



AMERICAN LEGION POST 305
“THE WOODLANDS POST”
THE BUGLE



October 2013

Volume 9 Issue 10



Pete Koch
COMMANDER'S CORNER

Dear Legionnaires,

This past month of September has been a busy month for our Post. As you read this, several events of interest have already occurred, while others are in our near future, as follows:

~ As reported last month, the American Legion National Convention has come and gone. New National Officers have been installed into their positions. The new National Commander is Dan Dellinger of the Commonwealth of Virginia, where he once was Department Commander. Our thanks to the outgoing Commander for all of his hard work during the past year.

~ **Jim Bolin** and **Dayton Denton** have volunteered to head up the Post's participation in the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest and the High School Scholarship

Program. The Post will select one Oratorical Contest entrant in the November-December period, then watch as he or she competes up the line.

~ On Saturday, September 21, the Post participated in The Woodlands "National Night Out", where public safety and first-responders have a chance to show off their equipment and speak about neighborhood security. I want to thank Post members who assisted by manning our booth in this important community affair: **Jim** and **Mary Bolin**, **Kimberly Biggerstaff**, **Harlen Thornhill** and **Carl Smith**.

~ As an offshoot to the above, the Post has been invited to join with The Woodlands Constable Precinct 3 in hosting a BBQ for our veterans on Saturday, November 16, as a part of Veterans Day week. I will be seeking Post support when I have more details.

~ We are invited to attend an upcoming meeting of the County Commissioners to inform these elected officials of the mission and commitment of the Post and The American Legion as they relate to the community and the country.

~ The Post has started the year with a good response to membership dues payment. Our goal is 322, with a roster of members in good standing of 344.

~ I was impressed by the fact noted by the First Vice Commander, to wit:

"The pool of eligible 17-to-24-year-old military recruits is shrinking on a national scale. There are 33.1 million Americans aged 17 to 24, according to the 2012 US Census, but, according to the Army, only 7.7 million are eligible to join the Army. The other services would draw the same conclusion. The three-fourths ruled ineligible were principally due to health and medical/apptitude reasons. That means military recruiters have to compete with industry as well as colleges and universities for America's top youth."

So, we experience our all-volunteer forces are being returned to war zones multiple times. I am sure those selection standards would be lowered if the US got into a bigger shooting war or would we out-source our defense?

~ In a new initiative, I am introducing a "Yearly Post Business Plan", to be maintained by the Commander and used to facilitate the transition across the year end/start event. It will use a comprehensive reference book (the "Koch Book") where all Post certifications and other stipulated and legal documents will either reside or will indicate where such are filed. An objective is to reduce the amount of paperwork and paper the officers have to deal with.

~ I have also established a Post bulletin board (cork board) which will be available at each membership meeting. It will display some of our basic references, including a graphic calendar of events for the current month and those just ahead. (This is in addition to the Website calendar.)

~ Our quest for copies of documentation which proves each member's eligibility to be a Legionnaire continues. The simplest and best document is a copy of your "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty" (Form DD-214), but other proof is OK, such as a copy of your Discharge Certificate, both sides, or other proof that (a) your separation was "other than dishonorable" and (b) your service period was at least one day within the War Era dates defined by the Legion. If your DD-214 carries your social security number as your ID, you can black it out on the copy. The current impetus for such validation derives from the IRS, which is tasked with verifying associations which have been given tax-exempt status. So, please get a copy of your credentials to the Post Adjutant, ASAP.

As you can see from the above-listed activities, we do need some help from our members to assist in assuring these programs are worked to the best of our abilities for our vets and their families. We will be issuing a list of the active Subcommittees with any open requests for help in the various programs. Please, if you have the time, help us to help our veterans and their families here in the surrounding area

Please remember that our annual Post picnic is approaching on the

17th of October. It will be held, as usual, at Shadowbend Park on Lake Woodlands Drive. This is a great time to relax and enjoy the comradeship of other Post and Unit members who will be attending. Hamburgers, hot dogs and bratwurst will be provided along with drinks. This will also be an abbreviated monthly Post meeting for October. In case of inclement weather, the Post meeting will be held at the South County Community Center.

One thing we do not do often enough is to thank each and every one of you for being a part of one of the best Posts in the American Legion. Let me take this occasion to say a deep felt thank you from Post 305. Please talk to your neighbors and friends about us and bring them to a meeting if you can. Inform them of our Website and ask them to fill out an application to join. Be sure they cite our Website at www.alpost.org on the application.

For God and Country,
Pete Koch

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
September 19, 2013

The Post Membership Meeting was convened at 7:10 PM in the prescribed manner and a quorum was determined. Minutes of last month's meeting were distributed, read and approved by motion and vote. There were no new members or guests.

Finance Officer Kim Biggerstaff presented her monthly financial report.. The General Fund totaled \$17,700.83 at the end of August and the Allocated and Money Market funds held \$22,878.85, for a total bankroll of \$40,579.68
First Vice Commander Emery

Heuermann reported that the Post has 222 members renewed for the year 2013-2014, which is 69% of our goal of 322. **Chaplain Victoria Glover** asked the membership to notify her if they know of any comrades in distress. **Sergeant-at-Arms Jim Bolin** noted that plans for the Annual Picnic were proceeding. (See the Bulletin Board herein for details.)

Next, **Second Vice Commander Mickey Fussell** noted that the trip to Coushatta was a personal success, but as a Post outing, a complete failure. The only two trip-makers scored. He reminded all of the coming Fall Rummage sale, noting that at the October meeting he will have a sign-up sheet for workers to designate the time they will be able to help out. **Mickey** also cited that he is planning a trip to the Battleship Texas sometime in December. So, keep that in mind and check the Bulletin Board to find the exact date.

The Commander asked **Kim Biggerstaff** to give a report on the National Convention held last month in Houston. She said it was very interesting to meet all the people working for the American Legion and our veterans. She was surprised to learn that the NFL will not release any information about its helmet design to DOD, information that might make the military helmet safer. She remembered that the Legion Riders raised \$750,000 for their ride to the Convention and that the outgoing Commander's charity, Operation Comfort Warrior, raised over \$1 million during the past year.

Historian Win Salter reported that he is collecting input for the History Book and has enough

book materials on hand to start the book. As Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, he is working on the Post's PR Plan and will have a first draft before we meet again.

Commander Pete Koch opened New Business by discussing proof of Legion membership eligibility, as noted in last month's Bugle. He also discussed his new business plan, designed to organize our documents and reduce paperwork, keeping all legal documents in one place.

Judge Advocate Everett Ison (and District Vice Commander) spoke for the District Commander by asking the Post if it would be willing to host the April 2014 District Convention. He said he had been investigating the basic needs for this in the Post's name and had reserved the South County Community Center. He has also determined that Sam's Club would provide a free breakfast, but he was still working on finding someone to donate lunch. He asked Post and Unit members to consider meeting such responsibility until next meeting.

Under "**For the Good of the Legion**", **Jerry Mulvihill** reported that his grandson Brett, a member of the Post and an Army Ranger, had signed up for an eighth tour in Afghanistan before entering college. Jerry asked for our prayers for his safe return and to be remembered by the membership.

The meeting was closed in the prescribed manner at 8:00 P.M. The next meeting will be dominated by the annual picnic at Shadowbend Park at 7:00 PM on October 17th.

DISTRICT 7 CONVENTION: TRAVELING TROPHY CONTEST

When District 7 convenes at Post 618, Willis, on Saturday, October 19, its Traveling Trophy contest will be based on the amount of art supplies each Post contributes. These materials include paints, any medium; paint brushes, any size; colored crayons, pencils, pastels and markers; pads of art paper, page sized or equivalent (sketch pads, water color and pastel sheets, and poster pads) and modeling clay. Thus, the Post needs your donations of these types of art materials, which will eventually go to VA hospitals in Houston, Waco and San Antonio for recovering veterans to help them deal with mental and physical disabilities. So, bring your donations to the October 17 membership meetings or get them to an officer earlier.

THE WOODLANDS "NATIONAL NIGHT OUT"

On Saturday, September 21, The Woodlands kicked off its celebration of National Night Out with a picnic and display of safety support equipment, including fire engines, SWAT vehicles and ambulances, to name a few.

The kickoff was to be followed with block parties during the next week. The block parties are intended to help you get to know your neighbor. In the past few years, The Woodlands has had, if not the best, one of the best programs for a very successful National Night Out. The Post and Auxiliary occupied a booth, along with other associations wanting to gather community support. Our members distributed handouts and engaged in conversation with interested passer-bys. Not all

were interested in or qualified for joining the American Legion, but many seemed interested in what we are doing, and some might join our ranks.

Commander Pete Koch and Mary Bolin at Woodlands' National Night Out



CONROE MARINE KILLED BY IRANIAN-BACKED JIHADISTS

Marine Lance Corporal David W. Brown of Conroe was among the 241 Americans killed on Sunday, October 23, 1983 -- 30 years ago. That date is the anniversary of the bombing of the HQ and barracks of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines at Beirut International Airport, Lebanon.

Our Marines were there as a part of a multi-national force trying to separate the factions of the Lebanon civil war. Early on the morning of October 23, a large stake truck, filled with the equivalent of 21,000 pounds of TNT, crashed through several barricades and check-points around the four-story building being used by the Marines and exploded, killing 220 marines, 18 sailors and three soldiers. The building collapsed, burying many sleeping troops. Minutes later,

another suicide bomb truck struck the nine-story building being used as the French barracks, killing 58 paratroopers. For the Marines, it was the deadliest, single-day death toll since the Battle of Iwo Jima. On the orders of Presidents Reagan and Mitterrand, the US and France retaliated with air strikes on bases of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the Bekaa Valley, where Hezbollah militants were trained.

US Navy ships stationed offshore of Lebanon rendered aid to the survivors, and the Air Force and RAF airlifted the injured to hospitals in Germany and Cyprus. It took five days, with Italian and Lebanese help, to recover all bodies. The last survivor was pulled from the rubble by noon on the day of the attack. Let's not forget Corporal Brown and his fellow Marines!



VETERANS ADVOCATE

IRS TARGETING VSO's

In the face of reports that The American Legion and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) are being targeted by the Internal Revenue Service, delegates to the Legion's National Convention in Houston recently passed three resolutions that include calling for Congress to look into the IRS' field investigations into Legion posts chartered under Section 501(c)(19) – or nonprofit – status. Auditors with the IRS reportedly are levying fines at Legion Posts around the

country for not keeping records of veterans' Form DD-214s, the separation document given by the military to GI's which establishes period served and conditions of separation. This Form supports eligibility to join the Legion.

Some DD-214's reveal Social Security Numbers (as a Service Serial Number), dates of birth and, in some cases, places of birth and medical information. The American Legion and IRS do not need this information and it may be "blacked out" when a copy is filed with the Post. The Legion and the IRS only need your name, dates of service and conditions of separation. Documents with this information need to be kept securely. Legion members still serving on active duty have yet to receive a DD-214, so they will have to submit other ID.

A Post (or any other non-profit association) which has failed to retain eligibility documentation is at risk of incurring a fine of \$1,000 for each day they are not in compliance, and the Post could lose its nonprofit status. Legion Post 447 in Round Rock, Texas, was fined \$12,000 for being in non-compliance before finding documents which satisfied inspectors. The National Convention delegates passed three resolutions regarding the IRS:

~**Resolution 62** seeks an amendment to Section 501(c)(19) of Title 26 U.S. Code to either remove the minimum percent of veterans in a VSO in compliance or to provide clarifying language that the minimum percentage be based upon the aggregate enrollments based on the entire national organization of the VSO, rather than on a local community-based Post.

~**Resolution 63** calls for Congress to rectify the problems with Chapter 4.76.26.1 of the IRS Exempt Organizations Examination Guidelines regarding wartime service periods.

~**Resolution 64** calls for Congress to rectify problems with Chapter 4.76.26.2.2(2)b. of the January 27, 2011, IRS Exempt Organizations Examination Guidelines so that it shall provide for at least 75 percent of the members who are past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and substantially all of the other members who are cadets or are spouses, widows, widowers, ancestors or lineal descendants of past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and that all of its members are either members of a VSO or who are related to a member of such VSO.

**VA DISABILITY CLAIMS
BACKLOG: IS ANY RELIEF
COMING?**

In June, a House subcommittee on Veterans Affairs held hearings on why the VA appeal process takes so long to clear a claim. A 2012 report of VA's Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) concluded that it takes about 900 days from the time an appeal is filed to a final decision is reached. There are over 45,000 veteran appeals currently pending.

Appeals of a VA ruling are frequently made when an initial claim is declared as offering insufficient evidence backing the claim or some other defect in the original claim. The VA reports an accuracy rate of 90% for claims adjudicated over the March-May 2013 period. However, the Legion's 2,500 accredited service officers have represented almost

30,000 veterans during the first half of 2013 and can demonstrate the VA had erred or failed to fully develop a claim in 75% of those cases. The appeals process is time-consuming and frustrating for veterans. By the time the VA's BVA renders a decision, the veteran has spent several years seeking redress.

According to the Legion's Peter Gaytan, Executive director in Washington, the real problems behind the claims backlog are at the VA Regional Offices, and those problems differ from office to office. About half the claims submitted to the BVA are remanded to the Appeals Management Center (AMC) with clear directions on how a claim should be further developed. Once that rework has been done, the AMC makes its decision. If the veteran decides to appeal a denial of the claim, the claim automatically goes back to the BVA for more review. The Legion's representatives say that despite clear instructions from the BVA, the AMC fails to comply with those instructions, resulting in another remand and delay for the veteran. The claimant has to endure even more months, even years, of claim development before getting a final decision from the BVA. VA's Secretary Eric Shinseki's 2015 goal of processing all claims within 125 days at 98% accuracy will require vast improvement in its adjudication accuracy. According to the Legion, if the AMC staff adhered to the remand instructions prepared by the BVA, fewer cases of multiple-remanded claims for development would occur. Does this Administration care about veterans or are they just a nuisance to be ignored as long as possible?

~30~

BULLETIN BOARD

~ WHAT ~ WHEN ~ WHERE ~

Thursday, October 17; Post/Unit Oktoberfest Picnic:

Except for a brief business meeting starting at 7:00 PM, this is the annual picnic outing for members, families and friends. The Post supplies the burgers, brats and dogs, while the Unit brings the rolls and fixin's. Other contributors will bring the usual side dishes – baked beans, potato salad and cole slaw. Drinks will magically appear, both sodas and margaritas. A great time to relax and chew the fat! The Shadowbend Park is located at 4995 Lake Woodlands Drive next to David Elementary School.

Friday, October 18 & Saturday, October 19; Semi-Annual Rummage Sale:

Friday is set-up day when the troops muster at 8:00 AM to truck out the goods from the storage lockers and to lay out the stock on tables and in the yard. It is at the Robinson Road Community Center, Oak Ridge, and lots of help is needed. Although Saturday is Sale Day, the lookers/buyers descend on us on Friday to grab the best bargains. Sign up at the picnic to help!

Saturday, October 19; District 7 Convention at Post 618

in Willis: This all-day District meeting will be attended by a delegation from Post 305. Registration starts at 8:00 AM, with a light breakfast available. The joint Post/Auxiliary session begins at 9:30 AM with the opening ritual. The principal business is to hear from each District Post about their activities, to share information pertaining to the Legion, to exchange ideas and to conduct training. (See the notice on page 3 about collection of Traveling Trophy contributions.)

Sunday, November 10; Red, White & Bike Charity Race:

The Auxiliary, with Post help, will be manning a rest stop on the track of this bicycle race in Hockley. This charity donates bicycles to the kids of Purple Heart veterans and of the spouses of those KIA. The gifts of a bike include a helmet and safety training. Volunteers are still needed for this Veterans Day week event, and the Unit has an entry in the race!

Thur. November 21: Boys State Grads to be Introduced:

At the regular Membership Meeting on this date all Post-sponsored Boys State grads will be invited to attend as guests, together with their parents, and be introduced. They will be asked to say a few words about the experience and will receive a Legion certificate from the Commander. They will also partake in the traditional roast turkey dinner and all the fixings (if we don't lose the room and the oven gets fixed)!

AUXILIARY UNIT 305 NEWS



Dayna Salter, President

During our September meeting we began our Fall 2013 Tupperware fundraiser. If you wish to participate and were not there to receive the order forms and catalog, please contact me or **Jenny Hamann** (see information below). Orders may be turned in at the October 17th meeting – Octoberfest in Shadowbend Park, or by November 1st at the latest. The fundraiser returns 40% of the sales, and **Jenny** has waived her commission for an extra 15%, so we stand to make some relatively easy money.

Our fundraiser at the Holy Comforter BBQ and Cake Auction netted \$100 which was a good showing for an informational table. Thanks again to **Joan and John Sparks** for the table fee donation,

as well as for the lunch tickets for me, **Mary Lee and Jerry Mulvihill**, our ace t-shirt sellers.

Here is yet another notice regarding **ALA Scholarships**. Please think about the juniors in your family and whether or not they might want to apply. Applications will be due in March, so now is the time to start thinking about it. Also, our **ALA Unit 305 Scholarship** is available to either male or female offspring of Unit 305 members who will be freshmen in Fall 2014. Please let me know of your interest so that we can begin planning and get application forms out.

Don't forget the Rummage Sale on October 18th – 19th. We will be helping the Post set up and keep the merchandise attractive.

We are entering the Veterans' Day Poppy season, and **Rosalie Fryer**, our Poppy Chairman, is planning for the usual Post Office venues on Friday, November 8th, and the Cochran's Crossing Kroger on Saturday, November 9th. **Rosalie** will be calling around to staff the various venues for those two days. This is one of our big fundraisers for our Veterans' programs, so please call **Rosalie** if you are interested in helping.

Unit 305 will be sponsoring a rest stop during the **Red, White and Bike** cycling fundraiser on Sunday, November 10th in Hockley. More information will be forthcoming.

Breaking news.....Post 305 is considering hosting the District 7 convention next April. Please think about how you can help with this event. Current plans are to host it at the South County Community Center. My personal opinion is that if we are to undertake such a venture, we should arrange for a classier establishment in which to hold it. I am open to all your opinions and ideas, however. This cannot be undertaken by only a few members of the Post and Unit.

Our next meeting is on October 17th and will be the annual Octoberfest picnic at Shadow Bend Park. No business will be conducted, although I imagine the the proposed District 7 convention will be a topic of conversation. **Veronica Maiolo** will be calling around to coordinate the various condiments for the picnic. I hope to see you there.

Dayna Salter
BOO! PAY YOUR DOOS!



2013-14 AUXILIARY UNIT OFFICERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>
Mon.	Oct. 7	Afghanistan War Began (2001)	
Mon.	Oct. 14	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Oct. 17	Membership Meetings & Picnic	Shadowbend Park @ 7:00 PM
Fri.	Oct. 18	Set-up day for Rummage Sale	Robinson Road Community Ctr. @ 8:00 AM
Sat.	Oct. 19	Fall Rummage Sale and Retreat	Robinson Road Community Ctr. @ 7:00 AM
Sat.	Oct. 19	District 7 Convention	Post 618, Willis, Starting @ 8:00 AM
Sun.	Oct. 27	Navy Day	
Thur.	Oct. 31	Halloween	BOO !
Tues.	Nov. 5	Election Day	
Sun.	Nov. 10	Red, White and Bike Charity Race	Hockley. TX (Rest-Stop Manning)
Sun.	Nov. 10	Marine Corps Birthday	
Mon.	Nov. 11	Veterans Day	
Mon.	Nov. 18	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Nov. 21	Membership Meetings (Boys State)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Nov. 28	Thanksgiving	Gobble Gobble !
Thur.	Dec. 5	Post/Aux. Daytrip to USS Texas	BB-35 is berthed in La Porte
Sat.	Dec. 7	Pearl Harbor Day (1941)	"A Day Which Will Live In Infamy!"
Mon.	Dec. 16	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Dec. 19	Membership Meetings & Blind Gift Exchange	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Tues.	Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	"T'was the night before Christmas, and---"

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 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.