



POST 305 BUGLE

January 2009

Volume 5 Issue 1

COMMANDER'S CORNER

I hope everyone survived the Holidays with a smile and is ready to get back to work. There is much work to be done, both within the Post and within the community. The National Commander, **Dave Rehbein** has challenged the American Legion Posts by creating a Post Excellence Award. I will have more on that later, but basically it set goals in each of four key areas, Membership, Youth Activities, Community Service, and Service to U.S. Troops or Veterans. Our Post does something in each of these areas, but perhaps there are ways we can do more. For now, I just want you to relate to the areas of measure and think about ways we can improve in those key areas.

January is our Chili Cook-Off month. We ask eight of our members to cook a pot of chili, no help from spouses. We give the chili to the Auxiliary who selects the winner based on a poll for the best tasting chili. The winner receives a certificate and a plaque for their excellence culinary creation. We hope to have a lot of fun with that and a good treat after the meeting when the membership gets to eat what's left. Hint. Get into the food line early.

We needed 13 members who hadn't renewed for 2008 from 2007 to qualify for the post "Hall of Fame" award. We had a blitz to see if we could get the required number, and due to the hard work of **Everett**

Ison and **Pickens Jones**, we found the necessary members and will receive the "Hall of Fame" award at the Department Convention in June.

We will be helping the students from the Lonestar College Veterans Assoc. by turning their concerns into resolutions that will hopefully be approved at the highest levels of the Legion and then be provided to the VA education authorities. We will also attend some of their meetings and functions to provide continuity to their efforts.

We were at 322 members for the year on Dec. 15th. We need to reach the goal of 410 by the time of the Department Convention. We would need a couple more to reach our all time high, and 433 to make "Hall of Fame" award. Let's do it all soon, so we get it out of the way.

Remember to say a prayer for our comrades who are not fortunate enough to be with their families over the holidays.

Jim Bolin
For God and Country

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

We had two new members sign up at the meeting. Welcome **Paul Lance**, a new member to the Legion, and **Joseph Gonzales** who transferred his membership to our Post.

We will be making up baskets that will be used by homeless vets, who through the U.S. Vets Program, are provided an

apartment in which to live. Think about what would be needed to set up an apartment, would fit in a basket, and bring it to the meeting as a donation to this program.

We approved a donation of \$100 to the Montgomery County Food Bank.

We approved a motion to authorize an expenditure of up to \$208 to pay the 2008 dues for distressed members.

Mary Bolin, President of the Auxiliary, presented the Post a check for \$293.24 for our help during their recent Craft Fair.

We approved a motion to pay \$90.39 for the hotel room of a guest at the recent District Conference.

Mid-Winter Conference in Austin at the Omni on Jan. 23 to 25. Advanced registration fee \$10, to be sent in prior to Jan. 1, 2009.

VETERANS ADVOCATE

IMPORTANT	PHONE	NUMBERS
Houston VA Regional Center	1-713-383-7842	

Montgomery County Veterans Service Office	1-936-539-7842
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Your Legislators (Toll Free)	1-877-762-876, 1-888-762-6780
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Haas Vs. Peake

It's not as confusing as you may have thought. On August 16, 2006, the Court of Veteran Appeals ruled that Vietnam veterans who served in the waters off Vietnam and did not set foot in Vietnam are entitled to a presumption of exposure to herbicide agents, namely Agent Orange.

VA appealed the Haas decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. The Federal Circuit reversed the Veterans Court decision and remanded the case for

further proceedings consistent with its opinion.

As you will recall, VA imposed a stay on Haas-related cases in December 2006. The stay remains in place and these cases are still being held in abeyance. The primary issue before the Federal Circuit is VA's interpretation of the applicable rules and regulations, as well as manual provisions pertaining to service in Vietnam.

While the legal experts wrangle over semantics, we common folks will continue to submit claims. By all means, continue to submit claims related to exposure to herbicides. But, no VCAA letter will be issued upon receipt of the claim. This involves claims wherein the only issue is based upon herbicide exposure.

VA is using a special code for these types of claims so regional office personnel can readily identify these special cases.

Texas Veterans Commission

AUXILIARY NEWS

I wish everyone a Very Happy New Year and a prosperous 2009.

In December the Auxiliary participated in donating money to purchase a wreath for the "Wreaths Across America" program. They were placed on the headstones at the Houston National Cemetery for Christmas.

Some of the Auxiliary members attended the Tillman's "Veterans Welcome Home Celebration" for our local veterans.

We still have a number of members who have not renewed their membership. We would like you to please do so soon.

Mary Bolin
Unit President

POST EXCELLENCE AWARDS CREATED

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, these awards will be given to posts that achieve a high standard of participation in each of the four key areas: membership, youth activities, community service, and service to U.S. troops or veterans.

Standards to be achieved include:

- **Membership:** Total number of members must be at least one more than the previous year.
- **Youth Activities:** The post must sponsor and actively participate in at least one of the Legion's primary youth programs – Boys State, Baseball, Oratorical, Boy Scouts of Junior Shooting Sports.
- **Community service:** The post must carry out a project that involves members of the legion family actively working in the community outside the post home. There's a large range of potential projects but monetary donations may not constitute the entire project.
- **Service to U.S. troops or veterans:** The post must carry out a project supporting troops or veterans in the local community, with Legion family members actively working outside their post home. Projects may include the Family Support Network or Heroes to Hometowns programs. Or helping a local veteran.

District Commanders responsible for each post will certify achievement of the four specified criteria. They also will submit a monthly list of qualifying posts to their department headquarters.

The last two criteria will ideally include documentation, such as copies of press releases submitted to the local media. Copy submitted should include a date-time stamp showing receipt by the medial outlet.

Each qualifying posts will receive a framed certificate. We will win a certificate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future issues of the Bugle will be distributed only by email, except for the May issue, due to lack of funds. The May issue, announcing the elections in May, will be sent to the entire mailing list. If you know anyone who gets the Bugle by mail and not by email, please share this information.

Post Activities

Day	Date	Activity	Location
Mon.	Jan. 12	Ex. Meeting	Office
Thur.	Jan 15	Membs. Meet.	Rayford Rd
Thur.	Jan. 15	Chili Cook-Off	Rayford Rd
Sat.	Jan 17	Oratorical Cont.	Willis Post 618
	Jan 23-25	Mid-Winter Conf	Austin Omni
Mon.	Feb 16	Ex. Meeting	Office
Thur.	Feb 19	Membs. Meet.	Rayford Rd.

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