I want to thank God for allowing me to serve The American Legion as Department Commander of Arizona. I am extremely proud and humble to have this opportunity to serve. I want to thank my wife Ann for her sincere understanding and support for my commitment to this endeavor. I am highly appreciative to the dedicated Legionnaires of the Department of Arizona who elected me. I am dedicated to serving our veterans as this organization has supported me and I have a year to do the best job that I can.

I enjoyed visiting the Districts and Posts this past year while campaigning and meeting so many hardworking Legionnaires. I was unable to visit the District 3 meeting in the Sierra Vista and Douglas area due to our intense campaign schedule, however, I will come there on my first chance.

My theme for this year is *Just Ask* because I believe we should be more proactive and aggressive when recruiting new members. Just Ask potential new members to join and be a part of our great organization. Just Ask are you a veteran? Would you like to be on our team? My goals are to promote and increase our membership numbers.

My commander’s pin will sport The American Legion Emblem with a message of leadership, communication, and programs. I believe we should be forward moving and strongly encourage our Area Vice Commanders, District and Post Commanders to work on our goals of service to our membership and organization. We are a service giving organization and it should be an honor to serve. I am asking my officers and committee chairmen to give some good sound leadership and teamwork.

I expect a year of complete dedication from our Commanders on all levels. Their duties are outlined in the Department, District and Post Constitution and By-laws and should be used at every opportunity to further business in our operations. I expect our officers and committee chairmen to fully familiarize themselves with the duties and responsibilities of their offices. A key element in my message is leadership because we need it to be effective in giving guidance and direction to our members and officers.

I believe we should all come together in unity...working under one “tent” (Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders). All working together to become a great American Legion Family and we should be giving and showing respect for each others goals and objectives.

We need to spend our time and talents working our programs (Boys & Girls State, High School Oratorical Contest, Legion Baseball, ALECA, Boy Scouts, Children & Youth, National Security, etc.) and keep these treasures alive and well. It’s also important to have the Consolidate Post Report (CPR) completed promptly and timely so we will receive full credit for all of our accomplishments by National.

During my campaign for Department Commander, I gave speeches about the exciting events scheduled for the upcoming year here in Arizona. The Department of Arizona will be host to the 2008 Western Regional Baseball Tournament. The tournament will be held August 13 through 18 at the Surprise Sports Complex in Surprise, Arizona. We are pleased and proud to host this tournament and welcome all The American Legion baseball players, coaches and fans to this outstanding event. Tickets are on sale and can be obtained by contacting The American Legion, Department of Arizona or Baseball Chairman, Rollin Kohrs, member with many projects.

Pictured are the 2007/2008 John J. Morris American Legion Post 62 Family. The City/ Peoria Legion Family has more than 3,500 members locally helping our veterans and community cooperation between the Unit and Post in the Department of Arizona. The award entails involvement in Veterans Affairs, Children & Youth, Legislative Activities, Community Service, Americanism, Education and Public Relations in their area. This was the first time for this award to be presented to John J. Morris American Legion Post 62 Family.

The Sun City/ Peoria Legion Family has more than 3,500 members locally helping our veterans and community.

Submitted by Jane Shoemaker
**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS**

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>Henry Branch</td>
<td>(602) 418-0605</td>
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<td>Vice Commanders</td>
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<td>(A) Louie Romero (520) 798-1792</td>
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<td>(B) Ariel Rodriguez (480) 897-2332</td>
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<td>(C) Jim Strande (928) 649-3374</td>
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<td>NEC</td>
<td>D.M. “Joe” Aguilar (520) 385-2142</td>
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<td>Alternate NEC</td>
<td>Paul Griffin (602) 938-0918</td>
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<td>Dist 1 Commander</td>
<td>Dale Hiller (928) 210-7786</td>
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<td>Dist 2 Commander</td>
<td>Kenneth Dowse (520) 834-4043</td>
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<td>John Taylor (520) 384-4311</td>
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<td>Dist 4 Commander</td>
<td>Jerry Boales (520) 836-2705</td>
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<td>Dist 5 Commander</td>
<td>Robert Cress</td>
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<td>Thomas Allstatt (928) 409-9008</td>
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<td>Dist 7 Commander</td>
<td>S. Ann Seney (928) 753-3955</td>
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<td>Dist 8 Commander</td>
<td>Joseph D. Duggan, Ill (928) 567-5540</td>
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<td>Thomas Willis (480) 726-0991</td>
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**NAME & POST/UNIT/SAL**

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**THE AMERICAN LEGION**

**FALL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 3-5, 2008**

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MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 5, 2008
Time To Pass the Torch

guess it is a natural thing to think “your” war was the most important ever. That no one else has faced the fire and survived, that your combat was the worst ever. When the WWI vets formed The American Legion, they were making a place for themselves. They held on to their little club and would not let anybody else in. It was with much adversity that membership was opened to WWII vets. They were not very welcome as I was told by some WWII members. The WWI guys didn’t think WWII was bad enough to let those “kids” into the organization.

WWII vets inherited that attitude and held the doors unwelcome to following vets. Some didn’t think the Korea guys belonged as that was the war this country tried to hide, hence “The Forgotten War”. Then came Vietnam. We weren’t welcomed with open arms either. We were the ones who “lost” the first war in U.S. history.

Never mind America was driving Toyotas and Hondas, never mind that at the end of WWII, Mitsubishi merely went from making Zeros to making cars, which they never mind that at the end of WWII Mitsubishi merely went from making Zeros to making cars, which they would have done no matter what the outcome in 1945. Never mind the Korean theatre has never been resolved, to this day, but Vietnam was “lost”. Given away be a weak government to a bunch of unruly mobs is more like it.

Iwo is gone, and we are the past. They are better for our example and realize that these vets of today are the future of this country and better tactics, gleaned from our mistakes. It’s time to pass the torch. They have better equipment, better chow and better tactics, gained from our mistakes. It’s time to realize that these vets of today are the future of this country and we are the past. They are better for our example and we will not be forgotten because of them. Iwo is gone, Inchon is gone, Khe Sahn is gone, and Baghdad is here. Let’s not make the same mistake our fathers made. Let’s make today’s war and its vets the most important. The survival of The American Legion depends on it.

Semper Fi
Tom Hindsdale

Military Family Relief Fund Provides New Hope to Arizona Families

(Phoenix, AZ) — Arizonans seeking to support our troops can now do more than display a bumper sticker! The Arizona Military Family Relief Fund provides funds to families whose loved one has been seriously injured or killed while fighting the Global War on Terror. The Fund is administered by the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services, so donors are assured that the money goes to Arizona military families in need.

By law, no more than 5% of all donations can be used for administrative costs. It provides taxpayers with an avenue for charitable giving that actually gives the contributor a tax incentive.

“Everybody always asks what they can do to help, and this is a great opportunity to make a real difference,” said Col. Joey Strickland, newly named Director for the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services. “We have helped three families so far – two of whom were facing homelessness while dealing with combat-related injuries.”

Arizona taxpayers seeking to give back to those who have answered the call of duty can also receive a tax credit. Donors are especially telling Arizona how to spend a portion of their tax dollars when they give to the Military Family Relief Fund (up to $200 for a single tax filer and up to $400 for a couple filing jointly).

Military Family Relief Fund recipients can use the support in a variety of ways. From mothers facing financial calamity after their loved one has been killed, to parents purchasing overseas plane tickets to be by their injured son or daughter’s side in the hospital - the fund will be there when people need it most.

For more information visit www.azmfrf.gov

2008 Cash Raffle Winners

$3,000  William Langley Post 94
$2,000  William Barnett Post 25
$1,000  Johann Brown Post 100

Next 8 winners each received $500

Ted Jackovich Post 4
Robert Rosenquist Post 75
Arthur Fesler-Butts, Jr. Post 27
Warren Thomas Post 81
Joe Aredondo
Norbert Konzal Post 29
Connie Tyree Post 19
Noah Adams Post 62

Congratulations to the winners and Thank You to each of you for your participation in this year’s Cash Raffle.
Working together for Another All Time High

Here we are, starting off another membership year and with the preceding All Time Highs, there’s just no reason why we can’t make it 4 YEARS RUNNING. That is, if the new Department Commander, Henry Branch, and I get the same great support as you have shown in the past!

This year, I am especially pleased to have been selected as your Department Membership Director and have already spent many sleepless nights thinking of how we can make this year memorable; again with your help, I know you can do it!

My personal goal is to help you. Help you come up some new innovative membership ideas, help you develop those ideas and then, help you deliver them - together I’m sure we’ll find what works for Arizona!

Along with my goal to help you, I’ll be seeing you as well...one of my first endeavors will be to set three membership training classes in each area for Area and District Membership Committee persons to attend. I promise to come “armed” with benefits and programs that even the hardest non-American Legion member can be swayed into saying “sign me up”. Then once we get that training out of the way, I’ll be visiting your individual District Meetings to offer my assistance. And let’s not forget to sell our Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Riders family members – we all need to grow in order to keep our posts strong!

In closing, remember I was appointed by the Department Commander, but he and I work for YOU and as a total team, we’ll have another successful and fun year!

For God and Country,
Jeri Strande, Membership Director

P.S. Please watch for my little chili pepper cowboy – because if you see him, you know I won’t be far away – trying to “lasso membership and fire ‘em up”!

Ashley New S.A.L. Commander

My Fellow Blue Caps,
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your trust in electing me your Detachment Commander for the 2008 - 2009 year.

Commander Frain had an excellent year with all of your support and I will ask you once again for the support for the coming year. National Convention is just around the corner and we will be hosting 55 Detachments in Phoenix. Do not forget to register and stop by the Convention Center in downtown Phoenix to support The Detachment of Arizona.

By the time you receive this we will have had our Organizational Meeting for the year, at Mesa Post 26 on July 19, 2008, where we set our goals for the coming year.

Once again, thank you for your support.

For God and Country,

Jim Ashley
Detachment Commander

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Assisting Veterans with VA Disability Claims - Appeals Only*

Theodore C. Jarvi, Attorney at Law
Retired JAG - Legion member
1050 E. Southern Avenue, Suite G-3
Tempe, Arizona 85282
Tel 480-838-6566; Fax 480-838-8810
E-Mail: Theodore.Jarvi@azbar.org

* Federal law prohibits the payment of attorney fees by the veteran for assistance with any VA claim prior to final, negative Board of Veterans Appeals decision.

Henry Branch Takes the Arizona

Both Young and Old Received Plaudits at the Conference

Taking the Plunge at the Summer Conference

Newly elected 2008-2009 Officers being installed

American Legion Riders family members – we all
need to grow in order to keep our posts strong!

Veteran Owned
Member American Legion
Post 2
WASHINGTON – One hundred recently injured veterans from around the country will participate in a unique rehabilitative sports experience this September in San Diego, the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“This new rehabilitative event is a therapeutic extension of the superior health care veterans receive in our medical centers each day,” said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “The sports clinic will strengthen veterans battling back from injury, improving their mental and physical well-being.”

The event is open to recently injured veterans who have spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, certain neurological conditions, amputations, other mobility impairments, or post-traumatic stress disorder. For many injured veterans, this event will provide their first exposure to recreational sports and other activities after being injured.

The National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic will take place Sept. 28 through Oct. 3 at several venues in the San Diego area. Events include sailing, cycling, surfing, kayaking and track and field events. Admission for the public is free.

Sea World and the San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina will be the site of the opening and closing ceremonies along with some of the week’s events. Other events will be held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Kellogg Park in La Jolla Shores, the Embarcadero Marina Park and the Mission Bay Yacht Club.

Recreational sports can be an important part of the therapy for many disabilities. VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with therapeutic programs available at VA health care facilities across the nation.

The event will become the fifth national rehabilitation event offered by VA to promote the healing of body, mind and spirit, joining the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The VA San Diego Healthcare System is hosting the 2008 Summer Sports Clinic. Specific event activities offered will change each year.

For more information about the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic or to volunteer during the week, visit the clinic Web site at www.summersportsclinic.va.gov.
Post Everlasting

Chaplain’s Corner

Freedom Is Never Secure

They speak of liberty and of the struggles and sacrifices by which liberty was won. To all the world they proclaim the spirit of our founders which our nation immortalizes. Washington is with us, Jefferson and Lincoln, John Paul Jones, “Mad” Anthony Wayne, and Davy Crockett still uphold this God given list of freedoms and stand for this country’s desire for all to live free. The men who fell at Lexington, Gettysburg, Chateau Thierry, Chosen Reservoir, the Mekong Delta, and now Iraq/Afghanistan, are at our side. All who fought for freedom, all who knew the great devotion, are still our comrades and exemplars.

In back of all of us, is the spirit of our founders which our nation immortalizes. Washington is with us, Jefferson and Lincoln, John Paul Jones, “Mad” Anthony Wayne, and Davy Crockett still uphold this God given list of freedoms and stand for this country’s desire for all to live free. The men who fell at Lexington, Gettysburg, Chateau Thierry, Chosen Reservoir, the Mekong Delta, and now Iraq/Afghanistan, are at our side. All who fought for freedom, all who knew the great devotion, are still our comrades and exemplars.

With such a comradeship, with such a heritage, we cannot hesitate, we cannot fail; under such examples, we cannot falter.

Hold high the light of liberty, hold high our belief in an omnipotent God; hold high the honor of our American Legion. This is the message to all, this is the message to you.

“For what avail the plow or sail, Or land, or life, or freedom fail?”

Be with God, and pray for our service people all over the world.

Richard J. Kepler, Department Chaplain – Post #878

GNUTS Luncheon Report

The Arizona fun group called “GNUTS” (past and current post, district and department adjutants) held its semi-annual luncheon on June 21st at Post 36. The dues collected barely covered the cost of lunch and liquid libations. Questioning if we continue our practice of making a cash donation to the outgoing commander’s favorite American Legion program, we must do one of two things. Raise the dues from $10 or find a more profitable means to raise at least $500 per year. You GNUTS think it over and we will discuss this issue at the Fall Conference Luncheon.

Nils Nilsen, Collector & Grunt
July 8, 2008

Mr. Neal Sundeen
Arizona American Legion
4701 N. 19th Avenue
Suite 200
Phoenix, Arizona 85015

Dear American Legion Veterans:

I appreciate the opportunity to explain the reasons for my vote on the domestic spending amendment to the emergency wartime supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 2642. I opposed the amendment because I believe the extra spending on a variety of programs was unwarranted as an emergency, which means it will only add to the federal deficit. Although I supported the goal of expanding G.I. education benefits, I thought the McCain alternative was a far better approach than the one taken in the amendment to H.R. 2642. The Senate, however, was denied the opportunity even to vote on the alternative.

As to the spending, the amendment would divert some $20 billion that could have been used by our troops to instead pay for prison construction ($178 million); a 13-week extension of unemployment benefits ($8.2 billion, including $178 million to administer it); “science initiatives” ($400 million); the 2010 census ($210 million); a food safety initiative ($150 million); and Katrina housing vouchers ($73 million). Some of this spending is unwarranted, none of it is an emergency and none of it should have reduced funds for our troops.

As to the G.I. Bill expansion, the version that made it into the amendment (also known as S. 22, a bill sponsored by Senator Webb) was seriously deficient in a number of respects. For example, it would extend the new benefits only to service members who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001. Second, benefits will vary from veteran to veteran because monthly tuition benefits will be determined by the cost of the most expensive public school in each state. As a result, veterans with the same length of service will receive significantly different benefits. For instance, a veteran who served three years on active duty and attends a college in Arizona will receive about $15,775 per year, while a veteran who similarly served three years on active duty but attends a college in New York would receive about $29,360 per year—a significant inequity for any veteran attending school in Arizona. I could not support an amendment that would shortchange veterans in Arizona in such a way.

The alternative that I cosponsored with Senators McCain, Graham, and Burr would have expanded education benefits for all veterans who are eligible for G.I. benefits, including those who served on active duty prior to September 11, 2001. The McCain alternative would increase benefits to cover the average cost of a four-year public college, including room, board, tuition, and fees. It would distribute benefits based upon length of service without regard to the state where veterans live. Unlike the version included in the House-passed amendment, the McCain alternative would also extend increased educational benefits to all eligible National Guard and Reserve members and allow service members to use up to $6,000 per year of their education benefits to repay federal student loans. The McCain alternative would also address the military’s concern over the retention issue more than the Webb bill. And, because Webb chose to reorganize the way the benefits are administered, it would cost $24 billion more over 10 years than the McCain alternative.

I am confident that the Senate could have drafted a compromise bill that would have increased current G.I. benefits to cover the costs in an equitable and fiscally-prudent manner, and am disappointed that the Majority decided to attach the G.I. bill to the bloated emergency spending package without even providing a chance to fix some of the deficiencies I’ve mentioned. I know of no other way to register my opposition both to the substance and the procedure than to vote no.

I hope you will feel free to share this information with fellow veterans. If you or others have any questions about the legislation or my vote, please don’t hesitate to let me know. And, rest assured, that now that the bill has become law, my office and I will do all we can to assist Arizona veterans to take advantage of this new opportunity.

Sincerely,

JON KYL
United States Senator
Pre-registration Form

Check One: Legion ___ SAL ____

Please Print

Name:_______________________________Post#________Title:__________________
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Send completed form and ten (10) dollars per person pre-registration fee to American Legion Department of Arizona, 4701 N 19th Ave, Ste 200, Phoenix, AZ 85015

Registration fee(s) at the conference will be twelve dollars (12) per person.

2008
Arizona American Legion Fall Conference
Holiday Inn
4550 S Palo Verde Rd • Tucson, AZ • (520-746-1161) • OCTOBER 3, 4 & 5, 2008
HOSTED BY: American Legion Dept of Arizona
4701 N 19th Ave
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Bashas Supports Chandler's Veterans

High prices are challenging everyone today but they make it even tougher for our struggling veterans. American Legion Post 91 sought support from a local Bashas on Pecos and McQueen and, thanks to Roger File, Store Manager, they got it!

Food cards and food donations have been provided to the Post so they can prepare and serve meals to the veterans, their families, and the needy. The donations have been instrumental in helping the Post serve quarterly meals to the veterans living at the Phoenix VA Home and getting meals to those with extremely limited incomes.

Post 91 sponsored a benefit dinner on Saturday, June 28, in which proceeds helped defray costs for a Post 91 family member awaiting a heart transplant. Bashas provided the majority of the food for this important event and Post 91 greatly appreciates their support and dedication to Chandler’s veterans!

Golf Tourney Raises $12,300

Jonathon Gradner, Director of SAVAHCS and Nils Nilsen, Chairman of Arizona Veterans Benefit Program present a check for $12,300 raised at the 6th Annual Veterans Benefit Golf Tournament held at the Tucson Omni Golf Resort.

Flag Amendment at a Standstill

There has been no new progress concerning the flag protection amendment. National Headquarters was contacted. The protection amendment was introduced in the House of Representatives in January. Very few co-signers have signed up. Nothing has been done in the Senate.

CFA officials feel the election is taking our law-makers attention and issues important to both parties are taking precedence.

The American Legion National Commander continues to consider the flag issue most important. We will continue to work for an amendment no matter how long it takes.

A question arose concerning the correct flying of the flag for Memorial Day. Many who flew the flag did it incorrectly. The flag should be raised to the top of the pole, lowered to half-staff until noon, and then raised for the remainder of the day.

Until new action takes place, continue to support the CFA.

Fly your Flag,
Maria F. Currie, C.F.A. Chairman