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 Commander’s 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

Area C Keeping Busy!

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

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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

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

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Ken Johnson (805) 714-9369

Dist 11 Commander
Dan Palmer (602) 377-4405

Dist 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

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 Foundation and a $3,700 donation to the Legacy Foundation.

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 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.azlر.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
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.
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.
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!!

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

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American Legion Dept of AZ
4701 N. 19th Ave #200
Phoenix, AZ 85015

ALL ADS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN April 4, 2016

The Arizona Legionnaire
POST EVERLASTING

1 Gene Brown
Frank Halasz
Joseph Kisczczak
William C Kramer
Donald R Leen
Sally D Miller
Robert R Woodward
Allen Skinner
3 Leroy M Aragon
Phillip Demiguel Sr
Pablo L Dominguez
Richard S Norwich
7 John Bud Grainger
Rudy O Molina
11 Thomas A Fitch
M L Alderson
Robert J Vaughn
15 Santiago L Gallegos
Pitacio S Martinez
Charles B Toombs
19 Donald C Barnett
James L Buresh
Carl A Landers
Ernest Limon
Joseph J Sorell
A I Swanson
Billy F Walker
Orval B Clapp
24 Paul J Gessner
David Stoneking
25 John H Allen
26 James A Combs
Ronald C Corneliusen
Jack Dawson Jr
Joseph H Polkus
Richard A Springer
Billy G Wood

27 Phillip Abbott
Charles T Brooks
Wilbur L Brotton
Jim Challas
Charles Cousineau
Harry J Delplace
John Gironda Jr
Herman Henry
Howard F Karon
Don J Krieg
Alan P Lasserre
Richard P Upham
28 Miguel L Espinoza
Charles B Franco
29 William Carugno
Paul A Coffiman
Edward S Dolovy
William J Waterworth
32 Harold E Noake Jr
Olin L Ressler
34 Neil E Bischoff
John E Johnson
George K Krikorian
35 Edward Barshak
Edward Fite
Virgil R Nabors
Dalton H Shroyer
Eulogio M Soto
36 Robert W Beem
Ernest W Carter
Richard M Decker
Merlin A Gross
John J Hargadon
Doyle D Jordan
John Kopydlowski
David A Lyons
Oscar L Martinez
Jess Ramirez
Charles F Wojno
39 Larry J Keenan
Wayne T Mills
41 Joe J Dean
Luz Gonzalez
Peter Martienz
Ruben Pacheco
Franz Rotter
Donald I Cooke
Victor J Dearing
John T Morio
45 George B Ellsworth
Charles J Gord
52 Donald M Weiner
54 Robert E Berghuis
William T Dillon
56 George Auza
Melvin Bennett
Jesse P Franco
Roscoe Ivey
Jesse Perez-Franco
James A Smith
58 Bruce A. Conklin
John E Hannay
Otto R Weeber
Gary L Zook
59 Philip Shaffer
61 Hans K Jorgensen Jr
Robert Wooddell
62 Steven L Aberle
Jack Conkel
James T Crary
Armin R Heine
Edward P Kelly
Charles P McGorry Jr
Richard Milne
Lloyd L Norman
Mel D Osburn
Ernest M Retzler
Joseph J Santa-Maria
Elaine F Taylor
Chuck Webb

63 M E Smalley
64 Lawrence Selberg
65 Bonnie Hopkins
66 Joseph L Faust
Arthur J Hoerning
Roberta Jolitz
Kenneth K Thompson
Howard R Whitehead
68 Johnny Chronister
69 Robert O Bruchansky
Robert L Buchanan
Larry D Dunny
Floyd Erickson
Robert S Rable
Eugene R Sellers
Charles R Ybarrondo Jr
78 Richard E Fore
79 Richard L Kennedy
Russell E Reason
81 Donald J Boule
John A Roy
84 John E Nolan
86 Samuel W Goode
87 Darl E Mericle
93 George Alexander
Donald J Peterson
94 Gerald J Groothuisen
Betty R C Heller
Joe D Kirk
Joseph Miller
96 Allen Heneman
Michael A Sweet
97 Ron Purvis

100 Warren C Anderson
George E Beierschmitt
Forrest R Bjornaas
Forrest Blackstock
Robert I Cochran
William A Crowder Jr
Earl R Danek
Steve A Dunagan Sr
James A Emmons
Alois Falkenstein
Raymond F Gigler
Doyle G Good
Duane Lowell
Jack Moore
Thomas Moore
Warren A Reboli
Walter Richards
Monte Rollins
Robert D Schnauffer
David W Streagle
Wilfried K Weber
Ralph H Zeller
William Zink

101 Dr Milton J Fox
Dennis L Turner
102 Ole A Wangberg
103 Norman J LaRue
105 Peter L Lindert
107 Grover W Ward
109 Earl R Eyster
122 Charles Laurendeau
126 Larry Biedermann
131 Robert J Ackerson
Paul J Baxter
Gary J Bongowski Sr
Ray F Bukovatz
Paul L Daly
Robert P Gehman
133 Ramon D Bivens
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 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

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!
### American Legion • Department of Arizona

**Membership Report, November 30, 2015**

#### District 7 - Commander: Rodger Ely Post

<table>
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#### District Totals

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#### District 8 – Commander: Ken Johnson Post

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#### District 11 – Commander: Dan Palmer Post

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#### District 12 – Commander: Scott Reeves Post

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**December 2015**

The Arizona Legionnaire
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.
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!
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

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
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

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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!

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Rally Point Arizona

THE 22 for THE 22

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.”