



For God & Country

THE ARIZONA LEGIONNAIRE



Volume 2015 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA • ISSUE 6

Let's Teach our Communities What We Do

I can't believe it is December, halfway through my term as Commander. I've traveled many places and met many wonderful people. The hospitality of Legion Family members everywhere is overwhelmingly warm and generous. I've heard from all over the state of the good projects you are doing for our Veterans and communities. With all the work being done, it is somewhat puzzling that overall Legion membership in Arizona is down. Most of you are aware that the National Legion raised the dues each Post pays by \$5 effective January 2016.

To accommodate this, most Posts have raised their dues which means we need to get as many renewals paid as possible prior to the New Year. I know you are all working hard and I hate to keep talking about membership. But the fact remains, without membership, this great organization will cease to

function and exist. With the aging population of the WWII and Vietnam Veterans, we are losing many members each year. Membership is everyone's responsibility. If you know of someone who has quit participating and paying dues, give them a call and ask why. Sometimes it is a lack of feeling welcome. Even when a member is not active, just by paying their dues they are contributing. To recruit new members, we must let the communities know what we do. We are not just a bunch of old men sitting at the bar, which is often the perception of the public. There are thousands of Veterans in Arizona who do not belong to The American Legion.

Commander continued on page 4



Commander's Message

Area C Keeping Busy!



Prescott Post 6 Color Guard

Wow! So much done this past three plus months! One of my first places to travel was to the Navajo Reservation (Leupp) for George Willie, Sr., Navajo Code Talker with Scott Miller, Ed Rocha, Tom Shackelford and others for an awesome recognition ceremony. Posts 130 Concho and Post 31 St. Johns as well as Post 126 Snowflake have done a great job on their Color and Honor Guard detail.

I then traveled to many Posts in Districts 6 and 8. A few in District 7; Kingman - Post 14, Ash Fork, Post 57 and Flagstaff Post 3. While in District 6 at the end of August, I got to participate in the Whiteriver Stand Down on the 29th, then two days of Stand Down in Prescott on September 18th and 19th; and finally, a smaller one in Kykotsmovi on the Hopi Reservation on November 10th and 11th.

Area C continued on page 3

Index

Fall Conference Photos.....	2	Membership Report.....	11
ALR Face of Legion.....	4	Post Everlasting.....	8
Americanism.....	6	Chaplain's Corner	9
Oratorical Schedule	6	Holiday Greetings	15
NEC Report.....	6	Veteran Suicide Awareness...	16
Legion Open House.....	7	Sweepstakes Winners	16
Membership Challenge.....	10		

2015 TUCSON FALL CONFERENCE



Photo of Earl E Mitchell, Post 29, Patriots Color Guard members assisting the Unit 29, Ladies Patriots Color Guard, retrieving colors at Department Fall Conference on November 8, 2015.



2015 Fall Conference Opening Session



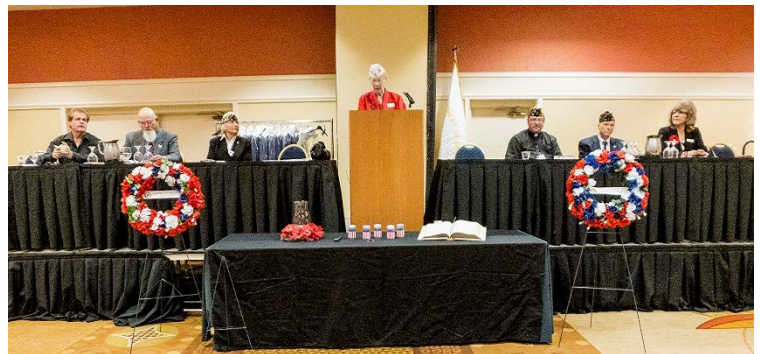
National Commander Dale Barnett; 2015 Legionnaire of the Year, Ed Davis from Post 132-Oro Valley; and PDC Andy Jaime presenting the award.



Department Commander Billy Ellis addressing Post, District and Area Vice Commanders at the Fall Conference.



Department Auxiliary President, Josephine Herrera and Department Commander Billy Ellis presenting the Memorial Wreath.



Department Chaplain, Carol Stensby conducting the Memorial Service



National Junior Auxiliary President, Lexi Escudera and S.A.L. Detachment Commander, Greg Mekula presenting the Memorial Wreath.

THE ARIZONA LEGIONNAIRE

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sign up or for more information.

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District 11 Commander
Dan Palmer (602) 377-4405

District 12 Commander
Scott Reeves (602) 722-0587



Upcoming Events: Saturday, January 9, 2016

American Legion Family Department Open House

12:00 NOON – 5:00 P.M.
4701 N. 19th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85015

FEBRUARY 14, 2016

8TH ANNUAL RIDE FOR LOVE hosted by American Legion Riders Post 138

This ride will benefit the Phoenix
Children's Hospital and The Make A
Wish Foundation

\$20.00 per rider, \$30.00 per couple.

Bring a NEW toy (for Phoenix
Children's Hospital) and get a \$5.00
discount per rider, per toy. Music,
Raffles, 50/50, High/Low Hand. We
will be riding to Phoenix Children's
Hospital from Post 138 at 107 E.

Broadway, Tempe 85282 at
approximately 11:30 A.M. Sign up
starts at 10:00 A.M. at the Post.

FEBRUARY 20, 2016

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

The Dinner Dance will be held at
American Legion Post 61,
35 N. Dysart Road, Avondale.
Cocktails, 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm;
Dinner 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm;
Dancing 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm.

Cost is \$15.00 per ticket.

There will be an auction sale during
the evening. Donations from all
Veteran Support Organizations and
individuals are welcome. For more
information or to donate, please
contact Al Aranda 602 448-6019 or
Joe Frame 623 695-3605.

Area C continued from page 1

Much is being done up here in Area C. District 8
American Legion Riders had a great VA BBQ on
Columbus Day, October 12th.



I'm proud of membership and a shout out to the
following Posts - 104 Bagdad - District 8; Post 130
Concho - District 6; and Post 31 - St Johns for all
achieving 100% membership already! Great job!!
As I continue to make the circuit to Posts in Area C,
make sure you are getting me your information of
what you are doing.



Stand Down in Prescott on September 18th and 19th

All cannot go here in the Legionnaire but don't forget
that those of you who have Facebook, you can see
pictures from Area C on there. I am excited as I
continue my term of serving you all. I want you to
have an exciting and productive year! Thank you all
for invitations to your Posts and community
functions.

For God and Country
Sherie Mercier, Vice Commander, Area C

GOV VACATION
REWARDS

Travel Discounts

Get access to our FREE travel program that
offers exceptional savings and discounts on vacations. All American
Legion Members have access to this exclusive program, which allows
active & retired military, government personnel, and veterans the
ability to shop great travel deals on: cruises, hotels, flights, car rentals
and resort stays.

Phone: (866) 691-5109

Arizona American Legion Riders**Busy Fall For ALR**

October was a busy month for ALR in Arizona.

ALR 58 in Fountain Hills scored big on their Annual Bike & Hot Rod Show on October 24.

Bikes and Hot Rods in seven competition classes were on display as well as local vendors. ALR 58 was assisted by volunteers from District 12 Chapters (26, 34, 35, 39, and 91) showing great ALR camaraderie. The event was attended by over 800 people. Record proceeds from the event resulted in a \$3,700 donation to the Legacy Foundation and a \$3,700 donation to the Patriot Guard Riders of Arizona.

ALR 29 (Glendale) participated in the Homecoming Celebration at Cactus High School in Glendale. The school allowed ALR 29 to enter the stands with donation jars and collect monies for their Veteran Charities. ALR Riders rode around the track passing by the Home Team Stands and were greeted with many cheers and waves, with everyone thanking them for their service. Within an hour's time ALR 29 collected over \$600 in donations. The monies collected will be allocated to ALR 29's Wounded Veterans of Arizona.

ALR 24 (Tombstone) held the 6th Annual Legion of the Silver Rose Ceremony. (The Legion of the Silver Rose is a Post 24 ALR program that recognizes the service and sacrifice of Viet Nam Veterans and their families affected by Agent Orange. There are three ceremonies a year: October at Post 24, Tombstone; April at Post 58, Fountain Hills; and one in late October in California at the Los Alimitos American Legion.) The October ceremony recognized and welcomed home 23 Viet Nam Veterans with an escorted motorcade down Allen Street followed by the induction ceremony where recipients and surviving family members were presented with the Legion of the Silver Rose Certificate and Medal as well as a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from Rep. Martha McSally. ALR 24 also had their 4th annual Bikers for Boots Run in October, and raised over \$5,000.00 for Boots for Troops.

District 8 ALR Riders (Chapters 6, 25, 40, 78, 03, 108 and 140) held their annual BBQ at the Prescott VA on Columbus Day, and served over 200 meals to the patients and staff at the Prescott VA. This BBQ is put on annually by the Rider Chapters in District 8, and is done at no cost to the VA patients and staff. And our newest Chapter (**ALR 103-Meadview**) had their initial slate of officers sworn in.

Finally, at the National NEC Fall meetings in Indianapolis, The American Legion formally acknowledged the American Legion Riders Advisory Committee to Internal Affairs as an ongoing and permanent committee of the National American Legion. [Previously this had been an Ad Hoc Committee which was subject to being reinstated each year by the National Commander.]



Upcoming statewide ALR events: January 19 – AZALR quarterly meeting at ALR 66; April 9 – AZALR quarterly meeting at ALR 58; May 5 – AZALR Annual Camp-Out, hosted by ALR 24; and June 2-5 – ALR Western Romp, hosted by the ALR in Seaside, Oregon.

If you are interested in seeing what is going on with all of the ALR Chapters in Arizona, feel free to visit our website at www.azalr.yolasite.com. If you want to start an ALR Chapter in your Post, please contact me at the e-mail address below for information on how to get started.

For God and Country,
John Moffitt (AZALR)
prescottbikers@hotmail.com
American Legion Riders
National Advisory Committee
(Western Region) Chairman,
American Legion Riders

Commander Continued from page 1

We need to help them understand what their membership can do. Last month, I had the privilege to attend the presentation ceremony of the French Legion of Honor Medal to two WWII Veterans who served in France. Hearing their stories made me remember the great legacy our Veterans have contributed to the world. I know many Vietnam Veterans did not feel the gratitude for their service and we must never allow that to happen again. That is why the Legion Programs are so important. We must take care of Veterans today and always. And we must educate our youth of the price of service to the country. Children nowadays play video games of war, but do they really understand the honor and sacrifice of serving in the military? They are the future of our great country.

My best wishes for a happy holiday season and don't forget the Department Open House, January 9, 2016!

Billy Ellis
Department Commander

Veterans History Project

Bill Parker, a volunteer for the Phoenix VA Health Care System, is recording personal accounts of American Veterans for the Veterans History Project so that future generations may hear directly from Veterans. These personal service stories are recorded on a DVD and archived at the Library of Congress.

Veterans can contact Bill at
480-261-7252 or at
WParkerRe@aol.com



Commander Billy with Pima County Sheriff, Chris Nanos at Tucson Veterans Day Parade



Commander Billy with Department President Josie Herrera at Pearl Harbor Day Memorial



Commander Billy with Detachment Commander Greg Mekula and Post 39 Commander Chris Ellis



Commander Billy with Department President Josie Herrera at Tucson VAMC Christmas Gift Shop

Legion to Congress: VA's automated solutions need further improvements

Improving the technology used to manage education and employment benefits for veterans is important. It can save waste in the system and make everything run more efficiently to the benefit of veterans, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“We must be sure not to overlook the human factors involved in ensuring the veterans who transition to the civilian world get the tools they need to maximize the education opportunities and succeed in their careers,” said Davy Leghorn, assistant director of the Legion’s Veterans Employment and Education Division, during a congressional hearing Nov. 3.

Leghorn presented written and oral statements conveying the Legion’s positions to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. Focused around the digital solutions implemented by VA to manage education and employment benefits, the hearing explored changes to Post-9/11 GI Bill claims processing and the Veterans Employment Center.

In the same fashion the Legion created the original GI Bill during World War II, The American Legion helped usher in a new generation of education opportunities for American veterans in June 2008. Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, establishing a new education benefit program under chapter 33 of title 38 United States Code, referred to as the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

When the Post-9/11 GI Bill became law, VA had just under 13 months to develop a new, complex system to process the newly eligible beneficiaries under the brand new program. Creating new processes to provide timely Post-9/11 GI Bill payments to schools and student veterans was an enormous challenge and the gravity of the task led to early struggles.

As part of VA’s efforts to improve Post-9/11 GI Bill claims processing, the automated Long Term Solution was implemented with the intention of halving the time it takes to process benefit payments. “In theory, it’s supposed to take human claims processors out of the equation – using computer systems to process claims,” Leghorn noted.

To date, VA’s information technology systems have not yet automated all original and supplemental claims. Due to time limitations and prioritization of effort, VA has focused on automating the supplemental claims, but not all of the supplemental claims have been automated at this point.

Automation Continued page 13

Save the Date
 Arizona
 Fisher House Dedication Ceremony
 Join us on
 Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.
 Arizona Fisher House
 Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
 3601 South 6th Avenue
 Tucson, Arizona 85723
 For more information contact Voluntary Service at (520) 629-1822

Americanism and 2016 Oratorical Schedule

Sat. Feb. 6, 2016

Department Headquarters [Training](#) 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
By appointment with Roger Munchbach 480-705-9527
legionoratoricalcontest@msn.com

Area C, 2:00 pm, Post 3

204 W. Birch

Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Contact Bobby Reyes 928-774-6086

bretired15@aol.com

Sat. Feb. 13, 2016 District 2, 1:30 pm, Post 102
(mobile home park clubhouse)

5975 W. Western Way

Tucson, AZ 85713

Contact Jim Barrett 520-822-1927

jrbarrett_wolf@yahoo.com

Sat. Feb. 20, 2016 District 12, 10:00 am, Post 35

2240 W. Chandler Blvd

Chandler, AZ 85224

Contact Roger Munchbach 480-705-9527

legionoratoricalcontest@msn.com

District 11, 2:00 pm

Location not yet determined

Sat. Feb. 27, 2016 Area B, 9:00 am, Post 27

1018 S. Meridian

Apache Junction, AZ 85220

Contact Roger Munchbach 480-705-9527

legionoratoricalcontest@msn.com

Area A, 1:30 pm, Post 102 (mobile home park clubhouse)

5975 W. Western Way

Tucson, AZ 85713

Contact Ken Dowse 520-834-4043

k.dowse@att.net

Department Finals

Sat., March 5, 2016 10:00 am, Post 64

(Ahwatukee Rec Center)

5001 E. Cheyenne Dr.

Phoenix, AZ 85044

Contact Roger Munchbach 480-705-9527

legionoratoricalcontest@msn.com

National Finals

April 15, 16, 17, 2016 Indianapolis, IN

NEC Report

National Commander Dale Barnett lashed out at the Department of Veterans Affairs about paltry punishments issued to Department of Veterans Affairs executives who were found to have manipulated the travel and relocation bonus system to line their pockets with hundreds of thousands of dollars. These corrupt executives didn't face harsh consequences for their actions. They actually may have improved their economic worth.

The National Commander calls continued lack of leadership accountability disgusting. The demoted V.A. officials are rewarded.

One official who was demoted is former Philadelphia Regional Director Diana Ruben, who was transferred to Houston and only lost \$20,000 in wages. The cost of living in Houston is \$120,000 compared to Philadelphia's \$180,000, so she now makes \$160,000. Kimberly Graves, Regional Director from St. Paul, MN was transferred to Phoenix. Same statistics. These two directors manipulated the system for over \$400,000 for relocation allowances. This is unbelievable!

Legionnaires, our National Commander has called the V.A. unresponsive to the facts presented to them.

This must boggle your mind to see the level of protection V.A. employees have from their own wrong doings while our Veterans slip through the cracks, some of them sleeping on

the streets and looking to fill their empty bellies.

The V.A. will not try to recover any of this excessive money paid to these two officials. It's crushing to see that the system still protects the wrong doers with seemingly impenetrable armor to shield them from responsibility while Veterans are stuck outside waiting for medical appointments and outrageous backlog just to be fairly compensated for injuries they sustained protecting America.

V.A.'s top management, Secretary Robert McDonald and Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson promised Veterans that V.A. employees who wronged Veterans would be held accountable.

You be the judge, do you trust V.A. Officials and their promises? Is this the best justice we can expect?

-- Dick Perry, N.E.C.

From the mailbox... Pocket Flag Found

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I am currently deployed to Afghanistan with the Army's 10th Mountain Division. The other day I came across a small flag in a baggie with your card in it. I'm not sure how long ago these were sent here or even who they were sent to, but I now have one of these hanging in my area. I wanted to take the time to let you know that I appreciate your support. Also, as a member of Post 559 in Annville, PA, I wanted to say that it is great to see The American Legion doing things like this to show their appreciation for the men and women in our armed forces.

Respectfully,

Donald Sherman

CW3 DONALD E. SHERMAN
Materiel Readiness Branch Chief
JTF-10, USFOR-A, J/4 MRB
Bagram, AF

American Legion 2016 Convention PROGRAM BOOK

Outside Back Cover	\$300
Inside Back Cover	\$300
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Half Page	\$120
Quarter Page	\$80
Business Card Size	\$40
Boosters—Per Name	\$2

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Mail your Ad and/Or Booster along with payment made out to:

American Legion Dept of AZ

4701 N. 19th Ave #200

Phoenix, AZ 85015

ALL ADS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN

April 4, 2016

**The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary,
Sons of The American Legion, and Riders**

Annual Open House

JANUARY 9, 2016

12:00 noon - 5:00 PM

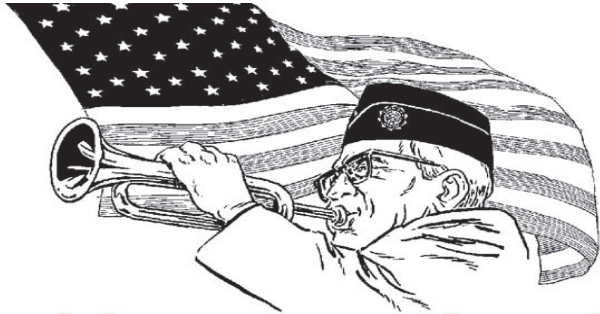
**We would like to see ALL of you for relaxing company, excellent food
and some "after holidays" fun.**

Bring your favorite dish and join us at

Department Headquarters

4701 N. 19th Avenue, Phoenix

See you then!!



POST EVERLASTING

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| | | 41 | | | 100 |
| | | Joe J Dean | | Warren C Anderson | |
| | 27 | Luz Gonzalez | | George E Beierschmitt | |
| | Phillip Abbott | Peter Martienz | | Forrest R Bjornaas | |
| | Charles T Brooks | Ruben Pacheco | 63 | Forrest Blackstock | |
| | Wilbur L Brotton | 42 | M E Smalley | Robert I Cochran | |
| | Jim Challas | Franz Rotter | 64 | William A Crowder Jr | |
| | Charles Cousineau | 44 | Lawrence Selberg | Earl R Danek | |
| | Harry J Delplace | Donald I Cooke | 65 | Steve A Dunagan Sr | |
| | John Gironda Jr | Victor J Dearing | Bonnie Hopkins | James A Emmons | |
| | Herman Henry | John T Morio | 66 | Alois Falkenstein | |
| | Howard F Karon | 45 | Joseph L Faust | Raymond F Gigler | |
| | Don J Krieg | George B Ellsworth | Arthur J Hoerning | Doyle G Good | |
| | Alan P Lasserre | Charles J Gord | Roberta Jolitz | Duane Lowell | |
| | Richard P Upham | 52 | Kenneth K Thompson | Jack Moore | |
| | 28 | Donald M Weiner | Howard R Whitehead | Thomas Moore | |
| | Miguel L Espinoza | 54 | 68 | Warren A Reboli | |
| | Charles B Franco | Robert E Berghuis | Johnny Chronister | Walter Richards | |
| | 29 | 55 | 69 | Monte Rollins | |
| | William Carugno | William T Dillon | Robert O Bochansky | Robert D Schnauffer | |
| | Paul A Coffman | 56 | Robert L Buchanan | David W Streagle | |
| | Edward S Dolovy | George Auza | Larry D Dunny | Wilfried K Weber | |
| | William J Waterworth | Melvin Bennett | Floyd Erickson | Ralph H Zeller | |
| | 32 | Jesse P Franco | Robert S Rable | William Zink | |
| | Harold E Noake Jr | Roscoe Ivey | Eugene R Sellars | | |
| | Olin L Ressler | Jesse Perez-Franco | Charles R Ybarrondo Sr | | 101 |
| | 34 | James A Smith | 78 | Dr Milton J Fox | |
| | Neil E Bischoff | 58 | Richard E Fore | Dennis L Turner | |
| | John E Johnson | Bruce A. Conklin | 79 | 102 | |
| | George K Krikorian | John E Hannay | Richard L Kennedy | Ole A Wangberg | |
| | 35 | Otto R Weeber | Russell E Reason | 103 | |
| | Edward Barshak | Gary L Zook | 81 | Norman J LaRue | |
| | Edward Fite | 59 | Donald J Boule | 105 | |
| | Virgil R Nabors | Philip Shaffer | John A Roy | Peter L Lindert | |
| | Dalton H Shroyer | 61 | 84 | 107 | |
| | Eulogio M Soto | Hans K Jorgensen Jr | John E Nolan | Grover W Ward | |
| | 36 | Robert Wooddell | 86 | 109 | |
| | Robert W Beem | 62 | Samuel W Goode | Earl R Eyster | |
| | Ernest W Carter | Steven L Aberle | 87 | 122 | |
| | Richard M Decker | Jack Conkel | Darl E Mericle | Charles Laurendeau | |
| | Merlin A Gross | James T Crary | 93 | 126 | |
| | John J Hargadon | Armin R Heine | George Alexander | Larry Biedermann | |
| | Doyle D Jordan | Edward P Kelly | Donald J Peterson | 131 | |
| | John Kopydlowski | Charles P McGrory Jr | 94 | Robert J Ackerson | |
| | David A Lyons | Richard Milne | Gerald J Groothousen | Paul J Baxter | |
| | Oscar L Martinez | Lloyd L Norman | Betty R C Heller | Gary J Bonkowski Sr | |
| | Jess Ramirez | Mel D Osburn | John D Kirk | Ray F Bukovatz | |
| | Charles F Wojno | Ernest M Retzler | Joseph Miller | Paul L Daly | |
| | 39 | Joseph J Santa-Maria | 96 | Robert P Gehrman | |
| | Larry J Keenan | Elaine F Taylor | Allen Heneman | 133 | |
| | Wayne T Mills | Chuck Webb | Michael A Sweet | Ramon D Bivens | |
| | | | 97 | | |
| | | | Ron Purvis | | |

Chaplain's Corner

Time Flies

Not only does it fly, but it seems to fly faster every year. By now, we should all be recovered from



turkey and pumpkin pie as well as that bane to society known as BLACK FRIDAY. Christmas has become so secular that retailers start in October to tempt us to spend with one morsel or another on a daily basis. So as we prepare this year for the holidays, let's remember what this season is all about. The Jews will be celebrating Hanukkah while Christians world wide will be celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. In lots of Christian homes, you will find a

In lots of Christian homes, you will find a stable or creche where Jesus, Mary and Joseph are the stars but the bit players, like the shepherds and Magi are also present in this tableau.

While you may not think so, this very scene gives us a clue about what we should be celebrating at this time of year. The Holy Family should spur us on to celebrate with our own families as much as possible. As a family, we all share some sort of a bond. What better time to expand on the bonds we share. This applies not only to our blood relatives but to our Legion Family as well, that bond requires no explanation. It matters not how many cookies get baked or how many presents are under the tree, it matters how much love you can pass around one hug at a time. Please remember our Veterans who may be under the weather in your prayers. Here's wishing all of you the very Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest and most Prosperous of New Years.

For God and Country,
Carol Stensby, Chaplain

View These Legionnaire's Stories and Tell us Yours



DANIEL YODER (NH)
US Air Force



GAIL GALICH (IN)
US Army

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Daniel's Story



Gail's Story



THE LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST PRESENTS:

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True Stories of Veterans and Their Service
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YOUR DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Many already know...

In Case You Hadn't Heard it...

Veterans in our Arizona Community are saying THANK YOU!

Since July 1 To recent date; our Annual Dues arriving at State and National have already helped nearly 200 Veterans and their families for upwards of \$70,000 in emergency, temporary financial relief.

In collaboration with Posts and other social service agencies, Veterans with needs are regularly being referred to The American Legion for help.

There are plenty of great helps that our dues are accomplishing and many of you don't hear about it because you might not be able to make it to hear the State Commander reports at Conventions and Conferences. At a time of year when many of us are celebrating with family, its important for you to know at least some of what your membership dues are accomplishing for others who may be struggling. Just one more reason to belong.

Membership Chairman Challenge 2015-2016

MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE ENDS: 05/27/16

I want to see each Post compete for these Awards; each category listed below will be awarded First Place, Second Place and Third

Place for highest membership total reached by May 27, 2016 (that is a total of 15 awards):

X-Small, Small, Medium, Large, X-Large
15-75, 76-200, 201-500, 501-1,000, 1,001 plus

In order to determine which category you belong to, use your 2016 Goal.

The awards are:

1st Place - \$100.00 National Emblem Sales Gift Certificate
2nd Place - \$50.00 National Emblem Sales Gift Certificate
3rd Place - The American Legion Certificate Maker CD

It may be possible for one Area to win all of the awards!

Your Membership Committee and I will be keeping track as to how everyone is doing.

This is a great challenge and we've tried to make this year's awards as fair as possible to all post sizes as well as awarding something that a Post could use.

Good Luck to everyone!

Ken Queen

Department Membership Chairman

Please see Page 14
about a
special drawing for
those who hand carry
membership to
Department
Headquarters!

WORLD WAR II TOURS	
France • Luxembourg • Belgium • Germany	
June 2-14 • August 11-23, 2016	
Paris • Normandy Landing Beaches • Reims • General Patton's Grave Battle of the Bulge • Remagen Bridge • Nuremberg • Dachau Memorial Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden • Munich	
VIETNAM TOUR	
March 13-23, 2016	
	Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) • My Tho • Cu Chi Tunnels Mekong Delta • Nha Trang • Cam Ranh AF Base • Hue Chu La • Hoi An • Da Nang • Quang Tri • A Shau Valley Halong Bay Cruise • Hanoi • DMZ • US Military Bases
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American Legion • Department of Arizona Membership Report, November 30, 2015

Table with columns A, B, C, HQ, Grand Totals. Rows include Steve Aguirre, Michael Thelen, Sherie Mercier, Billy Ellis.

High: Area A – 66.77% • District 5 – 72.06% • Post 144 – 144.44%

District 1 - Commander: Terry Greene

Table for District 1 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include H.H. Donkersley, Chic Chison, Floyd G. Jefferson, Freman Sharp.

District 2 – Commander: Manny Beltran

Table for District 2 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Morgan McDermott, Organ Pipe Cactus, Ridge-Igo, John P. Burns, Cocio-Estrada, Green Valley, Sahuaro, Casas Adobes, Tucson Mountains, McCulloch-Wagner, Patagonia, Burton E. Buck, Yoeme, Madera, Oro Valley, Tucson.

District 3 - Commander: Ed Meza

Table for District 3 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Fred A. Hilburn, L.A. Engle Jr., Tenely - Lopez, Roy Fourr, Vicente Manzo, Bill Carmichael, Pearce.

District 4 - Commander: James Sylvester

Table for District 4 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Fred A. Humphreys, McClellan-Parsons, William P. Kern, P.A.L., Francis M. Bunch, Haskel Osife Antone, William David Hood, San Tan, Duane Ellsworth, Bernie G Crouse.

District 5 - Commander: Richard Rodriguez

Table for District 5 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Henry Berry, Lloyd C. Hill, Swift-Murphy, McCulloch-McNair, Lopez-Hernandez.

District 6 - Commander: Alfred Avenenti Post

Table for District 6 with columns Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Frank Perkins, John H. Slaughter, Greer-Dewitt, Navajo, Whiteriver, Tonto Rim, William House, Lori Piestewa, Warren L. Dempsey, John D. Wibby, Snowflake - Taylor, Joseph McCarthy.

District 7 - Commander: Rodger Ely Post

Table for District 7 with columns Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Mark A. Moore, Cordova, Swaskegame, Golden Valley, Jerry & Daw, John Ivens, Robert Fulton, Robert A. Eckert, Mohave Valley, Dolan Springs, Meadview, Curtis Huskon, Forrest C. Longwell, South Valley, Yucca.

District 8 – Commander: Ken Johnson Post

Table for District 8 with columns Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Ernest A. Love, Verde Valley, Bobby Bisjak, Humboldt, Taylor-Keehner, Black Canyon City, David C. Johnson, Dennis S. Pike, Gary Streeter, Cordes Lakes Mem., Cornville, George D. Reiff, Prescott Valley.

District 11 – Commander: Dan Palmer Post

Table for District 11 with columns Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include Luke-Greenway, Southern Meadows, Kellis-Draper, Earl E. Mitchell, Hazel Morton, Thomas Tang, Hazelton-Butler, Crandall-Palmer, John J. Morris, Dwight Eisenhower, MaryEllen Piotrowski, Surprise, John H. Harries, Christopher J. Lapka, Daisy Mountain, Laveen, Isaiah Mays-Bill Mauldin, Thomas D. Rabjohn, Arrowhead-John E. Ford III, Lake Pleasant Pkwy.

District 12 – Commander: Scott Reeves

Table for District 12 with columns Post, Name, City, Goal, 2016, %Goal. Rows include William Bloys, Mesa, Apache, Frank W. Wright, Mathew B. Juan, Merrill-Mitchell, Tony F. Soza, Sipe-Peterson, James O. Shroeder, Fountain Hills, Lena Vaughn Whitney, Ahwatukee, Travis L. Williams, Sunnyslope, East Mesa, Ira H. Hayes, Wayne V. McMartin, Irving B. Selmer, Bushmasters, North Scottsdale, Pat Tillman, Guadalupe Veterans, James Witkowski.



**23rd Annual Massing of The Colors
attended by State Commander Billy D. Ellis**

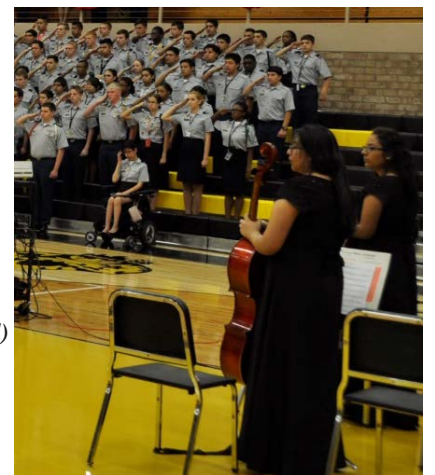
The Military Order of the World Wars and The Marcos de Niza High School JROTC program conducted their Twenty-third annual East Valley Massing of the Colors on Friday, Dec 4th, 2015.



There were multiple Colors from Patriotic Organizations, The American Legion Post 39 Color Guard and JROTC programs from throughout Arizona. SFC Larnel Norman was the "Adjutant of the Colors"..

(Photos Courtesy of: MAJ (RET) Robert Fore, Senior Army Instructor, JROTC, Marcos de Niza High School)

This beautiful 35-minute event showcased the Marcos de Niza Main Gym that morning. A reception followed for the students in the vestibule of the Auditorium.



Automation Continued from page 5

It is clear that VA requires additional funding to enhance LTS with functionality to process all original and supplemental claims with little human intervention," added Leghorn.

In March of this year, The American Legion supported legislation that would mandate that VA complete the transition to a full IT solution.

A newly released GAO report further demonstrates room for improvement with VA IT. The report shows that VA is overpaying schools and veterans when Post-9/11 GI Bill users drop a class or leave school. "The process that VA uses for addressing overpayments should be improved. This would create more certainty for student veterans and could also help VA become better stewards of taxpayer dollars," Leghorn said.

During his testimony, Leghorn encouraged Congress to authorize and appropriate the necessary resources for IT solutions which would reduce the labor-intensive nature

of these tasks and reduce the burden for repaying overpayments – which falls disproportionately on veterans. Improving the operation of the LTS, VA can help process the education benefits more efficiently and reduce unnecessary processes that creates debt problems for both the government and veterans pursuing their education.

In regard to VA's Veterans Employment Center (VEC), The American Legion believes there is great potential in this one-stop veterans employment platform.

The VEC is the first government-wide product that brings together a reputable cadre of public and private employers with real job opportunities and provides transitioning servicemembers, veterans and their families with the tools to translate their military skills into plain language and build a profile that can be shared – in real time – with employers who have made a public commitment to hire veterans.

Users of the application reported their need to save information multiple times as portions of their profiles were constantly being jettisoned from their account when logging back in and after periods of non-use. Some veterans reported having to re-enter and "save progress" as many as three times to complete their profiles.

The concerns do not end there, Leghorn explained. VEC has touted itself as a cache of resumes and profiles that helps VA and private sector employers find veterans. To date, the Legion has yet to come across one instance where VA or a private sector employer reached out to a veteran for an interview after reviewing resumes on the VEC.

Leghorn said he believes it is important to focus on continued IT improvements with the online application, not ignore the VA employment specialists and coordinators that work directly with veterans.

"We believe that the best thing we can do to for the VEC is to build and improve the services around it," he said. "VA is the focal point of veterans programs and services, so the consolidation of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program and Jobs for Veterans State Grants funding and services under VA's Office of Economic Opportunities simply makes sense."

More attention to the functionality of the VEC can give both veterans and employers better tools to match capable veterans to the jobs they need.

Leghorn closed out his testimony suggesting the implementation of a balance between already incorporated system process and the employees that have been providing assistance to countless veterans.

"Improving the operation of the LTS, VA can help process the education benefits more efficiently and reduce unnecessary processes that creates debt problems for both the government and veterans pursuing their education," he said. "We must not forget the importance of the human factor and the need for employment counselors and specialists who can help get veterans on the right track and avoid letting them slip through the cracks."

ADVERTISING NOTICE

Current and Back Issues of The Arizona Legionnaire are available to the general public when they visit our Arizona website www.azlegion.org. Our website is also visited by anyone who reaches The American Legion in Arizona when they search from the National website, www.legion.org. Any coupon or other time-sensitive offer should be clearly visible in the ad copy. The American Legion is not responsible for errors or omissions contained in the ad copy of the advertisement.

Payment for advertising is due in advance and should accompany copy. Please submit your camera ready art work with your check made payable to The American Legion Department of Arizona at: 4701 N. 19th Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85015.

IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S, THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY, DEC. 23 – 25 ALL BUILDINGS WILL BE CLOSED

WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY, DEC. 30 – JAN 1 – ALL BUILDINGS WILL BE CLOSED

Customer service will not be available on the above dates.

Reports and site features will remain available.

American Legion Department of Arizona office will be closed special days in December this year.

We will be open December 21-22; **Closed December 23-25.**

We will be open December 28-29; **Closed December 30-31.**

Regular processing of membership will be done during the early parts of each of these weeks to ensure the best processing possible.

Please see us these days as much as you're able to participate in the special drawing shown below!

WHAT: 2016 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

WHO: Membership Processor for Post and Squadron

WHEN: December 10th through January 9th (OPEN HOUSE)

Prize drawing will be at 3:00 P.M. at Open House (Don't need to be present, but we know you will be)

WHERE: Department Headquarters, 4701 N. 19th Avenue, Ste. 200

WHY: Because we want your Membership! Bring in as much membership as possible for our January 17th target date

PRIZE: \$50.00 Gift Certificate for each of; one for Post, and for Squadron

RULES: Each time a Post or Squadron brings in membership to Department, the person delivering the membership will get a ticket from Department Staff for the drawing. We want to see as many of you as possible drop by

Department. For the out-of-towners, just show up at Open House with your membership! No limit on the amount of times you come in as long as you are dropping off 2016 membership you get a ticket for the drawing!

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN WITH THIS!

Holiday Greetings

Christmas Love to all The American Legion Family. Have a blessed holiday Peace.
PDC Al & Donna Tercero

Let's play some Baseball!
Merry Christmas
Bob, Scott, Rollin & Tom

Holiday Greetings and a very happy 2016 to all our Legion Family. Ernie & Rebecca Faris

Happy Holidays to everyone!
American Legion Family of Swaskegame Post 14

Season's Greetings for a safe and Happy holiday season! The American Legion Family of Christopher J. Lapka Post 105

Holiday greetings to all of our Legion Family members. Best wishes for a great 2016

20&4 Honor Society of Women Veterans AZ Echelon 35

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.
Mike Stout
Post 24-Tombstone

Best wishes to our American Legion Family
PDC Bud
Hansing & Sandy Adams

Holiday greetings to all of our Women Veterans throughout Arizona. We honor those who served!
Beth Nehring, National 20/4 Director VIP

Wishing each of you a Merry Christmas! Love, Kavis Family
Shirley, Tim, Jason, and Jodi

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season
PDC Andy Jaime, Jr.

Merry Christmas In Memory of Bunny Hamilton from her Family

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year Arizona American Legion Family
Lori, Scott, Justin, Cadence from Oceanside, CA

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year American Legion Family Post 2
Dave & Sherrie Grey

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to our American Legion Family
Sandy Conklin in Memoriam
PDC Bruce Conklin

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.
Bah Humbug!
Gayle Reed

Holiday Greetings!
NEC Dick & Elaine Perry

Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.
NEC Paul & PDP
Helen Griffin

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year
PDC Larry & PDP
Ginger Cox

A Very Merry Christmas and a happy and Prosperous New Year to our Legion Family! PDC Joe & Jeannie Aguilar

Wishing all our Legion Family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
PDC George and Jan Cushing

May the love and peace of the Lord descend on you throughout this Holy Season and in the coming New Year
Carol Stensby,
Department Chaplain

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Tina, Landen and Ethan

Wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas
Kenneth King

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
Billy & Margaret Ellis
Department Commander

May you have quality time with Family and Friends throughout the Holidays and into the New Year. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year & God Bless!
Kenny & Sheila

Feliz Navidad "y" Prospero Ano Nuevo.
John & Sylvia Aldecoa

Blessings for you and yours during this Wonder filled time of the year!
Angel & Tommie Juarez & Family

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our American Legion Family. God Bless our Veterans, our servicemen and women and their families. Keep them safe.
Angel, Gayle, Tina and Sheila
Department Staff



THE 22 for THE 22



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On Saturday, November 7th, 22 people ventured out on a 22 mile journey to raise awareness of Veterans Suicide. The suicide frequency is 22 a day, one every 65 minutes; suicidal thoughts - 30% of all Veterans have considered suicide. The 22 people were a very special group comprised of Veterans and the family members of Veterans who had committed suicide.

They started this 22 mile journey at American Legion Post 29 in Glendale and finished at Tempe Town Lake where there was a Candlelight Walk for Military Veterans and their families.

The walkers got sponsors and funds raised went to support the La Frontera EMPACT Rally Point Military Navigator Program.

**In memoriam, with the recent loss of one of the organizers,
Alex S. Taylor, 1971 - 2015**

Thank you to everyone who walked for THE 22 in hopes that each year that number goes down!

To get more info on Rally Point, go to: www.rallypointaz.org

2015 Sweepstakes Fall Conference Winners

Leon Smith	\$3,000.00
Ernest Soto	\$2,000.00
Abe Walls Jr	\$1,000.00
Ray E Colby	\$ 500.00
Frank E Seuss	\$ 500.00
James E Barrineau	\$ 500.00
Norbert W Kahlert	\$ 500.00
Fred Y Ong	\$ 500.00
Annella M Campbell	\$ 500.00
Robert E Thompson	\$ 500.00
Roger D Anderson	\$ 500.00

Thank you to ALL of you for your continued support of The American Legion Programs!

National Commander, Dale Barnett: VA “has a long ways to go”

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 10, 2015) – American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett expressed frustration Wednesday after a congressional hearing that addressed accountability issues in the Department of Veterans Affairs in the aftermath of relocation compensation paid to executives implicated in a VA Inspector General’s report last month.

“Our veterans are looking for accountability at every echelon of the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Barnett said after Wednesday’s hearing. “American taxpayers want to give veterans the best health care possible for veterans. However, they expect VA to be fully accountable to provide that care without waste, fraud or abuse of government funds. It appears that VA has a long ways to go before achieving this mission.”