



AMERICAN LEGION POST 305 "THE WOODLANDS POST" THE BUGLE



February, 2013 Volume 9, Issue 2

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Commander Pete Koch

Dear Legionnaires,
January's meeting was busy but we also celebrated with some fun with the Annual Chili Cook-off. We had three entries from the Post and four from the Auxiliary. Congratulations go to **Mickey Fussell** as this year's Post winner and to **Dayna Salter** as the Unit's winner. It was a close call as there was only a three-vote spread among the other contestants. Hopefully these recipes will be entered into what I hope to be a Post and Unit cookbook coming along that we intend to be a fund raiser.

Our February meeting will include the "Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony". For those unfamiliar with this honor, also sometimes referred to as "The Immortal Chaplains", it refers to the four Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other GI's and

civilian personnel during the WWII sinking of the troopship *USAT Dorchester* on February 3, 1943. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats, and they gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The four joined arms, said prayers and sang hymns as they went down with the ship. These men of God were Father John R. Washington, Reverend George L. Fox, Rabbi Alexander D Goode and Reverend Clark V. Poling.



The March meeting will feature the initiation of all new members of Post 305. This will be a special ceremony for all members that have joined our Post who have yet to be initiated into the American Legion properly. Please come and participate in the ceremony in your honor and let us welcome you again. If you are one of the Post members that have never been initiated into the American Legion, please make that known to the First Vice at emeryheuermann@charter.net or

to the undersigned at petekoch76@gmail.com.

Membership remains an issue and we need those renewals returned to the Post as soon as possible. It will not be long when the 2013 year has ended and we will begin 2014, and I would hate to see your continuous years of service broken. At the present time, we have 293 paid members. We are in the process of making the monthly Post meetings more interesting in the hope that some of our absent members will attend our meetings. Speakers on various subjects will be obtained. If you have a topic you would like to know more about, please forward it to me, and we will see if we can get someone to talk about it.

We are also be improving our "Welcome Package" for all new members that join and will assign a competent Sponsor to each to assure they become familiar with the protocol and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Post and are introduced to all of the members, especially the committee chairpersons so they will have a chance to choose which committee they would like to assist the Post with. We can use all of the help we can get in working these important committees. This step is very crucial if we want to maintain

membership and be of a great help to our veterans.

On January 22, at a special meeting of the Executive Committee, we were honored to have Ms. **Donna Wick Milstead** of **dwpr/marketing, media & public relations**, present us with an explanation of what “public relations” is and how it could benefit the Post in getting our name and purpose out to the communities in The Woodlands area. She listed all of the contacts we need to utilize and the ways articles are placed in the newspapers, on television and on the radio. It was rewarding to have an expert in the field explain this topic. We will now discuss the findings amongst ourselves and advise Ms. Milstead as to our findings. Hopefully, we can start getting our name out there to the approximately 22,000 veterans in Montgomery County. We have to advise the community what the American Legion stands for and how we can be of assistance to everyone, especially our veterans.

Several of the Post and Unit members, including your Commander, attended the Department’s Mid-Winter Conference held in Austin. It was extremely informative. We will have more information coming out about it shortly.

The programs that we support, which include Boy’s State, Scholarships, Oratorical Contests and others, go a long way with the nearly \$3.00 from your dues per month average. Unfortunately, we need your support to continue these programs. We have several programs that rely on funds from dues to support those programs.

As a reminder, I would like for all members to update their contact

information with the Post when information changes, so that we can update our records and also those of the Department and National as well.

On a side note, I do want to honor all of our active duty servicemen and servicewomen and let them know that they are truly appreciated for their service to God and our Country. We need to be honoring them each day of the year and not just on Veterans Day.

In closing, remember to pray for our troops and their safety in their ongoing efforts to protect our country.

Our next meeting will be at 7:00 PM on February 21st at the South County Community Center on Lake Robbins Road in the Woodlands.

For God and Country,

Pete

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

January 17, 2013

The meeting was convened in the prescribed manner. The Commander checked with Sergeant-at-Arms **Jim Bolin**, to assure that we had a quorum. Next, the Commander asked the First Vice Commander **Emery Heuermann** to give the financial report because Finance Officer **Kim Biggerstaff** was absent. He reported that the General Fund had \$17,404.22 and the Allocated Fund and Money Market were at \$22,3376.29, for a total in all funds of \$39,780.51.

Next, the Commander called on **Emery** to give his membership report. He reported that the Post has 293 paid members for the

year. The goal for the year is 333 members

Mickey Fussell, Second Vice Commander, reported that he is planning the next outing to Coughatta Casino Resort on March 5th. 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. He also noted that the Conroe Seniors take many trips each month and that we would be welcomed on any trip. He specifically mentioned a trip to the dog races in May 22nd. Mark that date on your calendar. More later. Mickey also reported on progress by the Fourth-of-July Parade Committee. It should be able to refurbish the float, including adding a sunroof, within budget constraints.

There being no further business to come before the membership, the meeting was closed in due form at 7:50 p.m.

Shortly thereafter, the Post and Auxiliary members enjoyed tasting and voting for the best chili-concarne, The Post winner selected by the Auxiliary was **Mickey Fussell** and the Unit winner selected by the Post was **Dayna Salter**.





VETERANS ADVOCATE

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT 2013 UPDATE:

On December 20, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the conference version of the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by a vote of 315 to 107 and sent it on to the Senate for its consideration. The Senate then approved it by a vote of 81 to 14 the next day. The NDAA authorizes \$633.3 billion in defense spending. It includes numerous provisions that the Military Coalition worked hard for but also fails to include several items the Coalition desperately wanted. But, on the whole it is a success for the presently serving and retired military members and their families. The final version of the Conference Report is over 1,600 pages. Among the most important provisions for you and your families are:

~ **TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Co-Pays** - The House refused to agree to the Administration's and Senate provisions that would have allowed DoD to triple the drug co-pays in the next five years. Instead of the proposed raising of the present \$12 brand-name retail co-pay up to \$26 this year and up to \$36, the NDAA limits this year's retail brand-name co-pay to \$17 in FY2013 and any future increases can be NO MORE than the yearly COLA. The amount for Generic-Retail prescriptions will remain at the present \$5 co-pay for this year

instead of the proposed yearly \$1 increases.

~ **TRICARE Third-tier/Non-Formulary Retail Availability and Co-pays** - The Administration wanted to end all availability of third-tier/non-formulary drugs from retail pharmacies. Presently they are available with a \$25 co-pay. The final version keeps them available in the network pharmacies, but at a \$44 co-pay.

~ **TRICARE Home-delivery/Mail-order Co-Pays** - In the final version, the mail-order generic drugs still have NO CO-PAY. The conferees refused the Administration's plan to raise the generic co-pay to \$9 in 2017. The brand-name drug co-pay goes from \$9 to \$13 in FY2013 and then only increases at the COLA rate, rather than the Administration's proposal to go from \$9 to \$26 in FY2013 and then to \$34. And, while the mail order would still provide third-tier/non-formulary drugs, the present co-pay will go from the present \$25 to \$44 and then only COLA increases, rather than the proposed increase to \$51 this year and then up to \$66.

~ **TFL Mail-order/Base-Pharmacy Refills** - To replace the money the Administration said it would get from its proposed drug co-pay increases, the conference report requires that there be a test to require TFL maintenance-drug refills be filled through the mail-order program for one year. (After the year, anyone can go back to retail if they prefer.)

~ **Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission** - The Administration's proposal (which was in the Senate version of the NDAA) included a BRAC-like commission and reconfiguration of the full military retired system. The Administration would have gotten to choose all the Commission members (which

could not include anyone who had worked for a VSO or MSO for the last year.) They would submit a report that Congress would have to vote up or down; yea or no; without allowing them to add any amendments or changes ('a la BRAC). The final provision passed by the House and accepted by the Senate permits the President to appoint one commissioner, with two each to be appointed by the Republican and Democratic leaders of the House and Senate, in consultation with Armed Services Committee leaders. And, any recommendations developed by the Commission would be treated like any other proposed law. This was a real danger to retirees and stopping it is a real success.

~ **Concurrent Receipt** - There was a small but important improvement in the current concurrent receipt law. Presently the complicated statute often underpaid combat-injured military retirees under Combat-Related Special Compensation. The correction went into effect on January 1st.

~ **Space-Available Travel** - The new law authorizes (but does not require) the Secretary of Defense to expand eligibility to "gray area" Guard/Reserve retirees under age 60 and to other categories of individuals the Secretary deems appropriate. The Secretary has authority to establish relative travel priorities among eligible groups.

~ **Autism Treatment** - The new law establishes a one-year pilot program making active duty and retired family members diagnosed with autism eligible for applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy under TRICARE. MOAA is pleased the provision includes all uniformed services (the original House and Senate bills excluded some or all Coast Guard, NOAA,

and USPHS beneficiaries). The one-year limit means another battle to continue eligibility beyond FY2013.

The bill now goes to the President to signed into law. He had previously said he would veto the bill if given to him in its present form. But both the House and Senate passed the bill with a veto-proof majority, so an Obama veto would likely be easily overridden. A controversial part of the bill relates to detainee policy. The House-passed bill affirmed that U.S. citizens have habeas corpus rights on U.S. soil, while the Senate bill said U.S. citizens could not be held under military detention indefinitely. The compromise language says nothing in last year's NDAA or the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) would prevent the constitutional rights of those captured on U.S. soil from being infringed upon. The bill also includes controversial language providing reproductive healthcare to female service members, including abortion in the cases of rape and incest. Source: TREA News for the Enlisted (December 21 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

PROTECT YOUR CREDIT: FREEZE IT

(With thanks to Clark Howard)

You are ten times more likely to suffer a full-scale identity theft if you have experienced a data breach. The least kind of a data breach is someone stealing your credit card number. That is remedied by the filling out of some paperwork to dispute any bogus charges on your account. Conversely, having a debit card number compromised is a wholly different matter. In that case, the

money in your checking account just disappears, and you may have to fight with your own bank to recover the loss. Beyond such intrusions is full-blown identity theft where the thief can open new lines of credit in your name and wreak havoc. To protect yourself from such damage a credit freeze is the cheapest insurance you can buy. A credit freeze will cost you about \$10 per credit bureau (Equifax; Experian; TransUnion). An on-line guide on how to impose a freeze (or to release one) is available to you. Just go to:
www.clarkhoward.com/news/clark.howard/personal-finance-credit/credit-freeze-and-thaw-guide/nFbL/

AFGHANISTAN COST IN AMERICAN BLOOD AND BODIES

From time to time, The Bugle updates readers on American personnel KIA and WIA in Operation Enduring Freedom. As of December 12, 2012, 2,155 troops and three DoD civilians have been killed. Of these deaths, 1,711 were killed in action with the enemy, while 445 died in non-combat incidents. There have been 18,137 troops wounded in action during Operation Enduring Freedom. Those are the cold facts, and one is tempted to wonder whether “non-combat incidents” include murder by the Afghan military and police under training by our soldiers. No invader of this tribal nation has ever accomplished whatever its reason was for going there. The US and its few allies will someday learn the lessons learned by the Mongols, the Mughals, the British (twice defeated) and the Soviet Union. Historically, Afghanistan is known as the “Graveyard of Empires”!

EVENT BULLETIN BOARD WHAT ~ WHERE ~ WHEN

Thursday, February 21; Four Chaplains Memorial

Ceremony: Following the Membership Meetings on this date, the Post and Auxiliary will join to participate in this tribute to the four Army chaplains who sacrificed their lives in 1943.

Sunday, March 24; The Groundbreaking For The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument:

This two-day event recognizes the Texans who gave their lives in the Vietnam War. The several venue are open to all Texas ‘Nam vets and the general public, and include the LBJ Presidential Library auditorium and the Great Hall, Austin’s Scholz Garten (evening reception for vets), and the Capitol Grounds. The completed monument will be dedicated in the fall of 2013.

AUXILIARY UNIT 305 NEWS



Dayna Salter, President

It is “Birdies for Charity” Fund-raising time again. Although this is a Post fundraiser, I would like to encourage all Unit members to contact friends, neighbors, co-workers and ask them to contribute \$20 or more. Each \$20 donation gives the donor one chance to guess the number of birdies to be scored at the Shell Houston Open scheduled for the end of March. A \$100 donation gives the donor 5 guesses. The Grand Prize will be awarded to the winner of a drawing from the correct entries on May 9, 2013. This has been one of our big fundraisers each year. The 2013 goal of Chairperson **Rosalie Fryer** is \$1000 for our Unit coffers. Entries are due at the

March 21st meeting. There will be more on this in an email from me.

With regard to 2013 fundraisers, it was decided by the members at the January meeting to continue another year with “quick hit” fundraisers – a table at the two Rummage Sales, church bazaars, VFW Craft Shows, and other opportunities to collect donations for t-shirts, crafts, baked goods, etc. And, as always, we will have a strong Poppy Program for Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day donations.

Jenny Le and I attended the Mid-Winter Conference in Austin on January 19th. We heard several important presentations, and purchased two copies of the 2013 Unit Leadership Guide. They will be available at meetings for those interested in looking through one.

Key programs of the ALA Department of Texas in 2013 are homeless female veterans, the Auxiliary Emergency fund, Cancer Research and the Creative Arts Festival. We can discuss how Unit 305 can help with these at the February meeting.

Stephanie Marshall is coordinating Girls State interviews again for 2013. The Woodlands

High School interviews are scheduled for 9:45 AM on February 26th. The College Park High School interviews will be at 9:30 AM on February 28th. She needs two volunteers to help interview the candidates. If interested, please contact Stephanie or me.

It is ALA Scholarship season again. All interested juniors should visit the following website for information. Please let me know if interested so I can help expedite the application process. <www.alatexas.org/activity/scholarships>

Post Commander **Pete Koch** would like to begin a program of a speaker at each meeting. This will necessitate we reduce business meetings to 45 minutes, followed by our joining the Post for the speaker, followed by the Potluck. I think this is a worthwhile change and will require that I be a bit more disciplined with the agenda.

The Four Chaplains ceremony conducted by **Jerry and Mary Lee Mulvihill** will be the highlight of our February meeting. The Potluck will be Italian Night. **Veronica Maiolo** will be calling around to coordinate the dishes. I hope to see you there.

Happy Mardi Gras and Happy Valentine’s Day **-Dayna Salter**

AUXILIARY UNIT OFFICERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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Liz Heuermann; Tel: (281) 362-8431; Email: lizheuermann@peoplepc.com
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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>
Thur.	Feb. 14	Valentines Day	Dinner and a Show
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 Ended (1991)	
Sat.	Mar. 2	Vietnam War Began (1963)	
Sun.	Mar. 17	St. Patrick's Day	
Mon.	Mar. 18	Post Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Tues.	Mar. 19	Iraq War Began (2003)	
Thur.	Mar. 21	Membership Meetings (New Member Initiations)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM.
Sun.	Mar. 24 to	Groundbreaking For Texas Vietnam Veterans Monument	LBJ Presidential Library and Texas Capitol Grounds, Austin
Mon.	Mar. 25		
Fri.	Mar. 29	Good Friday	
Sun.	Mar. 31	Easter Sunday	
Sat.	Apr. 6	Army Day	
Mon.	Apr. 15	Post Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Apr. 18	Membership Meetings	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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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.