



# THE BUGLE

AUGUST 2017

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 8



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AMERICAN LEGION POST 305 OF THE WOODLANDS

POST COMMANDER  
VICTORIA GLOVER



## COMMANDER'S CORNER

Whew! July went by fast! August is here. Hope everyone is staying cool with the heat. We had a busy start to July!

The July Fourth parade was a success as usual! We took the "Most Patriotic" float award this year! Excellent job by **Emery Heuermann** and **Harlen Thornhill** and all who helped with the float and parade! Saddle River Range was fun as well! I met several veterans and hopefully will have several join us. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the rescheduled Spring Rummage Sale due to lack of helpers able to move furniture and other items. We are still planning on having the Fall Rummage Sale on October 21-22, directly after our Annual Oktoberfest Picnic.!

The Department Convention was held in Killeen and here are the elected and appointed Department Officers:  
**Commander John Hince, Vice Commander Phil Westerman, Treasurer David Paris, Judge**

THINK NOT OF THE PRICE OF YOUR DUES; THINK OF THE PRICE YOU PAID TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PAY THEM



**Advocate Dan Corbin, Historian Susan Marty, Sergeant-at-Arms Kimberly Biggerstaff** At the Department's Executive Committee meeting, **Commander Hince** appointed **Harvey Klee** as **Chaplain** and **Mark Thompson** as **Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms**.

Congratulations to all!

The Post received two awards: one for Post Retention, and second place for the Post History Book! Way to go **Jim Bolin** and **Lacey Homan**!

We have been trying to come up with ideas of things to get involved in. There is a project that we discussed at our Executive Committee meeting called Operation Paperback. We would be mailing books to the military that are requesting books for their troops. We need somebody to spearhead it and collect and package books for it. If anyone feels like a spearhead for this project, we need such

volunteer. If you have any other ideas for projects and activities let us know!

Be mindful, being out in this heat, to keep yourselves cool and hydrated. If you must do something outside, do it in the cooler part of the morning or evening. And, if you need any

assistance let somebody know, and we will help.

I have been thinking about getting a group together and attending an Astros game. I am working on getting more details and will let you know. Group pricing usually needs about 10 people or more. If not a baseball game, maybe head to a museum or other activity.

Remember to invite your veteran family and friends to our activities and meetings! The more the merrier! We will always welcome them with open arms!

Until next time, let us ever be reminded to never forget our fallen, the POW/MIA's, our veterans, those on active duty and their families. Keep them and our first responders in our prayers!

**Victoria Glover  
Commander**

**MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**  
**(July 20, 2017)**

**Commander Victoria Glover** opened the meeting in the customary manner, assisted by **Chaplain Bill Houghton** and **Sergeant-at-Arms Bruce Carter**. When called on, **Bruce Carter** reported there was one guest in the house – **Richard Carpenter**, a USAF veteran with long service and a prospective Post member. **Carter** also confirmed a quorum was present. The minutes of the June 15 membership meeting and the July 17 Executive Committee meeting had been distributed and read in silence. Through motion, second and voice vote, both were approved.

The **Finance Officer** was absent. In view of that, **Judge Advocate Everett Ison** moved that review of the financial report for June 30<sup>th</sup> be suspended until such time as **Finance Officer Heuermann** returns. The motion carried. The **Commander** noted that **First Vice Commander Bolin** was also absent and no report on membership status was available. The Post had not yet received its annual goal (target) for paid-up membership, but it was early in the year (first meeting) to expect such.

The **Sergeant-at-Arms** and the **Historian** had nothing to report, but **Judge Advocate Everett Ison** did. He had advocated that the Post develop a set of “Standing Rules” to flesh out certain operational and administrative matters not detailed in the Constitution & By-Laws. Such Rules, once written and adopted by the Post, would better establish the nuances of Post operations and administration. Such Rules also must be consistent with the current Constitution & By-laws, he

emphasized. **Ison**, in his position as the Post’s parliamentarian, had drafted a four-page set of Rules, which he distributed to all present, then walked through, explaining the needs for and purposes of each section and paragraph. He invited questions and comments, and there were many, even though the members had not seen the draft previously. He closed by inviting further review comments so that a smoother second draft could be developed.

**Service Officer Toby Carroll** reported that he, among others, had attended the Department Convention in Killeen. He witnessed the election of **Department Commander John Hince** and other new officers. He noted that our **Kim Biggerstaff** was elected as **Department Sergeant-at-Arms**. **Carroll** went on to describe his interfacing with other Post and Department Service Officers, much to his benefit (and ours). He liberated many copies of the 2016 edition of VA’s booklet “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors”, which he made available to meeting attendees. (The 2017 edition is in preparation now.). He also had a few copies of VA’s pamphlet “Summary of VA Benefits” (September 2012), which apparently is still valid.

The two **Committeemen-at-Large**, **Dayton Denton** and **Art Eipper**, were absent. **Commander Glover** cited the awards and certificates the Post and Unit received at the Department Convention and cited a few pieces of incoming mail. Under Old Business, she explained the cancellation of the postponed Spring Rummage Sale, which was to have taken place on the following two days. The Exec-



**THE BUGLE**

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**Monthly Meetings:** The Post and Auxiliary meet at the South County Community Center in The Woodlands at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month, except in October\*. The Center is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Lake Robbins Drive and Grogan’s Mill Road, next to the library. Meetings are followed by a pot-luck supper provided by the Auxiliary.

\*In October, a combined, short meeting precedes the Annual Picnic in Shadowbend Park.

utive Committee, at its very recent meeting, concluded that the Post did not have the necessary transport vehicles nor able-bodied members to move sale stock from the storage locker to the sale site and to return leftovers back on Saturday. So, the ill-fated Spring Rummage Sale will not take place, but the Fall Rummage Sale is scheduled for October 20-21. Due to the storage locker now being filled, added donations must be held by the donors and brought to the sale site on Set-up Day. **Judge Advocate Ison** stated that we will get our deposit back, but henceforth the County will require a two-weeks' notice on cancellations or, if later, a fee will be charged.

Under New Business, **Historian Win Salter** was called on to describe a proposal which the Executive Committee approved on Monday. He cited a not-for-profit charity called "Operation Paperback" which facilitates the sending of paperback books (or other books) to deployed military service personnel in the war zones. Operation Paperback ("OP") provides copies of incoming requests for books from military units or individual troops, and the Post, as a "Volunteer Shipper", assembles books which fit the requests and mails them to the addresses provided by OP. The Post pays the cost of packaging and postage, which is reasonable under the USPS' APO and media rates. **Salter** agreed to give the Commander a step-by-step plan for getting started.

There being no other business to come before the membership, the **Commander** closed the meeting in the prescribed ritual. The Auxiliary members joined with the Post members and set out a hot-dog featured, pot-luck

supper, which was topped off with ice cream sundaes.



## VETERANS ADVOCATE

### AMENDING COVERAGE OF THE 9/11 G.I. BILL AGAIN

Many of us, perhaps most, took some advantage of the earliest G.I. Bills, like P.L. 16 and P.L. 356 for WWII veterans or P.L. 550 for Korean War service. These were law under the "Servicemen's Re-adjustment Act of 1944", aka the "G.I. Bill of Rights", which FDR signed into law on June 22, 1944. Whether you got college help, got that first mortgage backed-up, or got a loan to convert your old coal-fired furnace converted to a Timken fuel-oil gun, Uncle Sam was there to assist; not welfare but a reward for serving our country in time of war.

Following the 9/11 attacks and the renewed mobilization of troops, airmen and sailors to deal with whatever was ahead, Congress passed a new G.I. Bill, which was last amended in 2008. This Post newsletter cannot become a reliable reference to the benefits provided today to active-duty servicemen and women, but a superficial citing of a few would tell you that:

~ The aggregate level of benefits earned depends on the length of service, where a percentage of the maximum applies to durations from 90

days (40%) to 36 months (100%).

~ Eligibility applies to all branches of the services, except National Guard and Reserve Units who were involuntarily called to active duty.

~ All benefit entitlement must be used within 15 years of the release from active duty.

~ Under certain other circumstances, benefits can be transferred to a spouse or child, if the G.I. re-ups for four years, including in the National Guard or Reserves.

~ Educational benefits (e.g. tuition assistance) is limited to \$250 per semester and \$4,500 per year under DoD rules and \$4,000 per year for Coast Guardsmen. The Army and the Navy also have limits of 16 semester hours per year.

~ G.I. schooling may be at a four-year college, community college or an industrial training facility. The institution accepting G.I. Bill students must first sign a DoD agreement which puts forth certain conditions pertaining to recruiting and educating military students.

~ Students drawing down G.I. benefits must maintain a grade-point average of "C" or above for undergraduates and "B" for higher levels. Failure to do so, requires returning monies received by the school for that semester.

~ The level of courses acceptable must be an advancement beyond the level already reached by the student. (A G.I. with, say, a BS cannot obtain benefits for a BA degree. He or she can seek a financed MS degree.)

~ Varying with the branch of service, active-duty G.I.'s can begin to use tuition assistance benefits after 12 months of service (Army) or 24 months (Marines).

There is a House Bill pending action now, called the “Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017”, named after the American Legion National Commander who drafted the original 1944 Act. This act when enacted will extend or otherwise enhance the provisions of the 9/11 G.I.Bill, for example:

~ The exclusion of National Guardsmen and Reservists who were involuntarily called to active duty will be removed.

~ The 15-year limit within which benefits can be claimed will be removed.

~ Today, when a school or other institution of learning includes G.I.Bill veteran students and that school folds or closes, those students lose their entitlement to further schooling benefits. The pending bill makes provision for retention of benefits and refund of current semester tuition.

So, when the new act becomes law, it will extend, correct and augment the provisions of the amended 9/11 G.I.Bill. Let us hope H.R. 3218 – the Colmery Act – passes into law!

Sources: *Military Times*, June 19, 2017; and The American Legion Legislative Update, July 13, 2017.

### **ARMY AND MARINES GETTING NEW ARMORED VEHICLE**

As WWII raged, the US developed a General Purpose Truck and the “GP” became called “Jeep”. Just as the long-serving Jeep and the Dodge PowerWagon platform were gradually phased out of the military, to be replaced by the various models of the HMMWV, or “Humvee”, production is underway now of a new JLTV, otherwise the “Joint Light Tactical Vehicle”, which will

replace the Humvees. The first question is: What easy name will be attached to it.

One unit of the II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, NC, and a unit of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY, will be the first to receive the new “armored truck”. The Marines will be getting 69 JLTV’s to replace 69 Humvee’s in July 2019, and the Corps has programmed need for 5,500 by 2022. More, if the budget allows.

The vehicle is being produced in two variants so far: A four-passenger Combat Tactical Vehicle and a two-passenger Combat Support Vehicle. The program to replace the Humvee began with early studies in 2006. As its design and capability became known throughout the world, several US-allied nations have expressed interest, and Australia funded nine of the 30 prototypes. On August 25, 2015, an initial production contract was awarded to a Northrup-Grumman/Oshkosh Truck joint-venture for over 16,000 vehicles.



Military officials contend these new vehicles will prove to be stronger and offer better survivability and maintainability, will be mechanically more reliable and maintainable, will navigate difficult terrain better and will be equipped to link into current and future data networks. The vehicle has ballistic protection equal to the

mine-resistant and ambush protected vehicles, but is one-third lighter and 70% faster off-road than the MRAP. It is currently in low-rate production for the US military, with full production scheduled to start in 2019. Ah! But what is it to be called?

Sources: *Military Times*, July 3, 2017; and the Internet at Wikipedia.

### **VA’S 430 VACANT BUILDINGS ARE ON THE BLOCK**

Following through on a key promise from less than a month ago, VA Secretary David J. Shulkin announced a plan to dispose of all VA vacant buildings in 24 months by selling or by repurposing. The plan was in the VA’s “State of the VA” address delivered to the White House on May 31. Nationwide, the VA currently has 430 vacant, or mostly vacant, buildings that on the average are more than 60 years old and are costing taxpayers more than \$7 million per year to maintain. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Shulkin announced that the VA has begun disposal or reuse processes on 71 buildings and will start on another 71 in the next six months. Plans to deal with the remaining 288 are scheduled within 24 months.

“We owe it to the American taxpayer to apply as much of our funding as possible to helping veterans”, said Dr. Shulkin. “Maintaining vacant buildings, including close to 100 from the Revolutionary War and Civil War, makes no sense, and we are working as quickly as possible to get them out of our inventory.”

The Secretary also announced that VA will review another 784 non-vacant, but underutilized,

buildings to determine if additional efficiencies can be identified to be reinvested in veterans' services.

In addition to the building disposal plan, Dr. Shulkin announced that the Veterans Benefits Administration is freezing its footprint and will maximize space management by leasing or eliminating office space nationwide, thanks to a robust telework program and the digitization of claim files. VA estimates that these actions will save taxpayers an additional \$15.7 million annually beginning this year, for a total of close to \$23 million in combined annual savings from these initiatives.

"We need to move rapidly to bring savings to taxpayers", said Dr. Shulkin. "We will work through the legal requirements and regulations for disposal and reuse, and we will do it as swiftly as possible."

Source: VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs; News Release; June 20, 2017.

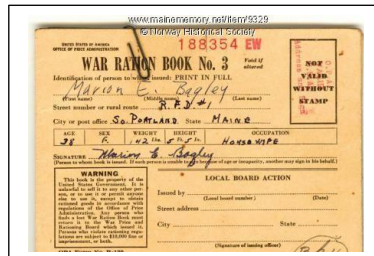
## WORLD WAR TWO REDUX

Through the period 1941-1945, the US was involved in all aspects of World War Two. In the current period, 2016-2020, the US is celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War Two. But, "celebrating" does not seem appropriate. Try "remembering", for those who experienced that wartime period, whether in the uniform of one of the armed services or in coveralls at one of the many factories producing the tools of war or just a kid carving model planes to train airplane spotters or collecting scrap metal, a vital war materiel. All households were daily glued to radios, listening to Lowell Thomas, H. V. Kaltenborn, Eric Sevareid, Edward R. Murrow

and the BBC to learn of the good and bad events in far off war zones. There was no more effective unifier than the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. That silenced the America Firsters and other pacifists who argued for staying out of that scrap in Europe. Pearl Harbor produced a flood of men volunteering to join the fight. Those hometown vacancies caused women to take off their aprons and don slacks and kerchiefs, becoming "Rosie the



"Riveter" or Wilma the Welder. Parks, vacant lots and backyards became victory gardens of vegetables. Shoes, tires, gasoline, meat and other foods became limited due to rationing. V-mail was invented, as was oleomargarine and car-pooling. Those were just a few of the results of an all-out war.



Hollywood and the entertainment industry joined in with motivating movies and noisy but comforting canteens. Motion



picture stars, like all Americans, put on the khaki, dark blue or sage green uniforms and joined the fray.

Gradually, the news went from bad to better to good, as our troops, airmen and sailors, alongside Great Britain and the other Allies, started rolling up the Axis forces in North Africa, on Guadalcanal, over Germany and at sea everywhere. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times, but victory, first in Europe, then the Pacific, did come – with a "bang".



World War One was never known as that until World War Two became recognized as another global contest. Today, we wonder about the future. Is there a World War Three out there, waiting for some minor event, like the assassination of Austro-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand, or some huge event, like Pearl Harbor, to touch off a new global war? It will not be Germany, Italy nor Japan which causes a Three. It will be some pariah nation who lights the fuse or a worldwide mobilization of stone-age zombies. Let us pray that only little wars or regional clashes are in our future, or none at all, for a World War Three will not be the same as One or Two.

# AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 305 NEWS

## President Kathy Carroll



It seems like summer just started, but the stores are full of back-to-school items. How time flies! July was so busy. In case you haven't heard – Post 305 won 1<sup>st</sup> place for best patriotic float in the Woodlands Fourth of July parade. Way to go!

The Department of Texas convention was in Killeen on July 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. Someone asked me if our Unit got anything and my quick answer was – we won a ton! We received participation certificates from every committee. We received a banner for our Unit flag for reaching 113.75% of membership goal, a plaque for Best Overall Unit VA&R report and a framed certificate from the Community Service committee for Best in Texas Report. Also, two of the essays that we sent to Department were chosen to be forwarded to National.

Our new Department of Texas officers were elected and installed on the last day of the convention. They are:

**President:** Donna Dillard (from Houston)  
**Vice President:** Shay Kuehner  
**Chaplain:** Janice Winters  
**Historian:** Von Hale  
**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Cheryl Estes

The President's theme for this year is "Who We Are, What We Do, and Why We Matter". The President's pin is an owl, and I will have some available at the August meeting for anyone who is interested – price \$3. FYI: **Kim Biggerstaff**, a dual member in our Post and Unit, was elected Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

In June, **Gene Watz** volunteered to coordinate a "Packages Across The Seas" project, which will send two "CARE" packages per month to Staff Sergeant Harris, who will distribute the goodies to the 50 members of his Marine Unit. We are off to a good start since many members brought things to the July meeting for the packages. In the Fall, we will also be "adopting" an Army Ranger Unit being deployed to Afghanistan.

**Joan Sparks** gave a great example of thinking outside the box when it concerns getting donations. She talked to the manager of her local Kroger store and got him to agree to give her 150 snack bags of nuts for \$5. With creativity like that we should have no trouble filling these boxes every month. Part of our mission is to enhance the lives of our veterans and active duty military. I am sure that anything we send in these packages to make their time away from home better, will be greatly appreciated. So remember, we will be collecting donations for packages every month. If you have things you want to donate but are unable to get to the meeting, please call one of the officers or any member of the Unit, and we will arrange to pick up the items.

The new membership year begins in September so you should be receiving a renewal notice from National this month. Once again you can send your renewal check to the Unit or you can renew on-line.

We have been talking for years about the importance of retaining existing members and increasing membership. I think the President's theme this year is an excellent guide for us to use. If we focus our activities in a way that answers those three statements, the community will understand our mission and know the importance of the American Legion and the Auxiliary. We need to do a better job of getting the word out about Post and Unit activities. People will join an organization if they feel like their time is being spent in a worthwhile way.



Our next meeting will be Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the South County Community Center. I hope to see all of you there. Stay cool and enjoy the "dog days of summer".

God bless our veterans, our men and women in uniform and the USA.

**Kathy Carroll,  
President**

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
Mon.	Aug. 7	Vietnam War Began (1964)		
Mon.	Aug. 14	Japan Surrendered (1945)		
Mon.	Aug. 14	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Center @ 7:00 PM	
Wed.	Aug. 16	American Legion	Grand Sierra Resort & Casino, Reno, Nevada	
	to Thur. Aug. 24	National Convention		
Thur.	Aug. 17	Membership Meetings	South County Community Center @ 7:00 PM	
Mon.	Sept. 4	Labor Day		
Sat.	Sept. 9	ALA National Day of Service	Henry's Home - Horse & Human Sanctuary	
Mon.	Sept. 11	Patriot Day – 9/11 Attacks (2001)		
Thur.	Sept. 18	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Center @ 7:00 PM	
Thur.	Sept. 21	Department's Fall Executive	Omni Austin Southpark Hotel, Austin	
	to Sun. Sept. 24	Committee Meeting		
Thur.	Sept. 21	Membership Meetings	South County Community Center @ 7:00 PM	
Sat.	Oct. 7	Afghan War Began (2001)		
Fri.	Oct. 13	U. S. Navy Established (1775)		
Mon.	Oct. 16	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Center @ 7:00 PM	
Thur.	Oct. 19	Annual Oktoberfest Picnic	Shadowbend Park, (Woodlands) @ 7:00 PM	
Fri.	Oct. 20	Fall Rummage Sale – Set-up Day	Robinson Road Community Ctr. @ 7:00 AM	

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

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>TEL. NO.</u>	<u>E-MAIL ADDRESS</u>
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SERVICE OFFICER	Toby Carroll	(281) 323-4985	toby.carroll@sbcglobal.net
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	Bruce Carter	(281) 844-0836	bruce4482@att.net
ASS'T SGT-AT-ARMS	(vacant)		
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ASS'T CHAPLAIN	(vacant)		
JUDGE ADVOCATE	Everett Ison	(281) 298-9524	everett.ison@sprint.com
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