



Commander's Message

I hope you have stayed healthy and had an enjoyable Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year celebrations.

I wish to thank the Post 154 members who attended the Back to God Mass, the Christmas Bazaar and Department of Maryland Security Forum. Also, thanks to the regular attendees to our Post 154 meetings in person and those who participate remotely via zoom.

Post 154 encourages our youth to better prepare for their careers by perusing higher education at a college or learn a trade at a vocational school. To help with the cost, the Post will be awarding two \$1,000 scholarships in 2026. These scholarships are available to high school seniors who have a family association with a Post 154 member. (Eligibility criteria is on page 2). We awarded two scholarships in 2025 and wish to do the same this year. Encourage your family's high school youth to apply.

Baltimore Lithuanian Community's Lithuanian Independence Celebration will take place at Lithuanian Hall on March 15 at 2 PM. Post 154 has been invited to present The Colors. Please participate and arrive 30 minutes early wearing your Post 154 uniform.

On behalf of the officers of Lithuanian Post 154, I wish you and your family a safe, happy, healthy and prosperous 2026.

Gintaras Buivys

Lithuanian Post 154 Commander

Back to God Mass

On December 7, 2025, Lithuanian Post 154 held its annual "Back to God" Mass celebration at Our Lady of Victory Church, Arbutus, Maryland.

These annual masses began during the early 1950 era when The American Legion took a strong anti-Communist stance, consistent with the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution, which begins with the words "For God and Country". The American Legion formally endorsed the "Back to God" movement with a resolution during its 1951 Miami National Convention. Prayer service and masses were soon adopted by many posts around the country. Masses in Maryland were started in 1953 by Father Anthony Dranginis, a World War II combat Marine veteran, who served as Lithuanian Post 154 Commander, Chaplain, and for many years the Department of Maryland Chaplain. With only a few exceptions, this mass has been held yearly since that time.



Our Lady of Victory Church

These services initially began in the form of Catholic military field masses held at Holy Redeemers Cemetery and later at the Baltimore National Cemetery on Memorial Day. For many years, the masses were a recurring event on the American Legion, Baltimore Division, calendar, but they wane over time. This year's mass included a remembrance of the Pearl Harbor attack and the valiant part played by our American fighting men and women in World War II.

After this year's mass, Lithuanian Post 154 members and families made their way to the Lithuanian Hall and took part in its annual Lithuanian Christmas Bazaar.



Boys & Girls State



Maryland Boys State & Girls State 2026 invites interested high school



junior boys and girls to apply by May 1, 2026, for a week of immersive government education. Boys State will be held at McDaniel College from June 21-27. Girls State will be at Salisbury University from June 21-26. Both programs will be teaching real-world leadership and civic skills. They will offer a hands-on experience in running mock governments and learning about local, state, and federal operations.

These American Legion-sponsored programs with room and board will be provided by The American Legion at no cost to the student or student's parents. Please ask the student that you recommend to notify Commander Buivys so that Post 154 can coordinate tuition.

Application and detail information about the programs can be found on <https://mdboysgirlsstate.org/boys-state>.

Windmills International Folk Dance Festival



The Mituva Lithuanian Folk Dance Group will be sponsoring the Windmills International Folk Dance Festival at Lithuanian Hall on March 21, 2026 at noon. Dance groups from the Baltimore-Washington area and beyond will perform folk dances from around the world. Admission will be only \$20 for a great afternoon of entertainment. Ethnic food and drink will be available.

Membership

If you have not yet paid your 2026 dues, please do so now. The old 2025 membership card became invalid on December 31, 2025.

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

Gintaras Buivys,
Membership Chairman

Happy Birthday

December

Yvette Muhammed

January

Patrick Dohlus
Dr. Bernard Karpers Jr
William Morrison
Stephen Mueller
John Potts
Ronald Price
Vytautas Ramunas

February

Kirk Bauer
Jeffrey Burton
Donald Thompson

March

Richard Leffler
Gediminas Naujokaitis
Augustinas Uleckas
Thomas Willis

American Legion Department of Maryland Fall National Security Forum

On December 12, 2025, Lithuanian Post 154 was represented by Post Foreign Affairs Committeeman Thomas Sadauskas and Henry Gaidis at the American Legion, Department of Maryland, Fall National Security Forum, held at Post 136 in Greenbelt. In attendance were representatives from other posts and many honored guests. Among them was National Executive Committeeman Ronald L. Holcombe; Alt. NEC Ruth A. Higgins; Department Vice Commander Eric V. Wathen and Sr; National Security Commission Chair, Wayne Kaikko.

Keynote speaker at the event was past Department of Maryland Commander David Heredia. He emphasized the need for National, Department, and Local Posts to protect their computer websites from hackers both foreign and domestic. He cited many examples of such hackings and the need for all post and Legionnaire to be aware of this increasing threat. Legionnaires are discouraged from providing any person information to anyone that contacts you in any manner. If someone from the bank or credit card calls claiming there is an issue with your account, call the bank or credit card using the phone number on the back of your credit card or on your bank statement and not on the number they provide or you find on the internet. Remember there is "no free lunch." If an offer seems to

be too good to be true, it is most likely a scam.

David Heredia during the forum remembered the contributions to the American Legion by Lithuanian Post 154 departed long serving past commander and adjutant Vincent Tomas Dulys. David present the American Legion, Department of Maryland, 2025 Convention Commemorative Letter of Gratitude with photograph of Vince which was prominently displayed at the Convention to Lithuanian Post 154 at the event.

In Loving Memory

Vincent Tomas Dulys

U.S. Army Veteran (1967-1970) • Faithful Legionnaire, Lithuanian Post 154



Vincent Tomas Dulys—a proud U.S. Army veteran and faithful Legionnaire of Lithuanian Post 154. Vincent served our country from 1967 to 1970, and he never stopped serving. For decades, he was a humble and steady presence in our Department, deeply committed to the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

One of Vincent's greatest passions was this very ceremony. As longtime chair of the Department's Post Everlasting Remembrance Ceremony, he ensured that every comrade—every family member—was honored with dignity, reverence, and care.

Today, we return that honor to him, and we say with full hearts: **thank you, Vincent.** Your devotion lives on.

To Vincent's beloved wife: thank you for sharing him with all of us.

Respectfully,

David Heredia Jr.

Commander David Heredia, Jr.
Department of Maryland – The American Legion

Two \$1,000 College Scholarships

Lithuanian Post 154 will grant two 1,000 scholarships in 2026. 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 2026 and will be attending collage or trade school this year. Contact Joe Jankevicius at (410) 259-5032 or email Joe at joejankevicius@gmail.com for an application. Completed applications must be received by July 15, 2026

German Brigade Deployment in Lithuania Update

In the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, NATO established the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) and deployed the multinational battlegroups to the Baltic states in 2017. The battlegroup in Lithuania consisted of roughly 1600 soldiers from various NATO member states on a rotational basis. Germany has been the lead nation, contributing about 1000 troops. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Germany pledged to keep one combat brigade at higher combat readiness, ready to deploy to Lithuania within 10 days. Lithuania repeatedly requested a robust, permanent German deployment, which the German government initially declined to commit to. However, in June 2023, German Minister of Defense Boris Pistorius announced that Germany would form a new combat brigade and permanently deploy it to Lithuania.

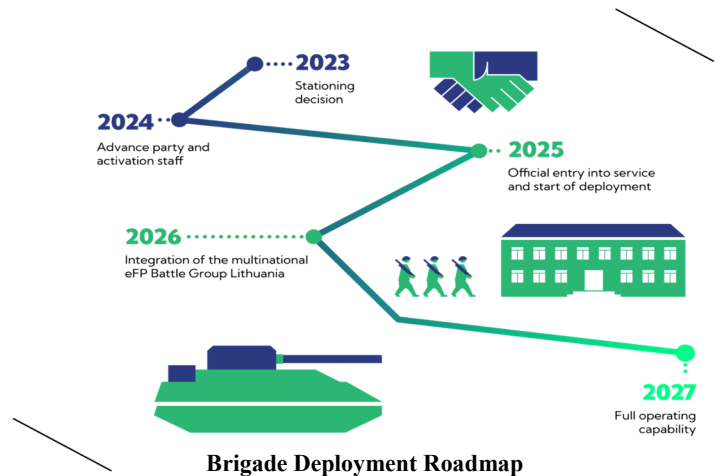
In December 2023, Lithuanian Minister of Defense Arvydas Anušauskas and his German counterpart Boris Pistorius signed a formal agreement on the planned deployment. In April 2024, an advance team of 20 officials arrived in the Lithuanian capital to organize preparatory work. The brigade was formally established on 1 April 2025, being planned to reach full operational capability in 2027.

The 45th Panzer Brigade (also known as *Panzerbrigade 45* or "Lithuania Brigade") was inaugurated on 22 May 2025 with a military parade on the Cathedral Square in Vilnius. German chancellor Friedrich Merz and Lithuanian president Gitanas Nausėda attended the inauguration along with the defense ministers of both countries, Boris Pistorius and Dovilė Šakalienė.

The brigade is expected to comprise 4800 soldiers and 200 civilian staff. Further, a third of the German soldiers are expected to bring their families to Lithuania, requiring not only military infrastructure, but also civilian facilities such as German-language kindergartens and schools. German-language kindergartens and schools (such as *Deutsche Schule Vilnius*) have begun operating in Vilnius and Kaunas.

The bulk of the brigade will be stationed in the densely forested military facility in the Rūdninkai Training Area (near the Belarusian border) and Rukla. The base currently sees major construction to prepare for the arrival of the German brigade. Facilities will include accommodation as well as dedicated storage, maintenance, and firing ranges for battle tanks.

As of January 2026, around 500 troops were already deployed to Lithuania as part of the brigade with the initial focus on command structure development,



in-theatre training, and force integration. In February 2026, the existing NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroup—led by Germany—will be structurally integrated into the brigade. The combined force will then reach around 1,800 troops, growing to approximately 2,000 German personnel by mid-2026. The brigade is scheduled to reach its full operational capacity of roughly 5,000 personnel (4,800 military and 200 civilian) by the end of 2027.

The brigade will be equipped with Leopard 2A8 tanks and Puma armored fighting vehicle will be the primary system for the mechanized infantry units. The force will eventually include artillery, reconnaissance, engineering, and medical support detachments.

The deployment is a "beacon project" of Germany's *Zeitenwende* (historic turning point) in security policy following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. It marks a shift from temporary rotational missions to a permanent, long-term presence aimed at ensuring that "protecting Vilnius is protecting Berlin".

Source:
Lithuanian Embassy and other websites.

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Meeting Information**General Meetings**

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

Executive Committee Meetings

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

Calendar & Reminders**January, 2025**

Thu	01	New Year's Day
Wed	14	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Sat	17	Persian Gulf War Began (1991)
Mon	19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Sun	26	Lithuania Hall Annual Members Meeting - 1 PM
Tue	27	Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)
Wed	28	US - Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)
Wed	28	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

February

Sun	01	National Freedom Day
Mon	02	Groundhog Day
Sun	08	Boy Scouts of America founded (1910)
Thu	12	Lincoln's Birthday
Sat	14	St. Valentine's Day
Sun	15	Department Executive Committee Meeting - Kent Island Post 278 800 Romancoke Rd., Stevensville, MD 21666 - 1 PM
Mon	16	Presidents' Day
Mon	16	George Washington's Birthday Observed
Wed	25	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

March

Tue	03	"The Star Spangled Banner" made US National Anthem (1931)
Sun	08	Daylight Saving Time Begins - Set clock ahead one hour
Wed	11	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Thu	12	Girl Scouts of America founded (1912)
Sat	14	National Commander's Banquet - Cumings-Behlke Post 226; 830 E. Central Avenue, Edgewater, MD 21037 - 5:00 - 8:30 PM
Sun	15	Lithuanian Independence Celebration Lithuanian Hall - 2 PM - Post 154 invited to present <i>The Colors</i> . Please arrive in Post 154 uniform at 1:30.
Tue	17	St. Patrick's Day
Wed	18	Ash Wednesday
Thu	19	Iraq War began (2003)
Fri	20	Spring begins
Sat	21	Windmills International Dance Festival - Lithuanian Hall - Noon
Wed	25	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
Sun	29	Palm Sunday

April

Wed	01	April Fools' Day
Wed	01	Passover begins
Fri	03	Good Friday
Sun	05	Easter Sunday
Mon	06	US entered WW I (1917)
Thu	09	Passover ends
Wed	15	Income Tax Returns due
Wed	29	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
Thu	30	Vietnam War ended (1975)