



AMERICAN LEGION POST 305

"THE WOODLANDS POST"

THE BUGLE



January, 2013

Volume 9, Issue 1

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Commander Pete Koch

I trust everyone had a nice holiday season and are ready to get back to reality. I really believe the older you get, the faster time goes. We accomplished a lot this year but we can do more. Our Boy's State Program was an outstanding success this past year, and our thanks go to **Dayton Denton** for a wonderful job. Fourteen of our youths got a good starting education on how the state government works.

I also trust that you all took advantage of the special on membership and joined at the \$25 level, because now it will cost you \$31, however, the membership is still a real value at that price. You get the Legion Magazine, information on veteran benefits, a free \$1000 insurance policy, and you belong to one of the best Posts in Texas.

Kimberly Biggerstaff, Finance Officer, and I attended the first ever training session for Post Commanders to be held by the Department. It was held in Austin and was put on by the Department of Texas. It was well-presented on various subjects that are of concern to each and every Post.

Also, at the meeting on January 17th, will have our Annual Chili Cook-off. Ten intrepid cooks, members of the Legion and Auxiliary, will prepare their chili for us to sample after the meeting. Panels of Post and Auxiliary members will judge the best chili, and the winner will go down in history.

Then, on the third weekend in January, the State Mid-Winter Conference will be held. It is a time that the State-level committees get together to present status reports. Also, it is a time of training. This year the Department will be much more involved in training. The budget for training has been increased exponentially. The Conference is open to all Legionnaires and will be held at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark from January 17th to January 20th. Take note: the National Convention will be held in Houston this year from the 23rd of August through the 29th.

We have now commenced posting our meeting and event dates in the newspapers and Woodlands-on-Line monthly to inform the veterans of Montgomery County and beyond what we are doing and inviting them to join our Post and attend our meetings and other events

I will also be suggesting social and training sessions during our monthly meetings that can be developed, even if we do not have a building or Post Home. Starting in January, we will be commencing a Sponsor Program, where each new Post member is appointed a Sponsor to assist him/her in the learning of the functions of this Post and the American Legion in general. Each will receive a Welcome Packet with useful information in it. Each Sponsor will be responsible for assuring the new member meets all of the members in attendance, especially the Committee Chairpersons, and gets him/her assigned to help at least on one committee.

For God and Country,

Pete

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December 20, 2012

The meeting was convened in the prescribed manner. The Commander checked with Sergeant-at-Arms **Jim Bolin**, but there were

no visitors. Next, the Commander asked the First Vice Commander **Emery Heuermann** for his membership report. He reported that the Post has 275 paid members for the year. The goal for the year is 333 members. The Commander then discussed his plans for having sponsors for the new members and an Initiation Ceremony for the new members twice a year, rather than just once a year. The Commander also noted that he and **Kim Biggerstaff** attended the Department's training session at Austin last weekend.

The Commander then called on District 7 Commander **Everett Ison** for a report. He reported that the District was currently hanging on to first place among other Districts. We need to keep up the good work and get more members signed up for the year. He also noted that the Mid-Winter Conference will be January 17-20. All are encouraged to attend and that there will be training on Legion topics at the meeting.

Mickey Fussell, Second Vice Commander, reported that he is planning a outing to Coushatta Casino on January 8th. The bus leaves at 8:00 AM and will return about 8:00 PM. Make reservations a week ahead of the outing. All are invited. Call Mickey if you have any questions at 281-296-9344. Mickey also reported that he has a committee assembled to plan ways to improve our 4th of July float.

The Commander mentioned that he had asked **Donna Milstead** to come to the next Exec Comm. Meeting to talk about public relations and how she could help with our Public Relations efforts. The Finance Officer was absent, so the Commander gave the

report. The Post General Fund holds \$17,570.61 and the Allocated Fund is at \$22,373.96, for Total Assets of \$39,944.57. The membership approved a motion to permit the Finance Officer to renew the Certificate of Deposit for another six months. The Budget was also approved by the membership. The membership also approved the expense of \$50 per month to Hawthorn Storage for rental of storage for the Post's property such as filing cabinets, etc.

In For-The-Good-Of-The-Legion, VFW Post 12024 Commander **Carl Smith** reported that there would be a Veterans Appreciation Luncheon on January 26 at Tall Timbers Community Center. It is located at 9435 State Highway 292 and Moss Oak Street, next to a Valero gas station. All veterans are welcome. The affair will be a cookout from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

The meeting was closed in due form at 8:30 p.m.



VETERANS ADVOCATE

VETERANS LAND BOARD

The VLB Veterans Land Loan Program is the only one of its kind in the country, giving Texas veterans the opportunity to borrow money to purchase land at or below market interest rates while only requiring minimum 5% down payment. The program is easy to

use, and offers Texas veterans an exclusive and unbeatable financing alternative to purchase their own piece of Texas. The bonds used to fund the program are retired from loan repayments, and the cost of administering the program is financed through a small fee charged on each loan. Refer to the October 2012 Bugle for more info and check with the VLB for further details

FLU PREVENTION

Flu season is off to its earliest start in nearly 10 years - and it could be a bad one. Health officials on December 3 said suspected flu cases have jumped in five southern states, and the primary strain circulating is one that tends to make people sicker, especially the elderly. "It looks like it's shaping up to be a bad flu season, but only time will tell," said Dr. Thomas Frieden, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The good news is the nation seems to be fairly well prepared, Frieden said. More than a third of Americans have been vaccinated, and the vaccine is well matched to the strains of flu seen so far, CDC officials said. Higher-than-normal reports of flu have come in from Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas. An uptick in flu cases like this usually doesn't occur until after Christmas. It's not clear why the flu is showing up so early, but flu-related hospitalizations are rising earlier than usual, and there have already been two flu-related deaths in children. In fact the last time a typical flu season started this early was the winter of 2003-04. That also happened to be a year when the dominant flu type was the same one seen most widely this year. And in that year, there were a higher-than-usual

number of flu-related deaths in both the elderly and children. One key difference: In 2003-04, the flu vaccine was a poor match to the flu strain. Another: There's more vaccine now, and flu vaccination rates have risen for the general public and for key groups like pregnant women and health care workers. In all, an estimated 112 million Americans have been vaccinated so far, the CDC said. Flu vaccinations are recommended for everyone who is six months of age or older. [Source: VAMC Houston | AP | 3 Dec 2012 ++]

Important Contact Numbers

Houston Regional VA Office:
1-713-383-7842
County Veterans Serv. Offices:
Montgomery 1-936-539-7842
Harris 1-281-876-6600
Texas Veterans Commission:
1-800-252-8387
www.tvc.state.tx.us
State Legislators:
Dist. 4 – Tommy Williams
281-364-9426
Dist. 15 – Rob Eissler
281-681-9655
Dist. 16 – Brandon Creighton
936-539-0028
Dist. 126 – Patricia Harless
281-376-4114

THE BUTTERFLIES AND THE RAVENS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

In 1962, the US and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam signed the Geneva Accords, which guaranteed the neutrality of the Kingdom of Laos. A provision of the Accords required withdrawal of all foreign troops from Laos. The US had a small number of advisors in Laos, and they were pulled out. The North Vietnamese had about 4,000 troops stationed in Laos, remnants of the

First Indochina War. The North Vietnamese ignored the Accords, yet repeatedly stated it had "no military presence in Laos". Hoping to rid the country of the Vietnamese, the Laos government asked the US to help Laos to evict the invaders, who were there to protect their supply corridor, the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Kennedy wanted to help but did not want to violate the Accords. He then ordered the Air Force to covertly perform operations in Laos to help that country fight the North Vietnamese communists.

In 1963, four USAF sergeants were ordered to turn in their uniforms and ID's and were assigned as forward air controllers (FAC's) of the CIA. Occupying the right-hand seat of Air America light planes, these enlisted men spotted targets and directed air strikes. This civilian operational unit was known as the **Butterfly Air Force**. When the general in charge of air strikes discovered that enlisted men were in charge of air strikes, he ordered their replacement by rated fighter pilots, also without military trappings. Thus, the now six sergeant FAC's were replaced with pilots who could fly aircraft alone or, as needed, with a Laotian interpreter-observer. This 1966 operational change was redesignated "Palace Dog" which included the FAC's, now called **The Ravens**.

The Ravens were volunteer officers who had at least four months' combat duty, including at least 60 days as an Air Force FAC. Although they belonged tangentially to the USAF, they performed their duties in T-shirts and Levi's under the direction of the US ambassador's air attaché. Operations began small with two pilots on 90-day TDY, using

borrowed Air America light planes. By December 1966, there were three Ravens, flying their own Cessna O-1's ("Bird Dog"), with either no markings or Royal Lao Air Force markings. By November 1967, the Raven headcount reached eight pilots, and better Cessna U-17's ("Skywagon") augmented the fleet.

Working as a Raven FAC was an exhausting, high-risk, high-stress job. The casualty rate among these pilots ran to 50% KIA and WIA. Ground fire hit 90% of Raven planes and 60% had been downed by enemy action. KIA's reached 30%.

When North American T-28's ("Trojan") were assigned to the Ravens, they were "the Cadillacs of the fleet" – giving capability beyond unarmed observation planes. The T-28's had higher speed and sported bomb and napalm racks, HE rocket rails, and .50-cal. machine guns. You no longer had to orbit the target and await the Laotian fast-movers. You could take offensive action immediately, before the target took cover.



North American T-28 "Trojan"

The Butterflies and the Ravens were not well-known and were little heralded. But, they were effective in disrupting the movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies southward at great risk to themselves.

ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF CONTEST

Readers are reminded that the next meeting (January 17) will be followed by the intramural tug-o-war, titled as above. There at, crock-pots of chili con carne or equal will be presented by volunteer members of both the Post and the Auxiliary and judged against a set of secret criteria by judges of both units, carefully selected for their taste and honesty. So, those of you interested and challenged are invited to become a contender and to prepare and enter your best "bowl-o-red". And, those of you who just want a hot "stick-to-the-ribs" free meal, come to the meeting and enjoy!

[For any reader who just needs a good and different chili recipe, look to the right.]

CRACKPOT CHILI CON CARNE

Makes 8 to 10 servings

2 lbs. lean cube steak cut into half-inch pieces

2 cups chopped onions

2 cloves garlic, crushed

3 tbsp. chili powder

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. paprika

1 tsp. oregano

1 tsp. ground cumin

½ tsp. cayenne pepper

½ cup beef stock or tomato juice

24-oz. can diced or crushed tomatoes

16-oz can red kidney beans

1. Brown beef in a hot skillet.
2. Combine with all other ingredients in a crock pot, stir well.
3. Cook on low 8 to 10 hours or on high for 5 hours.
4. Serve chili over cooked rice. Offer garnishes of chopped onions, shredded cheddar cheese and sour cream.

EVENT BULLETIN BOARD **WHAT ~ WHERE ~ WHEN**

Tuesday, January 8; Casino Daytrip: Here's another chance to offset the ill effects of the "fiscal cliff" or to just have a good time with a few comrades and the significant other. This one is to Coushatta Casino Resort in Kinder, Louisiana. But, if you have not made your phone reservation, you need to hustle. The bus leaves First Class Tours' FM 1960 terminal at 8:00 AM. That's just two blocks east of I-45. Reservations can be made by phoning (281) 443-1200, at least seven days in advance of the trip.

Thursday, January 17; Annual Chili Cook-Off Contest: (Please read the notice found above.)

Thursday, January 17 thru January 20; DofT Mid-Winter Conference: This Department of Texas Conference will be held at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark. All Legionnaires and Auxiliary Unit members are invited to attend. This year training of Post members will be featured, as well as the usual status reports of all state-level committees.

Saturday, January 26; Veterans Appreciation Luncheon: This VFW cook-out event is open to all veterans and will run from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM. The venue is the Tall Timbers Community Center at the intersection of State Route 292 and Moss Oak Street. [9435 SR 292, next door to the Valero filling station.] Bring your mess kit and canteen cup!

AUXILIARY UNIT 305 NEWS



Dayna Salter, President

Our December meeting started with two short business items – the Mid-Winter Conference in Austin on January 19-20 and approval for funds to send two girls to Girls State in June. So far **Jenny Le** and I will attend Mid-Winter, but the Unit is eligible for five additional attendees. Please let me know if you are interested by January 5th. There will be leadership training on Saturday, the 19th, and committee reports for 2013 plans on Sunday, the 20th. This is a great opportunity to see how the ALA works at the State level to set priorities and implement programs.

The business meeting was followed by a gift exchange to get everyone in the holiday mood. We had 18 members in attendance --

an excellent turnout for this busy time of year.

As we look forward to 2013, I'd like to review some of the successes of 2012. We are ending the year with about 10% more funds in GOF account and over 50% more funds in the VA&R account than we had at 2011 year end. I want to thank the members for their hard work this year.

I think the biggest success was our Poppy Program in May and November. By including the Post Offices, as well as our Kroger store, we have significantly improved donations for veterans' programs. Thanks to all who participated in those outings and especially to **Rosalie Fryer**, our Poppy chairwoman.

The other success I want to single out here is the philosophy of doing quick hit fundraisers instead of a larger scale Crafts Show or Ride, which require a great deal of planning, investment and upfront concentrated work. With a smaller focus, we have been able to raise funds through tables at the Rummage Sale, neighborhood bazaars and craft shows, as well as Tupperware sales and Birdies-for-Charity fundraisers.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge some of our programs that have spent those hard earned funds. One is our focus on children and youth. For those programs, we won an award at the 2012 Department Convention. A special thanks to **Joan Sparks** who chairs this committee.

Another program is our support of deployed military through the sending of care packages. Thanks to **Ursula McConnell** and **Annie Smith** for leading those efforts.

And, I especially want to mention our tireless needlepoint, cross stitch, crochet and knitting experts **Nan Claypool** and **Mary Bolin**, who have created some beautiful crafts for our sales tables and as donations to our veterans.

As we begin a new calendar year, I would like to discuss 2013 plans at the January meeting, so please come with comments and ideas.

And, don't forget that our January meeting will be the Annual Chili Cook-off. The Post will be judging our Unit entries and we will be judging the Post entries. **Veronica Maiolo** will be calling around to coordinate the side dishes and condiments to accompany the chilis. I hope to see you there!

-Dayna Salter

AUXILIARY UNIT OFFICERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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SGT-AT-ARMS: Annie Smith; Tel: (281) 367-4714 E-mail: c.smith@thewesternsystemsinc.com

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Jenny Le; Tel: (281) 323-4530 Email: jmlchirp@yahoo.com

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

DAY	DATE	EVENT	LOCALE
Tues.	Jan. 1	New Years Day	
Tues.	Jan. 8	Casino Day-Trip	Coushatta Casino Resort, Kinder, LA
Mon.	Jan. 14	Post Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thurs.	Jan. 17	Membership Meetings (Annual Chili-Cook-Off Contest)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thurs.	Jan. 17 to Sun. Jan. 20	Department Mid-Winter Conference	Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark
Sun.	Jan. 27	Vietnam Peace Accord	
Sun.	Jan. 27	Division Oratorical Contest	Willis Post 618 @ 1:30 PM
Mon.	Feb. 18	Post Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thurs.	Feb. 21	Membership Meetings (Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Mon.	Feb. 28	Operation Desert Storm	
Mon.	Mar. 18	Post Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Mar. 21	Membership Meetings (New Member Initiations)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM.

POST OFFICERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

MAIL ADDRESS: American Legion Post 305, P. O. Box 9336, The Woodlands, TX 77387

<u>POSITION, NAME & TELEPHONE NUMBER</u>			<u>E-MAIL</u>
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SECOND VICE CMDR:	Mickey Fussell	(281) 367-7115	v.h.fussells@gmail.com
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FINANCE OFFICER:	Kimberly Biggerstaff	(281) 296-9344	kimgator5747@sbcglobal.net
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CIRCULATION: Emery Heuermann

WEBMASTER: Emery Heuermann

www.alpost305.org and www.mypost.org

FACEBOOK MANAGER: Kimberly Biggerstaff

MEETING DAY & PLACE: 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. The Auxiliary Unit hosts a pot-luck supper following the meetings. The Center is located on the southeast corner at the intersection of Lake Robbins Drive and Grogan's Mill Road, next to the library.