



# THE BUGLE

SEPTEMBER 2018

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AMERICAN LEGION POST 305 OF THE WOODLANDS

*THINK NOT OF THE PRICE OF YOUR DUES. THINK OF THE PRICE YOU PAID TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PAY*



**Bruce Carter, Commander**

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

I've completed my second month as Commander, and we had our first meeting at the new venue, **Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church** in The Woodlands. We will use either the main event room (Domec Hall) or Ministry House according to the following Post meeting schedule:

**Domec Hall** (Main room for the Post/Rm 10 for the Auxiliary):  
(2018) 8/16, 12/20,  
(2019) 1/17, 3/21, 5/16, 6/20, 7/18  
**Ministry House** (rooms A & B):  
(2018) 9/20, 10/18, 11/15  
(2019) 2/21, 4/18  
Directions are on our website.

Although it was a little hectic, it went well considering it was our first meeting. We were treated to attendance by our 7<sup>th</sup> District Commander, **Ed Jarvis** and by our 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander, **Sheila Shulte**.

On Saturday, August 18, I attended adjutant training hosted by Post 618, Willis, TX. This training was comprehensive and very thorough. We were informed that this training covered the existing program but that a new training program would be coming out after the National Convention, which will be held this year in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24-30. The training covered the following topics:

- Duties and Responsibilities
- Manuals
- Mission & Vision Statements
- Post Legal
- Reports / Forms
- Membership Information and Handling Procedures

Within each of these main topics there were numerous sub-topics all of which were reviewed. It was an education for me and gave me a new respect for the knowledge and responsibilities of the adjutant role.

I spoke with the outgoing District 22 Commander. This is the district which contains Post 654, the Post that my father was a member of. He informed me that Post 654 would be conducting the induction of the 2018-2019 Post officers the following day. Last month I wrote about taking my father to a meeting at Post 654 a couple of years ago where we were warmly received. When Dad passed away last December, I contacted Post 654 and spoke with **Chuck Hasselback** who was one of their officers at the time, perhaps Commander, I don't recall exactly. I had asked if they could provide a

Color Guard for Dad's interment and Chuck arranged for one through his VFW Post as they could provide a three-gun volley ceremony. This was wonderfully done and greatly appreciated by my family.

Although I had thanked them for providing this service, I had come to feel I should have done something more formal. Some years ago Dad was working on his WWII memoirs which he was providing to the Veterans History Project as part of the American Folklore Center at the Library of Congress. He completed it and my step-mother typed it into a Word document. I helped him organize it and scanned it along with some photos and other clippings into the computer in a .pdf file. His memoirs are now part of the Veterans History Project collection at the Library of Congress.

On Sunday I went to Post 654 and met **Chuck and Jimmy Mitchell**, the current 22<sup>nd</sup> District Commander, and gave them a hard copy of Dad's memoirs for the Post. I then followed up with transmitting electronic versions to e-mail addresses they provided. Jimmy told me about a veteran's museum initiative that they are working on which I found very intriguing. I will keep in touch with them about this project and see if there is a way that we can contribute to it. It would be a good place for my Dad's memoirs as well.

In August, we lost a great American hero who exemplified the epitome of what it means to dedicate oneself to service to our country. I'm speaking of course of **Sen. John S. McCain** who died this month from the ravages of an aggressive brain cancer. **John McCain** was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967. Because he was the son and grandson of four star admirals, the North Vietnamese offered his release. He refused unless all the other prisoners who were held captive before him were also released. The North Vietnamese refused to do this so he spent six years in captivity suffering numerous tortures and starvation. The North Vietnamese did not even treat his injuries after his capture. He was released in 1973 and had lost 50 lbs. He suffered from the results of his injuries and subsequent beatings for the rest of his life.

He went on to serve his country in congress where he stood for principle and honor. He earned the respect and admiration from both Republicans and Democrats. His life stands as a model for us all. He won't be forgotten.

**Bruce Carter, Commander  
Post 305, The Woodlands**

### MEETING HIGHLIGHTS (August 16, 2018)

**Guests:** **Ed Jarvis**, Dist. 7 Commander Post 615; **Sheila Schulte**, Div. 2 Commander Post 618; **Jeanette Merritt**, Post 618.

**Commander Bruce Carter** invited all to attend a training class for adjutants on August 17<sup>th</sup> at Post 618 in Willis. Commander **Bruce Carter** and Judge Advocate **Peter Koch** will attend. **Judge Advocate Peter Koch** reported that changes will have to be made to the Constitution and By-Laws.

**Member at Large Victoria Glover** reported that a program to honor the 28 boys who attended Boys State will be held on November 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM until 9:00 PM at the Community Center.

The guests that night introduced themselves, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander **Sheila Schulte** spoke about the adjutant training class, inviting all interested members to attend.

The next meeting will be on the September 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM at the Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church in the Ministry House.

### NEW 9/11 MEMORIAL ON TRACK TO OPEN FOR 9/11/2018



A new memorial dedicated to the passengers and crew of United Flight #93 is on track for dedication at the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony on 9/11/18. The flight was enroute from Newark to San Francisco when hijackers seized control and redirected the flight toward Washington DC. Forty passengers and crew attacked the hijackers and forced the plane to crash near Shanksville, PA about 60 miles southwest of Pittsburgh.

Amid the rolling hills, a national park has taken shape to honor the brave victims of Flight 93. The final phase of the memorial includes a 93-foot "Tower of Voices" with wind chimes for each of the victims and a grove of trees.



## THE BUGLE

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**Monthly Meetings:** The Post and Auxiliary meet at Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church in The Woodlands at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month. The Church is located at 26777 Glen Loch Drive. Meetings are preceded by a pot-luck supper provided by the Auxiliary. Meeting location will be posted on the Website and in the Calendar.



## **VETERANS' ADVOCATE**

### **OFFICIALS OPPOSE PLANS TO EXTEND BENEFITS**

Veterans Affairs officials strongly opposed legislative plans to extend disability payouts to roughly 90,000 veterans who claim exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, saying the move could set a problematic precedent for future benefits awards. "The science is not there, and what we do depends upon science," said Paul Lawrence, under secretary for benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs. But advocates for so-called "blue water Navy" veterans argued that VA officials are willfully ignoring an abundance of evidence showing veterans' exposure to toxic chemicals, and demanding evidence that could only have been collected more than four decades ago. "These people were exposed, how much they were exposed doesn't make a difference," said Rick Weidman, executive director at the Vietnam Veterans of America. "And you can't put that all together 40 years later."

At issue is a change in VA policy 15 years ago that excluded veterans serving on ships off the coast of Vietnam — known as "blue water Navy veterans" — from being included in a class of former service members presumed to be exposed to Agent

Orange. For troops who served on the ground or in inland rivers, exposure to the chemical defoliant is assumed, which speeds up the medical and disability benefits process when those veterans later contract a host of illnesses related to chemical contamination. But the blue water veterans still must prove they were directly exposed to Agent Orange for their illnesses to be labeled as service-connected. Legislation passed by the House last month would force VA to extend the presumptive benefits to veterans who served aboard those ships, and use a new VA home loan fee to pay for the estimated \$1 billion in costs it would incur.

Lawrence said forcing VA to go against their established "scientific" standards would set a dangerous precedent in future benefits disputes. He also said processing the new claims could add \$500 million in new costs over the next decade, and cast doubt over whether the new VA home loan fees would cover the costs. VA officials also testified that they already have a "liberal" policy for Vietnam War veterans who may have been exposed to chemical defoliants. Cancers and severe illnesses found among the blue water veterans, they argued, may simply be the result of aging or unrelated health issues. Several senators took exception to that idea. "This bill wouldn't be needed if these veterans were getting the care they needed after showing symptoms (of toxic exposure)," said Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV). "We should have taken care of our veterans."

Administration officials and veterans groups offered contrasting views on scientific studies regarding ship-based veterans' exposure to the chemicals, and whether runoff from the coastline could have contaminated drinking water for

miles out to sea. Veterans also complained that VA summarily rejects claims even when evidence suggests those ships visited inland ports, an accusation that Lawrence said is an unfortunate exception if it happens at all. Along with the blue water veterans, the House-passed bill extends presumptive exposure status to veterans who served in the Korean Peninsula demilitarized zone beginning in September 1967 and lasting until August 1971, the same end date for the Vietnam War.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson (R-GA) indicated he is hopeful a fix can be found for the issue, but also promised a thorough examination of the issue before the Senate moves ahead. Several lawmakers have pushed for quick passage of the House measure, but Isakson appears opposed to that idea. That likely means several more months of waiting before any resolution on the legislation. The Senate is scheduled to go on recess next week before working on nominations issues for the rest of August. House lawmakers aren't scheduled back in Washington until September, and both chambers will break again in October in advance of the November mid-term elections. [Source: MilitaryTimes | Leo Shane III | August 1, 2018 ++]

### **VET COMPENSATION COLA ACT OF 2018**

Senator Johnny Isakson (GA), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced S. 3089-the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018. This bill would authorize a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans in receipt of compensation and pension, and for survivors of

veterans who died from service-incurred disabilities and are in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). The bill would provide an increase by the same percentage as Social Security, effective December 1, 2018. Receipt of annual COLA increments aids injured and ill veterans, their families, and their survivors to help maintain the value of their VA benefits against inflation. Without COLAs, these individuals, who sacrificed their own health and their family life for the good of our nation, may not be able to maintain a quality of life in their elder years.

DAV strongly supports S. 3089 as it is in accord with DAV Resolution 031. Earlier this year they asked for your support of H.R. 4958, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018 in the House of Representatives. H.R. 4958 was passed by the House on May 21, 2018. DAV is now seeking your support of S. 3089. Readers are encouraged to use DAV' prepared electronic letter at [Take Action](#) or draft their own to urge your Senators to support and cosponsor S. 3089. Status of the bill can be tracked at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3089>. [Source: DAV National Commander | August 8, 2018 ++]

### **JOHN S. MCCAIN ACT SIGNED INTO LAW**

President Donald J. Trump signed the \$717 billion Fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act at a ceremony at Fort Drum, New York. The act – named for Arizona Sen. **John S. McCain** – authorizes a 2.6 percent military pay raise and increases the active duty forces by 15,600 service members. “With this new authorization, we will increase the size and strength

of our military by adding thousands of new recruits to active duty, Reserve and National Guard units, including 4,000 new active duty soldiers,” Trump told members of the Army’s 10th Mountain Division and their families. “And we will replace aging tanks, aging planes and ships with the most advanced and lethal technology ever developed. And hopefully, we’ll be so strong, we’ll never have to use it, but if we ever did, nobody has a chance.”

### **Services’ End Strength Set**

The act sets active duty end strength for the Army at 487,500 in fiscal 2019, which begins Oct. 1, 2018. The Navy’s end strength is set at 335,400, the Marine Corps’ at 186,100 and the Air Force’s at 329,100. On the acquisition side, the act funds 77 F-35 joint strike fighters at \$7.6 billion. It also funds F-35 spares, modifications and depot repair capability. The budget also fully funds development of the B-21 bomber. The act authorizes \$24.1 billion for shipbuilding to fully fund 13 new battle force ships and accelerate funding for several future ships.

This includes three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers and two Virginia-class submarines. There is also \$1.6 billion for three littoral combat ships. In addition, the act authorizes 24 F/A-18 Super Hornets, 10 P-8A Poseidons, two KC-130J Hercules, 25 AH-1Z Cobras, seven MV-22/CMV-22B Ospreys and three MQ-4 Tritons.

### **Afghanistan, Iraq**

There is \$5.2 billion in the budget for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, and another \$850 million to train and equip Iraqi security forces to counter Islamic State of Iraq and Syria terrorists.

The 2019 John McCain Authorization Act does not fund the military. Rather, it authorizes the policies under which funding will be set by the appropriations committees and then voted on by Congress. That bill is still under consideration. [Source: DoD News, Defense Media Activity | Jim Garamone | August 13, 2018 ++]

### **IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

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VA Conroe Outpatient Clinic: (936) 522-4024

Texas Veterans Commission Hot Line: 1(800) 252-VETS

County Veteran Service Centers:

Montgomery County - Conroe: (936) 539-7842

Harris County – Houston: (281) 876-6600

Military Veteran Peer Network: Conroe: (936) 521-6132

### **STATE LEGISLATORS:**

Dist. 3: Cecil Bell Jr. – Magnolia: (281) 259-3700

Dist. 15: Mark Keough – The Woodlands: (281) 419-1090

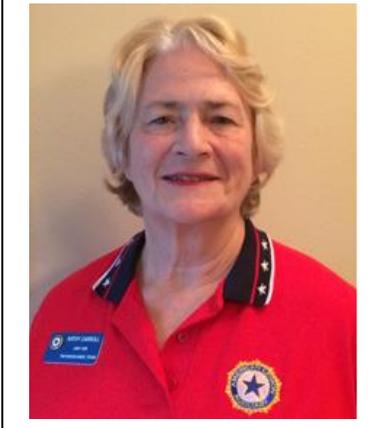
Dist. 16: Will Metcalf – Conroe: (936) 539-0068

Dist. 126: Kevin Roberts – Houston: (281) 444-1814

Dist. 150: Valoree Swanson –Spring: (281) 257- 4222

## PROGRAMS & NEWS OF THE AUXILIARY UNIT 305

**Kathy Carroll, President**



What a difference a year makes. Last year at this time all of us were dealing with the effects of Hurricane Harvey – whether we were personally affected or knew people who needed help. Now we look for some rain every day. Unfortunately, people in the eastern United States are dealing with flooding rains. Living in the Houston area has made all of us aware of the devastating effects of flooding and that is why I am very glad that our Unit voted to donate \$250 to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund designated to help victims of the flooding in Pennsylvania.

Department Executive Committee (DEC) will meet in Austin Sept. 21-23, 2018. This is where we will hear from all the new Department Chairmen and find out what the themes and goals are for the programs this year. Presidents' School (leadership training) will also be held that weekend. We should be bringing a lot of information back with us.

We will be collecting items to send to **Geri Mulvihill's** son's Ranger Unit. The requested items are in the July minutes. Some

items include boot socks, jerky, trail mix, coffee, personal care items, and hand held or nerf games. We will be sending the packages after the September meeting since his Unit is returning in January. If you have items to donate and can't make it to the meeting, please call one of us and we will arrange to pick them up.

Fall also means craft fair time. Once again we will have a table at the St. Simon and Jude Fair on Sunday October 28<sup>th</sup>. I know that many of you are crafty women so get your items together so that we will have a successful event.

FYI: There are a few dates in September that I want to make sure that you know about. September 11<sup>th</sup> is Patriots Day. It is not a day to celebrate but it certainly changed our country forever. We should fly our flags at half staff if possible. September 21<sup>st</sup> is POW/MIA Recognition Day. Recently the bodies of 75 fallen soldiers from the Korean War were repatriated. Hopefully someday all of our MIA's will come home. And Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup> is Gold Star Mothers' Day. If you know a Gold Star mother, give her a hug and remind her that we recognize her sacrifice and we will not forget.

We held our first meeting in the new location in August and it seemed to be a great success. Meeting at St. Simon and Jude gives us full access to a kitchen and the Auxiliary certainly has a much bigger room to use. Our September social with the Post will have a Mexican theme and should have good food for everyone.

In August **Toby** and I were invited to attend this year's Honor Houston Heroes hosted by Congressman **Ted Poe**. There were veterans in attendance from every branch of the service and from every war from WWII to the present day. Each veteran was introduced and gave a brief summary of what they did while in service. Listening to some of these veterans about their service and what they endured made me sit up in admiration for their commitment to this country and their fellow soldiers.

I would like to share with you the quote from the back of the program. It is from a speech on the floor of the House by **Marine Staff Sergeant Ben Williams**. It is something we should never forget. "We call ourselves patriots, but few of us have the scars to prove it. Few have the courage to face and embrace the darkest unknown, the possibility of not going home. As we fly the stars and stripes, may we always honor their service, remember their sacrifice, and be grateful that they stepped forward to defend liberty and all that we cherish as a nation."

God bless our veterans, God bless our men and women in uniform, and God bless the United States of America.

**Kathy Carroll, President ALA  
Unit 305**

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
Sun	Sept 2	V-J Day; Japan Formally Surrenders (1945)		
Mon	Sept 3	Labor Day		
Tues	Sept 11	Patriot Day	Attack on America	
Mon	Sept 17	U. S. Constitution Adopted (1787)		
Mon	Sept 17	Executive Committee Meeting	Sts. Simon & Jude Min House @ 6:30 PM	
Thur	Sept 20	Membership Meetings	Sts. Simon & Jude Min House @ 6:30 PM	
		(REMINDER: Pot-Luck Supper is served in advanced of Membership Meetings @ 6:15 PM)		
Mon	Oct 15	Executive Committee Meeting	Sts. Simon & Jude Min House @ 6:30 PM	
Thur	Oct 18	Annual Picnic	Sts Simon and Jude Picnic Area @ 6:30 PM	
Sun	Nov 11	Veteran's Day/100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WW I		
Mon	Nov 12	Veteran's Day observed		
Mon	Nov 12	Executive Committee Meeting	Sts. Simon & Jude Min House @ 6:30 PM	
Thu	Nov 15	Membership Meetings	Sts. Simon & Jude Min House @ 6:30 PM	
Thu	Nov 22	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY		

### POST & AUXILIARY UNIT CONTACT INFORMATION (2017-2018)

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