seldom identified, even in census records, as being Lithuanian. Most were identified as being Polish, Russian, or German. It should also be noted that many traditional Lithuanian names were changed by families (usually shortened or Americanized) or their names misspelled by ship captains, custom officials and census takers. Still the U.S. Census records for 1910 and 1920 asked the question “what language was spoken in the home.” As a result, many veterans not having Lithuanian ethnic last names could only be identified through a review of census records which listed Lithuanian as the language spoken at home. There is no question that the language spoken in the home is a much better indication of nationality than some arbitrary geographic place of birth. The finding of this information through a multiple step process added to the difficulty and consumption of time.

After many months of research, the Post has identified one hundred and forty-four (144) Maryland Lithuanian American men and one (1) women in U.S. and Maryland Military Archives, U.S. Census Records, and in some cases the Post’s own membership rolls as serving during WWI. Although great care

has been taken in preparing this list, regrettably there have been heroes that were surely overlooked due to a lack of information.

Of these veterans, seventy-three (73) were American born to Lithuanian immigrants and seventy-two (72) are listed as having been born in Lithuania, Russia, or Poland. Fifty-five (55) served overseas, four (4) were killed-in action, five (5) were wounded and two died of illnesses or other causes. Those Killed-in-Action are indicated on the subsequent list by an (*) designation before their names.

As in the case in most wars, two thirds of the identified Lithuanian Americans never went overseas but remained in the United States where they served in vital support activities or were still in training. The third that went overseas served in all types of support and combat missions. They fought in the trenches and the air above battlefields in France, Italy, Russia, and elsewhere. Regardless where they served each and every one gave something to the struggle and some gave all.

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN MARYLANDERS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1917-1919

**Military and Naval Service Records
Maryland War Records Commission
Baltimore, Maryland Volumes I and II**

The below listed one hundred and forty-five (145) Maryland Lithuanian American veterans, including one woman, Navy Yeoman Lillian Hildegard Akelitys, have been identified in official records as having participated in the War to End all Wars.



Their names along with their branch of service, residence, and place of birth are listed below. The abbreviation USA indicates service in the U.S. Army, USN in the U.S. Navy, USMC in the U.S. Marine Corps, and USCG in the U.S. Coast Guard. This information is listed as recorded and no effort was made to correct spellings.

NAME	SERVICE	ADDRESS	PLACE OF BIRTH
Abramovitz, Samuel	USA	39 S. Caroline St., Baltimore	Ponevyezh, Russia
Akelitys, Lillian Hildegard	USN	Halethorpe, Maryland	Baltimore, Md.
Alecknowch, Joseph	USA	606 W. Lombard St, Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Ambrose, Vincent T.	USA	640 Columbia Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Bagotaitis, Antonas	USA	213 President St., Baltimore	Vistitis, Russia
Batchatis, Elmer	USN	1815 E. Eager St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Bayoras, Joseph	USA	723 Saratoga St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Begus, William	USA	817 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Bender Morris	USA	2000 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore	Brest-Litovsk, Russia.
Beneshunas, Stanley Joseph	USA	614 W. Conway, St., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Bernotes, Walter A.	USA	30 Albemarle St, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Bierstatias, Charles	USA	524 Columbus Ave, Baltimore	Russia
Brazius, John Joseph	USN	422 S. Paca Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Buchness, Anthony V.	USA	407 S. Paca Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Buchness, John Adam	USA	407 S. Paca Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Buda, Michael	USA	11 Locust St., Curtis Bay, Baltimore	Curtis Bay, Md.
Burakiewicz, Joseph	USA	517 Register St., Baltimore	Suwalki, Russia
Chappas, Charles T	USA	1329 Herkimer St., Baltimore.	Russia
Cessna, Howard W.	USA	Mt. Savage, Allegany Co.	Bedford, Penna.
Chernius, William	USA	657 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Russia
Crisunas, Charles	USA	716 W. Lombard St, Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Demarco, John Lawrence	USA	414 S. Paca Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Demarco, Joseph Leon	USA	414 S. Paca Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Demarco, Samuel Joseph	USA	517 W. Saratoga Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Domeika, Arthur Louis	USA	1397 Herkimer St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Dounorowicz, Leo	USA	11 W. G St., Sparrows Point	Lithuania, Russia
(Changed Name to Link)			
Dubinskie, Frank	USA	604 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Ezersky, Samuel L.	USA	2008 E. Pratt St., Baltimore	Suwalki, Russia
Forys, Valentine	USA	Raspeburg, Baltimore Co.	Poland
Gasunas, Alexander	USA	Colgate, Baltimore Co.	Lithuania, Russia
Greinus, William Albert	USA	1149 Columbia Ave, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Gruzinski, Adolf	USA	729 Curtis Ave., Baltimore	Russia
Gurklis, Paul	USA	809 Hollins St., Baltimore	Russia
Gustitus, Joseph	USA	648 Columbia Ave., Baltimore	Sualke, Russia
Gutelius, Edward Nelson	USA	191 Antietam St., Hagerstown	Kraemer, Penna.
Hallikas, Theodore	USA	Curtis Bay, A.A. Co.	Pernau, Russia
Ignatovich, Alexander	USA	31 N. Eden St., Baltimore	Russia
Jasaitis, Vincent Anthony	USN	841 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Jawarz, Peter	USA	208 Ann St., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Jonas, John	USA	202 Albemarle St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia

NAME	SERVICE	ADDRESS	PLACE OF BIRTH
Juras, Joseph M.	USA	248 S. Castle St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Kabas, Daniel	USA	129 W. Hamburger St., Baltimore	Russia
Kairis, Tony A.	USA	873 Hollins St., Baltimore	Brooklyn, Md.
Kairys, Fred	USA	1223 Pennsylvania Ave, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Kalious, William	USN	112 N. Greene St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Karas, James J.	USA	1715 Lancaster St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Karas, Joseph E.	USA	2012 Preston St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Karpovich, John	USA	13 S. 10 th St., Highlandtown, Balto.	Vilna, Russia
Kasaczun, Leo B.	USA	Baltimore	Scranton, Penna.
Kazulis, Gus	USA	542 Barre St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Kliszes, John Joseph	USMC	665 W. Fayette St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Krerivienas, Vincent	USCG	310 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Russia
Kulis, William Frank	USA	2310 Cambridge St. Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Kungis, John P.	USA	115 Parkin St., Baltimore	Russia
Kwedar, William Leonard	USA	Halethorpe, Baltimore Co.	Baltimore, Md.
Lacavitch (Lacs), William G.	USA	118 Greene St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Lastowski, Alexander Joseph	USN	539 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Latusky, Thomas Anthony	USN	539 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Lebedes, Vincente	USA	631 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Russia
Lemba, Joseph	USA	101 Elm Ave., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Lemkes, Herman	USA	1123 Hollins St., Baltimore	Russia
Levine, Abraham	USA	1116 E. Fayette St., Baltimore	Panevyezh, Russia
Litwin, Abraham	USA	222 N. Alsquith St., Baltimore	Radzevilski, Russia
Litwin, Peter F.	USA	724 W. Saratoga St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Losinsky, Stephen J.	USA	10 Elm St., Curtis Bay, A.A., Co.	Russia
Luscowski, Austin	USA	114 Albemarle St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Maizis, Morris	USA	1210 Madison Avenue	Russia
Malkus, Phillip M.	USA	Park Ave., Raspeburg, Ba. Co.	Baltimore, Md.
Manelow, Joseph	USA	1101 E. Lombard St., Baltimore	Niezhin, Russia
Marcin, Thomas G.	USA	Rossville, Maryland	Baltimore, Md.
Matelis, Peter	USA	523 W. Barre St., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Matukas, Stanislaus	USA	423 S. Bond St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Matulewicz, John C.	USA	Raspeburg, Baltimore Co.	Baltimore, Md.
Mazeika, John	USA	Lonaconing, Allegany Co.	Lonaconing, Md
Medzunas, Henry	USA	437 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Mikulonies, Anthony	USA	920 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Miller, Abraham B.	USA	1925 Walbrook Ave., Baltimore.	Kovno, Russia
Milosh, Constant W.	USA	Middle River, Maryland	Baltimore, Md.
Munkus, Silvis	USA	817 E. Pratt St., Baltimore	Badvelicko, Russia
Naditch, Charles	USN	1905 Ensor St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Niemur, Vincent P.	USA	640 Columbia Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Olevich, Algard	USMC	700 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Olevich, Joseph	USA	1311 E. Eager St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Ozel, Charles Frank	USA	849 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Palonis, Anthony	USA	Ocean, Allegany County	Scranton, Penna.
Pasarskus, Joseph	USA	420 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Russia
Pausa, Toney Frank	USN	668 W. Fayette St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Penn, Edward	USN	120 S. Green St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Racusin, Alexander I.	USA	119 N. Paca St., Baltimore	Riga, Russia
Rakowsky, Joseph John	USA	228 S. Freemont St. Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Raszimas, Tony	USA	730 W. Lexington St., Baltimore	Witkowszki, Poland
Raziulis, Vincent	USA	119 S. High St., Baltimore	Dusety, Lithuania
Regustus, William E.	USA	708 ½ N. Stockton St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.

NAME	SERVICE	ADDRESS	PLACE OF BIRTH
Rosimas, John	USA	730 W. Lexington St., Baltimore	Alwitas, Russia
Rudis, Kazimeras	USN	506 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Russia
Ruzicka, Charles	USN	1413 N. Gay Street, Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Sackalosky, John Joseph	USA	254 Patapso St., Westport, Ba. Co.	Baltimore, Md.
Sadaukas, Vincent	USA	Baltimore	Russia
Sakievich, Anthony	USN	660 W. Saratoga St. Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Sakievich, Anthony Joseph	USA	622 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Sakievich, Joseph Anthony	USN	622 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Schakus, Anthony	USA	819 Hollins St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Shasky, Joseph George	USN	122 S. Greene St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Silanski, Kazimir	USA	826 Pratt St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Skiviklas, Stelak	USA	11 th & O'Donnell Sts., Baltimore	Lubin, Russia
Skladowsky, John Andrew	USA	638 Columbia, Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Smetona, John Joseph	USN	120 N. Ellwood Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Snidrowski, Albert M.	USA	424 Paca St., Baltimore	Poland
*Sokolowsky, Witold M.	USA	842 ½ W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Wilna, Russia
Squarinovitch, Steve	USA	616 W. Lombard St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Stankaveck, Charles John	USA	214 S. Sharp St., Baltimore	Russia
*Stanulis, Anton	USA	658 W. German St., Baltimore	Russia
Stoikes, Charles	USMC	Baltimore, Maryland	Dickmes, Russia
(Name changed from Kazimer Shtuikes)			
Tilles, Ellis	USA	237 S. High St., Baltimore	Vilna, Russia
Tivvis, William Matthew	USA	805 S. Fremont Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Tomlonas, Alexander John	USA	113 Scott St., Baltimore	New York, N.Y.
Unitas, Matthew J.	USA	110 N. Greene St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Urbin, Domonick	USA	Kitzmilller, Garrett Co.	Knomo, Russia
Urnezis, Ignacy	USA	834 E. Pratt St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Vansas, Harry J.	USA	13 N. Poppleton St., Baltimore	Shadyside, N.J.
Vencius, Bladas K.	USA	413 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Russia
Walcziacukas, Anton	USA	Montevideo, Howard Co.	Russia
Walukas, Albert	USA	1314 Glyndon Ave., Baltimore	Ansonia, Conn.
Walunas, Alek	USA	531 W. Barre St., Baltimore	Russia
Watson, George	USN	401 W. Pratt St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Welyvis, George Bennie	USA	320 N. Greene St., Baltimore	Lithuania
Wensk, Joseph A.	USA	413 Paca St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Yotropolis, Gaudentas	USA	412 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Lithuania, Russia
Youch, Charles	USMC	Baltimore	Roscoe, Pa.
Yousavage, Peter William	USN	922 Ridgely St., Baltimore	Girardsville, Pa.
Yuratis, Charles Stephen	USA	308 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Zablocki, Frank	USN	2001 Spruce St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Zalis, Joel Charles	USN	248 Harrison St., Baltimore	Russia
Zaukus, John J.	USA	Curtis Bay, A.A. Co, Md.	Russia
Zdanis, Dominik	USA	527 S. Paca St., Baltimore	Russia
Zebris, Igni J.	USA	Clinton, Prince Georges Co.	Chicago, Illinois
Zemaitis, Albert A.	USA	714 W. German St., Baltimore	Pandella, Russia
*Zemaitis, Mindow Leonard	USMC	714 W. Redwood St., Baltimore	Pandella, Russia
Zilaitis, Peter	USA	1111 Curtis Ave., A.A. Co,	Russia
*Zitaitis, Frank	USA	819 Holland St., Baltimore	Kovno, Russia
Zuckas (Zaukas), John J.	USA	1101 Curtis Ave, Curtis Bay, A.A., Co.	Russia
Zukas, Charles	USN	925 N. Central Ave., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
Zukas, Thomas Joseph	USA	Mt. Winans, Baltimore Co.	Baltimore, Md.
Zurliene, Joseph Herman	USA	501 W. Pratt St., Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.

* Designates Killed-in-Action

Although the State of Maryland took great effort to identify its veterans, many were overlooked. Those already serving in the armed forces, enlisted in other states, or settled in Maryland after the conflict were not included in Maryland records. Post research has identified seven such veterans who lived in Maryland and considered themselves as Marylanders. For this reason, these seven Marylanders have been added to the Post's Lithuanian American



Honor Roll. Three of them saw service overseas. One of them was born in Baltimore and six were born in Lithuania. Among the seven was Louis J. Mendelis, who during basic training, was determined not to be physically fit for service due to coal mine injuries and was given an honorable discharge. Mendelis later become a Catholic Priest and the noted Monsignor at St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Another one of them, Nadas Rastenis, sustained heavy injuries during a German poison gas attack causing him to be hospitalized for over a year upon his return to the United States. Rastenis subsequently became a lawyer, served as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates and became a well known poet.

NAME	SERVICE	ADDRESS	PLACE OF BIRTH
Karciauskas, Frank	USA	Chester, Pennsylvania	Lithuania
Maslauskas, Franciskus	USA	Brooklyn, New York	Tiskai, Lithuania
Mendelis, Louis J.	USA	Inkerman, Pennsylvania	Siauliai, Lithuania
Rastenis, Nadas	USA	Jacksonville, Ohio	Lithuania
(Name changed from Nicodemus Adelard Rastenis)			
Rutkus, Felix	USA	New Britain, Hartford, Connecticut	Lithuania
Velzis, Vincent J.	USA	Providence, Rhode Island	Lithuania
Zelwis, Adalbert	USA	Pittsburg, Pennsylvania	Baltimore, Maryland
(Albertas Zelvis also used as an alias)			

OUR HONORED GREAT WAR FALLEN

It is estimated that 4.7 million Americans served in the Great War, 116,516 died while in the service and approximately 420,000 were wounded or became ill from diseases contracted in the line of duty. Of the recorded deaths, 53,402 died in combat and 63,114 from diseases largely due to the Spanish influenza epidemic in 1918. Maryland furnished 62,424 soldiers, sailors, and marines, of which 645 were killed in action and 884 died for other causes. Among these casualties were four Lithuanian American Marylanders killed in action, one died from disease and one for other reasons. Though time precluded an exhaustive research of their biographies, the information that the Post found is a reasonable summary of their lives and the sacrifices they made for our nation.

Witold M. Sokolowsky was born in Wilna, Lithuania, and immigrated to the United States in the hopes of finding a better way of live. He settled in Baltimore, Maryland, residing at 842½ West Lombard Street and worked in various garment shops. Witold was 27 years and 10 months old when he inducted into military service on September 24, 1917. After basic training, he became a Private in Company C, 313th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 79th Division. On July 8, 1918, Witold and his unit were sent to France. He fought gallantly in the Avon Court Sector, Meuse-Argonne and the Troyon Sector until he was wounded on October 12, 1918 and died on the battlefield for his adopted country. He never married. We were unable to find any information about the family he left in Lithuania. Private Witold Sokolowsky gave all of his tomorrows so we could enjoy our todays. He lies buried in the St. Mihiel American Cemetery, Thiaucourt, France among his fallen comrades.

Mindow Leonard Zemaitis was born on September 8, 1901, in Pandela, Lithuania. After arriving in the USA, the family settled at 714 W. Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland. Young Mindow apparently developed “patriotic fever” when war was declared and he attempted to join the U.S. Army in Baltimore. His attempt at joining the Army failed because he was under age. Still, the fifteen year old would not be deterred and went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he lied about his age to recruiters. On May 2, 1917, when he was only fifteen years old. Mindow was accepted in to U.S.

Marine Corps. Following his successfully completion of basic training, Mindow was assigned to the 43d Company, 5th U.S. Marine Regiment. His regiment was shipped overseas, on July 3, 1917, where he took part in some of the heaviest fighting in France during the war. The regiment’s battle honors include the Toulon-Troyon Sector, Aisne, and Chateau-Thierry. Private Mindow Zemaitis, when only sixteen years old was Killed-In-Action, on June 13, 1918, while fighting the Germans in the Chateau-Thierry Sector. Zemaitis lies buried in the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, Belleau, France. Surely he is the youngest of all Maryland Lithuanian Americans who gave his life for his adopted country during the Great War.



**Pvt. Mindow
Leonard
Zemaitis, USMC
Belleau, France**

Frank Zitaitis was born in Kovno, Lithuania. Like many of his fellow countrymen, he fled his Russian occupied homeland in the hope of finding a better life in America. Very little is known about Frank’s life. He appears to have immigrated to America with, or seeking to join, his sister Barbara Narbutus and her husband. Frank was residing at 819 Holland St., Baltimore, Maryland on September 8, 1917 when he joined the U.S. Army. After completing his basic training, he was assigned to

Company I, 38th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 3rd Division. His unit was sent overseas to France on March 30, 1918 and took part in heavy fighting in Aisne, Chateau-Thierry Sector, Champagne-Marne, and Aisne-Marne. During heavy fighting in Aisne-Marne, Private Frank Zitaitis was Killed-in-Action, on July 22, 1918. Frank lies buried among his fallen comrades in the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, Fere-en-Tardenois, France.

Although not combat related deaths, two Baltimore Lithuanian Americans lost their lives during WWI while on active duty. Their loss was surely as traumatic to their loved ones as those who died fighting on a battlefield. For this reason, the Post lists their names among our fallen.

John L. Zuckas was another Lithuanian immigrant who came to America dreaming of establishing a better life. While residing at 1101 Curtis Avenue, Curtis Bay, Anne Arundel, Maryland, John answered his nation's call to duty. On April 30, 1918, when he was twenty-five years old, he was inducted into the U.S. Army. After completing basic training, Private John Zuckas was assigned on August 2, 1918, to Casual Company, 154th U.S. Army Depot Brigade, 2nd Battalion, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. While serving on active duty at the Edgewood Arsenal, John contracted pneumonia and died on October 1, 1918. Still just as his brothers in arms who died fighting in the face of the enemy, John also gave his life for his country. His military records list his cause of his death as pneumonia. Many historians would say he surely succumbed to the Spanish Flu epidemic that passed through Maryland.

Anton Stanulis's life, like many Lithuanians who came to America before the First World War, is clouded in mystery. The primary reason for this mystery is the poor spelling and handwriting of ship crews, custom and census information gatherers.

Attempts to find more detail information about Stanulis was unsuccessful. We know from the records we found that Anton Stanulis was born about 1896 in Russia and arrived in Baltimore, Maryland aboard the SS Weimar from Bremen, Germany on May 1907 . He had listed his intended destination as Aurora, Illinois. He was either traveling with or became friends with fellow passenger Jonas Mickus. Attempts to find information about Jonas were equally unsuccessful. Still, we know from the ship's log that Lithuanian was the native language of both Anton and Jonas.

For reasons unknown, Anton Stanulis chose to stay in Baltimore rather than continuing his travel to Aurora, Illinois. He listed his residence as 658 W. German St., Baltimore, Maryland, when he enlisted in the U.S. Army. Upon completion of basic training, on September 22, 1917, Anton was awarded the rank of Private and assigned to Company A, 60th U.S. Infantry, 5th Division. On April 1, 1918, he was promoted to Corporal and on April 16, 1918, he and his regiment were sent overseas. While serving in France, Anton, for unknown reasons, was reduced in rank to Private on September 4, 1918. Private Anton Stanulis took part in heavy fighting in the Anould Sector; St Die Sector; Villers-en-Haye Sector; St Mihiel; and Meuse-Argonne.

On the morning of November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, Private Anton Stanulis was Killed-in-Action fighting at Meuse-Argonne. His remains were never identified. He lies among his fallen comrades in the U.S. Military Cemetery erected on



**“Here rests in Honored
Glory an American
soldier known but to
God.”
November 11, 1918,
Armistice Day,
Private Anton
Stanulis
was Killed-in-Action.**

the Meuse-Argonne Battle Field. Above his interned body was placed America's traditional stone cross bearing the inscription "Here rests in Honored Glory an American soldier known but to God." Even in death, Private Anton Stanulis's story is clouded in mystery. To further complicate, his tale, his burial records indicate that he had enlisted under the name Anton Stein. No further information was recorded and one can only surmise what this indicates. Was the information listed as a result of some type of administrative error, was he Jewish by religion, listed under the name of a landlord, or trying to provide some type of financial security for a loved one if he fell. This fallen American hero's story will remain only known to God

John Rosimas another single male Lithuanian immigrant was born on April 25, 1882, in Alwitas, Russia. He, like all of the earlier cited Lithuanian immigrants, made the perilous voyage across the Atlantic in search of a better way of live. On July 24, 1917, John, while living at 730 W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, Maryland, voluntarily joined the Maryland National Guard and soon was serving as a Private in Company I, Maryland Infantry. John's demise in many ways is even more tragic than those who died on the battlefield. Available documents do not say what devils he fought before his death or what drove him to end his own life. All we know is John died alone in Baltimore, Maryland, without any friends, relatives, or fellow soldiers to comfort him on August 6, 1917 by a self-inflicted bullet wound. May God have mercy on his soul.

We have no idea of what hopes and dreams these heroes had for the future. Surely before their deaths, each thought about going home, marrying and raising a family in the land of the free. They shared such dreams with every other soldier, sailor, and marine who served in the war to end all wars. In their case such dreams never came to pass.

HONORING MARYLAND LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN WW II VETERANS

After Lithuanian Post 154 obtained its permanent American Legion Charter, the Post's first major undertaking was the erection of a commemorative monument dedicated to Maryland Lithuanian Americans who served in World War II. This project was the idea of the Post's first commander, Dr. Albertas Zelwis, a WWI veteran. He worked closely on the project with Reverend Louis J. Mendelis, pastor of Saint Alphonsus Church and other Post members. This project was enthusiastically supported and generously funded by Baltimore's Lithuanian American Community. Post members quickly began the exhaustive effort to identify their fellow WWII Lithuanian American veterans. This task required many days of military record review, followed by sending letters to each of veterans or their families to obtain permission to place the veteran's names on the plaque. Although about forty identified Maryland Lithuanian American veterans or their families chose not to respond or declined to have their names placed on this plaque, the vast majority supported the project.

After much work, the Post was able to identify and obtain permission to have the names of 581 Maryland Lithuanian American men and women, who served in World War II, placed on the commemorative plaque. The plaque was prominently erected on the exterior front wall of St. Alphonsus Church, in Baltimore where many of the veterans were parishioners. The plaque was officially unveiled, blessed, and dedicated on September 28, 1947, following a tumultuous parade and speaking program that featured the Mayor of Baltimore and the Governor of Maryland. Today, that plaque to members of Our Finest Generation stands proudly on the exterior wall of St. Alphonsus Church.

Preamble to the Constitution of THE AMERICAN LEGION

For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and good will on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.



**Compliments of The American Legion
Lithuanian Post 154**

“WHY”

**For God and Country to do and dare,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.**

**To make my community a better place,
And meet my neighbor face to face.
Help distressed comrades their cross to bear,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.**

**To face with courage the coming day
To teach my children how to pray,
To make my flag a symbol rare,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.**

**And at last when Taps are sounded,
I clime that golden star,
To face my Lord and maker,
Thank God, I'm a Legionnaire.**