



AMERICAN LEGION POST 305

“THE WOODLANDS POST”

THE BUGLE



FEBRUARY 2015

VOLUME 2: ISSUE 13

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

Post Commander Pete Koch



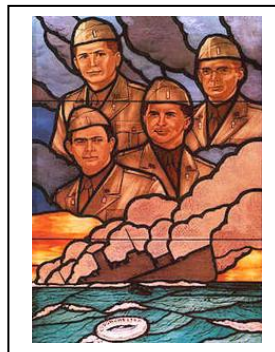
COMMANDER'S CORNER

January's meeting was very short due to the absence of several members of the Executive Committee, but we also celebrated with some fun with the Annual Chili Cook-off. We had one entry from the Post and four from the Auxiliary. Congratulations go to **Geri Mulvihill** for this year's 2014-2015 winner. With only five entries, the vote was very close, and we ended up with ties for second and third place. **Liz Heuermann** and **Dayna Salter** tied for second place and it was a close call as there was only a three-vote spread among the remaining contestants. Third place went to **Jim and Mary Bolin**, who both cooked up their own brand of chili. All entries were excellent, and the members had a hard time choosing the best. Hopefully these recipes will be entered into, what I hope to be, a Post and Unit Cookbook, now

in process, which we are looking to finish as a fund raiser.

We held a belated "Drape the Charter" ceremony for **Dutch (Max) Dettinger**, **William Wells** and **David King** who have moved on to the Supreme Commander.

The February meeting will include the Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony For those of you who do not remember the sad circumstances of WWII from which this ceremony is derived, please look at pages 20-24 in the current issue of The American Legion Magazine. Our Chaplains hold an impressive memorial ceremony every February, so be present on February 19th.



The March meeting will include an initiation of all new members of Post 305. This will be a special ceremony for all members that have joined our Post but who have never been initiated into the American Legion. Please come and participate in the ceremony in your honor and let us welcome you more formally. If you are

one of the members that have never been initiated into the American Legion, please send your name to pickensjones@usa.net or to petekoch76@gmail.com.

Membership remains an issue and we need your renewals returned to the Post as soon as possible. It will not be long when the 2014-2015 year has ended, and we will begin 2015-2016, and I would hate to see your continuous years of service broken. At the present time, we have 276 paid-up members out of 386. We are at 85% of our goal of 322 for this year and need the rest of the 2014-2015 members to remit dues as soon as possible.

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.

As of the start of the year, we have been distributing a "Welcome Package" to each new member that joins. We also assign a competent Sponsor to each to assure that the new member becomes familiar with Post protocol and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Post and that he or she is

introduced to all of the members present, especially the committee chairpersons, so each will have a chance to choose which committee they would like to join and assist in its programs. We could use all of the help we can get in staffing these important committees. This step is very crucial if we want to maintain membership and be of a great help to our veterans.

We are working with the Woodlands Chamber of Commerce and consultant Wicked Publicity to get our name out to the public. We can start getting our name out there to the approximately 22,000 veterans in Montgomery County, especially to the 8,064 who reside south of Route 144. We have to inform the community better what the American Legion stands for and how Post 305 can be of assistance to everyone, especially our veterans.

Several of the Post and Unit members attended the Department's Mid-Winter Conference held in Austin, Texas. 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 Contest and others go a long way with the \$5.00 of your dues the Post keeps every time you pay your dues. If you don't renew, we don't get the support to continue these programs. We have several programs that rely on funds from dues.

As a reminder, I would like for all members to update their relevant information with the Post when it changes, so that we can update our records and

those of the Department and National as well. I will be sending out a form shortly that has all of the information we have on you. Please take the time to review it and correct it where required. Add any additional information that might be missing.

On a side note, I do want to honor all of our active duty servicemen and women 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 19th at the South County Community Center on Lake Robbins Road in The Woodlands.

For God and Country,
Pete Koch

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS **(January 15, 2015)**

Commander Koch opened the meeting in the usual manner. The first order of business was draping the Charter to remember and honor three comrades who have gone to Final Muster: **Max ("Dutch") Dettinger, David King and William Wells.** Next came the matter of approving the minutes of the last month's membership meeting and the Executive Committee meeting on Monday. There being no changes, the minutes were unanimously approved by the membership's action.

The financial report was summarized by **Finance**

Officer Jim Bolin, to wit: the General Fund and the Money Market Fund (now combined): \$8,991.55; the Investment Fund: \$30,153.78; for a Total Assets of \$39,145.33. **Jim** drew attention to the report's transactions in the past month and to the budget vs. to-date actuals, at this mid-point of the year. Those showed a to-date Income of \$10,902.67 and expenses of \$6,494.08, for a positive balance of \$4,408.59. It should be noted that while good, we have not realized our large expense that will occur to support Boy's State.

Next, the Commander touched on various topics: (1) Expense Reports – These should be filed at least quarterly even though no payment request is made in order to better learn what it costs to run the Post, (2) Welcome Packages for new members, (3) The letters being sent to all members to solicit information not available through Legion sources, and (4) Membership -- We currently have 276 paid-up members, 85.7% on our way to the goal of 322.

The Commander also announced that the Executive Committee intends to appoint a Nominating Committee to get a head start towards developing a slate of willing candidates to fill all of the officer positions of the Post.

The Commander next called for a report from **Chaplain Victoria Glover.** She reminded all of the services for Max Dettinger to be held on Monday, January 19th. She also reported that the Post received a thoughtful letter thanking the Post for the Bible given to the family of William Wells. **Historian Win Salter** reported that the plaque the Post won for placing second in

the National History Book contest was received at the Mid-Winter Conference by Post representative **Kim Biggerstaff**.

Everett Ison, Judge Advocate and Service Officer, Dayton Denton, were not available to make a verbal report.

Old Business, New Business and For-good-of-the-Legion were not taken up, but the **Commander** reminded those present that the Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony will be held as usual at the next meeting. He then closed the meeting in the prescribed manner.

The judges then began to taste the chili-con-carne presented: one from the Post; four from the Unit. Post judges evaluated the Unit's offerings, while the Auxiliary did the same for the chili entered by a lone Post cook. (See the "Commander's Corner" for more on chili and the winners.)



VETERANS ADVOCATE

DEATH BENEFITS OR "ARREARS OF PAY"- WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU LEAVE

Arrears of pay" (AOP) won't be a source of stress and financial hardship for your survivors if you tell them what to expect. This onetime payment made to your beneficiaries will include the pro-rated amount of your final month's retired pay and

any other money you are owed at the time of your death. Because your entitlement to retired pay ends on the date of your death, it is important that your survivors promptly notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) of your death. Don't expect a funeral director to do this. When your death is reported, DFAS will reclaim your final month's retired pay and audit your account. DFAS will then compute the final amount owed to your estate and send it to the AOP beneficiary you specified in your retired pay account. A delay in reporting your death could result in an overpayment that would be collected from your bank, your estate or one of your survivors, if that survivor receives any of your retired pay funds. Designating multiple beneficiaries for your AOP may delay payment as each beneficiary must be located and then complete necessary forms. To verify your AOP beneficiaries and update their contact information, log into your myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> or call DFAS at (800) 321-1080. [Source: RAO Seal Beach CA | John Ryan | Jan, 01, 2015 ++]

LOAD AND LOCK: VA OFFER OF A FREE GUN LOCK RAISES CONCERN

The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering free gun locks to veterans if they provide details on the number of guns they own and their home address, raising concerns about a government-run gun registry. Some veterans have received a form letter in recent days from the VA offering gun locks if they return a completed form listing their name, address and number of guns in the home. "As your partner in healthcare,

we are committed to keeping you and your family safe," states the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Times. "Gun locks have been shown to greatly reduce death and injury caused by firearms in the home. If you own a gun, we hope you will request and use a gun lock."

The letter said agency officials "hope to reach all our veterans with this offer." The VA said it will mail the locks to the address provided by a veteran. Veterans who received the letter said it raises concerns about "a gun registry in disguise." "Young soldiers are already notoriously reluctant to admit any problems with post-traumatic stress disorder," said one veteran, who asked to remain anonymous. "Imagine the effect if the average 23-year-old private ... back from Iraq, already reluctant to ask for help ... is now hearing rumors that if he seeks help from the VA for sleeplessness, PTSD, nightmares, etc., Big Brother is going take his guns away? Now, young veterans will really avoid asking for help," the veteran said.

The letter about gun locks obtained by the Times was signed by Daniel Hendee, director of the VA Medical Center in Philadelphia. A VA spokesman in Washington said he was not aware of such an effort and could not provide further comment immediately. [Source: The Washington Times | Dave Boyer | Jan. 06, 2015 ++]

MILITARY AWARD REPLACEMENT

The military recognizes that military medals are often a cherished part of family history and makes replacement

medals, decorations, and awards available to veterans or their next of kin if the veteran is no longer living or able to make the request on his or her own behalf. Replacement medals, decorations and awards should be requested on SF 180, "Request Pertaining to Military Records". This form can be downloaded from the VA at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms>.

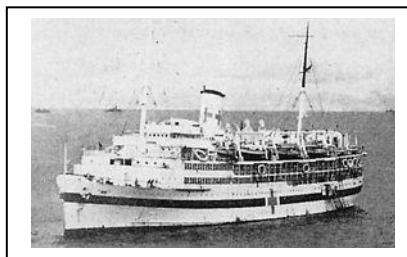
Each request should be filled out neatly, and should include the veteran's branch of service, social security number, dates of service, and it should be signed by the veteran or the next of kin, if the veteran is incapacitated or deceased. Where to send it is indicated by an address code on the back of the SF 180. In general, requests made by the veteran are fulfilled at no cost. This includes requests made by family members who have the signed authorization of the veteran. There may be an associated fee for requests made by next of kin, especially if the request involves archival records (records are considered "archival records" 62 years after the veteran's date of separation from military service). [Source: RAO Seal Beach CA | John Ryan | Jan, 01, 2015 ++]

PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR REMEMBERS

Edward J. Johann was aboard *USS Solace*, a hospital ship, in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese military attacked on December 7, 1941. Though he rescued many casualties, what he remembers most aren't the heroics, but the horrors, the fires, the men. He was only 17. Johann had joined the military before the war to receive the salary - \$21 a month, sending \$10 home each month to his parents. Johann said the "hard times," the Great Depression,

hit his family and the money he could send home from the Navy was a "big plus" for them.

Johann worked as part of a shore shuttle service, taking shipmates to the PX for supplies, to visit family and friends or to mainside to walk on solid ground. "The morning of December 7 we were already down at the end of the gangway, taking the fellas that wanted to do that, when the attack started," he said. "Pearl Harbor turned into a harbor of hell in a short while," he said.



USS SOLACE (AH-5) 1941

More than 2,000 servicemen would die, and another more than 1,100 would be wounded. Johann and his fellow seamen began pulling bodies from the bay. "We handled the first [American] casualties of World War II that morning." "I was just a young kid, practically. I was a boy sailor. All I could think about was trying to help the other fellas. A lot of them were injured, some were calm. A lot were injured; some were screaming in shock and pain. There were a lot of burns. Some of the oil in the water was on fire.... If you went to pull guys out of the water by their arm, skin would just slip off....And all this time, the planes were bombing; the planes were strafing; the planes were dropping torpedoes. The casualties were stacking up faster than we could handle them, because of the intensifying of that." Even so, the men on the *Solace* continued to

save men, eventually earning Johann a commendation from his service, particularly because he "went alongside of the burning *USS Arizona* in order to rescue casualties while the crew of that ship were abandoning ship." Johann said that the next day the wounded and dead were taken to the mainland. "They didn't have dog tags yet. They just had tags tied on their big toes, saying 'unknown', 'unknown', 'unknown'."



Johann would go on to serve in the Pacific theater, including Guadalcanal among other battles, and was discharged in 1945. "After the war was over, then we could breathe easy, but by then I was well-trained on these battle scenes." The experience of that terrifying day impacted the rest of his life, but not in the way one might expect. "I figured if I live through this I'm gonna spend the rest of my life trying to save people, which is why I got into the fire department and mountain rescue afterwards," he said. Johann went on to serve as a firefighter in Oregon for nearly 30 years. He is 91 and lives in a cottage he built in Lincoln City, Oregon. [Source: American Legion's Legiontown; October 12, 2014]



AUXILIARY UNIT 305 NEWS



President Jenny Hamann

Hello Friends and Patriots
(No, not those guys!)

This is the **Month of Hearts!** To all ALA members, I wish a HAPPY VALENTINES DAY; may all of you be remembered by your SWEET-HEARTS.



The month of January included our Annual Chili Cook-Off, and, as usual, the chili was delicious. Our **Geri Mulvihill** won the contest for the Unit, while there was only one Post entry, from **Jim Bolin**, and it was a noble contender! We need to encourage the Post members to don their field aprons and go to work!



Geri Mulvihill – The Winner

At the February meeting the Birdies-For-Charity fund-raiser will commence. We will need all of your contributions and birdie guesses returned in March.

The Unit was well represented at the Department's Mid-Winter Conference by **Rosalie Fryer** and **Geri Mulvihill**. Training was provided to attendees by National ALA officers. The day began with a description of the duties as a Department program chairman and the various objectives that are outlined in the National Plan of Action. We were advised to consider our Unit's resources along with our Department president's objectives for the year and choose one or two to bring to our committee members. A complete list of documents about specific programs, as well as the National Plan of Action, can be found on the National website at: www.alaforveterans.org/.

We benefitted from extensive training on how to retain members – ideas shared were: including our housebound members; utilizing social media; establishing a "sunshine club"; communication; recognizing all members for their contributions; and educate and mentor our Junior members. A great deal of emphasis was on being open to new ideas and to demonstrate *Service Not Self* in all of our activities and interaction with others. We brought home several jewels to share that will serve to help renewals and rejoining former members. Training provided us with many ideas about how to increase our Junior Membership, Image and Goodwill, Community Involvement, Recruiting Strategies and the traits of Good Leadership.

January Lady of Service

Now, I choose to speak of and praise our hard-working **Dayna Salter**. **Dayna** was an ALA member for a short time when she was elected Vice President, then rose to President when the then President resigned. Somewhat disappointed she was, but after thinking about the sudden change, she took the job with great enthusiasm. This was not easy, but Dayna came in and led us to success. She brought in new goals for us to work toward, and any and everything she proposed we are and were able to do with great success.



Dayna is always there when needed; she is there for support; she works all committees, as much she is able, as she holds a full-time job. I, we are so very thankful for pulling us through a somewhat critical period. She then turned the gavel over and became our Treasurer and Data Manager. **Dayna**; you are certainly appreciated by me and everyone, and please keep up all you do. Thank you, **Dayna!**

Jenny

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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>
Thurs.	Feb. 12	Lincoln's Birthday	
Sat.	Feb. 14	Valentine's Day	Candy is dandy, but Four Roses tends to be more effective!
Mon.	Feb. 16	Presidents' Day	
Mon.	Feb. 16	Executive Committee Meeting	So. County Community Center @ 7:00 PM
Thurs.	Feb. 19	Membership Meetings (4 Chaplains)	So. County Community Center @ 7:00 PM
Sun.	Feb. 22	George Washington's Birthday	
Sun.	Mar. 15	American Legion Birthday	
Mon.	Mar. 16	Executive Committee Meeting	So. County Community Center @ 7:00 PM
Tues.	Mar. 17	Saint Patrick's Day	
Thur.	Mar. 19	Membership Meetings	So. County Community Center @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Mar. 19	Iraq War Began (2003)	
Tues.	Mar. 24	Kosovo Campaign (1999)	
Tues.	Mar. 31	Somalia Campaign Ended (1995)	
Tues.	Mar. 31	LAST DAY TO TURN-IN BIRDIES FOR CHARITY PLEDGES/DONATIONS	
Wed.	Apr. 1	April Fool's Day	
Sun.	Apr. 5	Easter Sunday	
Mon.	Apr. 6	Army Day	
Sat.	Apr. 11	Op. Desert Storm Cease Fire (1991)	
Mon.	Apr. 13	Executive Committee Meeting	So. County Community Center @7:00 PM
Thurs.	Apr. 16	Membership Meeting (Resolve Election Slate)	So. County Community Center @7:00 PM

POST CONTACT INFORMATION (2014-2015)

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Tel. Number</u>	<u>E-Mail Address</u>
COMMANDER:	Pete Koch	(936) 273-3588	petekoch76@gmail.com
FIRST VICE CMDR:	(Candidates Being Sought)		
SECOND VICE CMDR:	(Candidates Being Sought)		
ADJUTANT:	Pickens Jones	(281) 367-7631	pickensjones@usa.net
FINANCE OFFICER:	Jim Bolin	(281) 251-2352	jpb20006@sbcglobal.net
SERVICE OFFICER:	Dayton Denton	(832) 928-6054	whselfstorage1@yahoo.com
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:	Joseph Bennett	(832) 928-3818	joseph@bennettrealestate.com
ASS'T SGT-AT-ARMS:	(To be appointed)		
CHAPLAIN:	Victoria Glover	(832) 813-9415	alpost305chaplain@gmail.com
ASS'T CHAPLAIN:	(To be appointed)		
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FACEBOOK MANAGER: Kimberly Biggerstaff kimbiggerstaff@icloud.com
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.