



# NATIONAL SOJOURNERS, INC

Harrisburg Chapter #76 — York Camp, Heroes of '76



## President's Message

Harrisburg Chapter No. 76 News  
SSG Todd Snyder, President

Welcome to fall, the weather has cooled, the leaves are changing and falling, and pumpkin spice is the rage. Football is in full swing and hopefully your team is doing well.

For those of you that missed the September meeting, you missed a great meal, fellowship and a great presentation from our First Vice President, Keith Murray on his time as an Embassy Guard. You will want to make it to the October meeting and hear another one of our members speak, Kenneth W. Womack, Colonel USAF, "My Experience Flying the U-2", and take part in the Recognition of U.S. Navy Veterans.

I often tell people that the Sojourners meeting is one of my favorites, the fellowship we share and the common background of having served in the military foster that fellowship. To look out over the gathered members and seeing the enthusiasm at being there makes me proud and honored to serve as your President. If you are unable to attend the meeting due to driving concerns, please call one of the officers and we will see if there is someone who lives near you and is willing to pick you up for the meetings. We as an organization must remember our masonic roots and our military customs and not leave anyone behind.

The Ladies Night and Charity Auction are coming up quickly. Start looking through the house for items that you are willing to donate to the cause - this is our biggest fund raiser to help send kids to the Freedom Foundation, now known as Founding Forward. The more we raise, the more students we can send. Also, the entertainment for the night is a duo which is called 'Joe Cooney and Friends'. They are becoming one of Central Pennsylvania's favorite acoustic cover bands. They present fun sets of covers including classic rock, folk, country, and rockabilly, and since it will be the holiday season, they will throw in a few holiday songs. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have when I've seen them!

Again, if you have any questions, big or small, do not hesitate to reach out. Again my number is 717-645-5646. Thank you and God bless America, this fraternity, the Sojourners and all of those effected by hurricane Helene.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,  
Todd Snyder, President



## Military Burial Honors

Issue #44 October 2024

We are all aware of the burial rights for Veterans at the various National Cemeteries across the nation. Our closest one being Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. However, there is another option for burial available. This option does require more work to be done, however, with proper planning, this could be an invaluable option for those wanting this choice.

The Navy's Burial at Sea Program enables families to provide for the final disposition of their service member's cremated or casketed remains as part of a special onboard ceremony. The Navy offers this service free of charge to eligible families, though families may not attend as the Navy performs the ceremony while the ship is training or deployed. This military funeral honor recognizes a service member or veteran's commitment and sacrifice to their country and provides comfort and gratitude to their families. The Navy performs an average of 1,500 cremated remains and 15 casketed remains per year. It performed 1251 burials at sea in 2021.

Those eligible to be buried at sea by the Navy are:

- Active-duty service members.
- Honorably discharged retirees and veterans.
- U.S. civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command.
- Dependent family members of active-duty personnel, retirees and veterans.

The United States Coast Guard has its own separate Burial-at-Sea program.

The National Cemetery Administration can't perform this type of committal service. For information,

call 833-330-6622. This Navy office is open 24/7.

Additional information can be obtained from the web site:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/transition-retirement/veterans/burial-at-sea/>

## Harrisburg Chapter #76 MEMBERSHIP

As of October 1, 2024

Primary Members-In-Perpetuity	236
Annual Active Members	47
Honorary Members-In-Perpetuity	34
Annual Honorary Members	4
Multiple Members-In-Perpetuity	28
Total Chapter Membership	349

York Camp Heroes of '76 170

The Chapter also has 200 Inactive Members-In-Perpetuity who laid down their working tools.





### Secretary's Report, Brother Tom Gordon

Harrisburg Chapter #76 remains the largest chapter in National Sojourners Inc. as identified in the Membership statistics in the newsletter. However, it is my said duty to inform you that during our summer break, the chapter lost three members who laid down their working tools. Brother Paul Sheaffer on June 28th, Brother Ronald Kerns on July 13th, and Brother Donald March on August 30th. A memorial prayer was provided by Brother Chaplain Darwin Chilcote at our September 12 meeting. On a brighter note, there were five Master Masons petitioned to join the Harrisburg Chapter at the September meeting: Brother Richard Auchey, Brother Jerel Bruns, Brother Jeffrey Haste, Brother Kevin Macomber, and Brother Troy Williams. These Brothers will be initiated into Harrisburg Chapter #76 at the October 10th meeting. We also are bidding a fond farewell to Brother Sojourner J. Micheal Rowe who is moving back to family in Virginia. We have already provided Brother Mike with a contact at National Sojourners' Fort Lee-Richmond Chapter #72. We welcome Brother Paul DeMerath, National Commander of the Heroes of '76, to the Harrisburg Chapter as a Multiple Member-In-Perpetuity. Additionally, two of our chapter Sojourners were recruited into our York Camp Heroes of '76, Brother William Brittin and Brother Dana Moore. If you missed the September meeting, 1st Vice President Keith Murray provided a highly informative presentation on the role and duties of a Marine Embassy Guard. Chapter Officer vacancies were filled and Ratified by the membership. Brother Stephen Wilt as Chapter 3rd Vice President, Brother Darryl Hamm PP as Chapter Treasurer, and Brothers Darwin Gaston PP, Glenn Kurzenknabe PP, and Ken Womack PP as the three Chapter Trustees.

### Scheduled Guest Speakers and Activities

Social Gathering 5:15 PM Dinner 6:00 PM Meeting 6:45 PM

**10 Oct 2024** - Kenneth W. Womack, Col USAF (retired).  
 "My experience flying the U-2"  
 - Recognition of U.S. Navy Veterans

HEROES' Bivouacs and Hero Initiation 18:00 (6:00 PM)

**24 Oct 24** - Harrisburg Consistory Unit Room, Lower level  
**27 Mar 2025, 24 Apr 2025, 22 May 2025**



### Meeting a Medal of Honor Recipient

In July 2018, I received a letter from the Scottish Rite Valley of Harrisburg, signed by fellow Sojourner, Bro. Dave Auchey, 33°, Secretary of the Valley of Harrisburg. He informed me that I had been selected to receive the Meritorious Service Award in Scottish Rite Freemasonry! Wow! I was shocked, honored and humbled. My thoughts went immediately to my late Grandfather, Bro. Charles Kurzenknabe who was honored with the same award in 1957, long before I was a Mason! I didn't know about his medal until many decades later when my father gave me the medal for safe keeping and told me the story. Dave's letter directed me to report to the Pennsylvania Council of Deliberation session on July 13, 2019, at the Valley Forge Casino in King of Prussia, PA. A long year passed, but finally my wife and I arrived at the Casino. Our instructions were to report to a luncheon, after we checked into the hotel.

As we navigated the hallways, I noticed a man in an Army uniform talking with another individual. I said to Barb, I know who the speaker will be tonight! It was Bro. / SFC Sammy Davis, 33°, U.S. Army retired, M.O.H. I recognized him from an article I had seen in an issue of the Northern Light, plus he was wearing the Medal of Honor! Bro. Davis is also a member of National Sojourners. I shook hands and spoke briefly with him. He was very humble and eager to chat with another brother. Barb took our picture, and he graciously autographed a copy of his book for me! That evening, when he spoke at dinner, the room was dead quiet. No one made a sound or checked their watches! His story was riveting! He earned the medal on November 18, 1967, while in an intense firefight with a superior enemy force at Fire Support Base Cudgel in the Mekong Delta, South Vietnam. Despite being critically wounded, he is credited with saving the lives of three of his comrades who were all seriously injured. He received the medal in a ceremony at the White House on November 11, 1968, from President Lyndon Johnson along with four other recipients. His book is "You Don't Lose 'til You Quit Trying" which I highly recommend. I will always remember the events of that day for many reasons and meeting Bro. Davis is just one.



Brother Glenn R. Kurzenknabe, PP



# NATIONAL SOJOURNERS, INC

Harrisburg Chapter #76 - York Camp, Heroes Chapter #76



Issue #44 October 2024

## Parting Thoughts!

“Life is a rollercoaster, full of ups and downs, twists and turns, and we mortals are just here for the ride.”

If you listen to the News, we hear of lives lost, locally and in faraway places, casualties of wars, terrorism, shootings, floods, famines, accidents, etc. It is easy to get discouraged when we are bombarded with negativity.

Rather than dwell on the negative, let us reflect on the positive. Babies are born every day, bringing new life into the world, precious and pure. As experienced veterans of this world, it is our responsibility to fill these little minds with knowledge and Love, to make everyone’s life a little brighter.

When confronted by someone that upsets us, remember everyone gets up in the morning, looks in the mirror and says, “I want to do the best job I can today.”, or “I want to be liked and make people happy.” No one says, “I want to do a poor job today.”, or “I want to see who I can upset today.”

Most times, negativity breeds misunderstandings due to a lack of positive communications between the two parties. Let us strive as Brothers to make this world a better place by pointing out the good in people and always strive to tame the “poison” tongue. Every human believes in themselves, and what they are doing is right.

For just a few moments, step away from this article, and tell your spouse, significant other, children, or grandchildren that YOU LOVE THEM. This few seconds will brighten both their day and your day as well.

By Brother Tom Gordon



## Scenes from our September Meeting



## For the Good of the Order!

By Brother Secretary Tom Gordon

### **HACK, HACK, SCAM, SCAM**

It is a shame that there are people in this world full of mischief and striving for ill-gotten gains, but that is the world we live in.

With the cost of postage continuing to increase, many companies, non-profit corporations, and associations have shifted to send their mass mailings through emails. Unfortunately, computer hackers are exploiting the digital world and stealing email identities and passwords for nefarious reasons such as defrauding the recipient.

### **NEVER PURCHASE GIFT CARDS BASED ON AN EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE, REGARDLESS OF WHO YOU BELIEVE SENT YOU THE MESSAGE.**

If a request truly is from a friend or colleague, they would do it in person, not by email or text messages.

**DO NOT FALL FOR THESE SCAMS** they are theft by deception.



*Toast to the Flag by Brother Thomas Gordon*

## Sept. Guest Speaker;

Sgt. Keith E. Murray, USMC

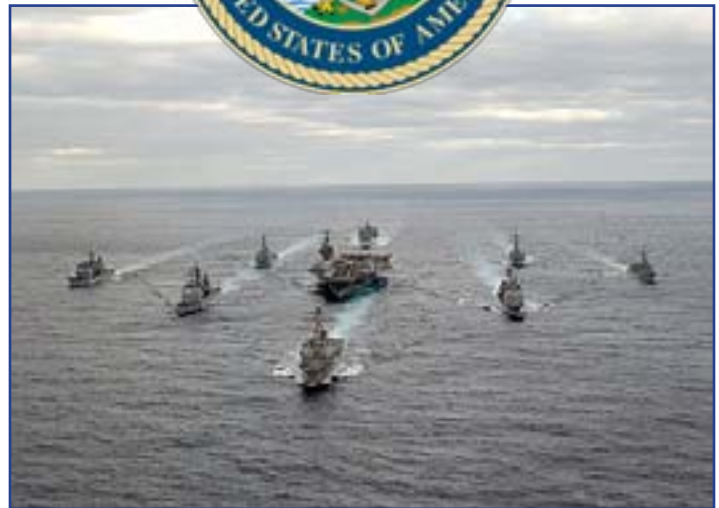




### *Distinguished Sojourners*

*This month we recognize our Brothers, U.S. Navy Veterans*

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Jr., U.S. Navy. Citations for Exploration in 1926: For distinguishing himself conspicuously by courage and intrepidity at the risk of his life, in demonstrating that it is possible for aircraft to travel in continuous flight from a now inhabited portion of the earth over the North Pole and return specialized in feats of exploration. He was a pioneering American aviator, polar explorer, and organizer of polar logistics. Aircraft flights in which he served as a navigator and expedition leader crossed the Atlantic Ocean, a segment of the Arctic Ocean, and a segment of the Antarctic Plateau. Byrd claimed his expeditions had been the first to reach the North Pole and the South Pole by air. Byrd was born in Winchester, Virginia. He was a descendant of one of the First Families of Virginia. His ancestors include planter John Rolfe, and his wife Pocahontas, William Byrd II of Westover Plantation, who established Richmond, and Robert "King" Carter, a colonial governor. His brother was Governor of Virginia and U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd; his father served as Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates.



**Military Awards:** Admiral Byrd was one of the most highly decorated officers in the history of the U.S. Navy. His medals include the Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Life Saving Medal, and all three Antarctic expedition medals. Byrd was one of only four American military officers in history entitled to wear a medal with their own image on it. As Byrd's image is on both the first and second Byrd Antarctic Expedition medals.



**Masonic History:** Byrd was an active Freemason. He became a member of Federal Lodge No. 1, Washington, D.C. on March 19, 1921 and affiliated with Kane Lodge No. 454, New York City, September 18, 1928. He founded First Antarctic Lodge No. 777. He was a member of National Sojourners Chapter No. 3 at Washington DC.



For Change of address, email address or telephone number

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Chapter contact information

**National website: <https://nationalsojourners.org>**  
**Facebook: "National Sojourners Harrisburg**  
**Chapter #76**

"When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen." *George Washington*