Message from the Commander
The Department of Texas American Legion Is Alive!

As each of us continue our life’s journey we celebrate that yearly milestone on a certain day of the month and year we were born, our birthday. The number of years we have navigated our earthly journey have certainly brought us many experiences. Our current world environment that we live in has seen amazing and dramatic changes. If you’re as old as I am, then you are able to recall President Kennedy’s vision of landing a man on the moon, the television going from black and white to color shows, the invention of the computer and the cellular phone. Now it seems the smart phone has put the entire world in the palms of our hands with the use of the internet readily available to answer all your questions with one “Google,” “Alexa” or “Siri” search.

Just as we have witnessed a life cycle of events during our years here on the planet called Earth, so too has The American Legion. Every organization goes through a “Life Cycle.” With the birth of a new century for our beloved American Legion have you wondered what the current relevant status of our organization is? Some models represent the life cycle in five stages. 1. Birth 2. Growth 3. Maturity 4. Decline 5. Death or Renewal. Using membership as the indicator, The American Legion has for the past several years been in stage #4, Decline, or some might even say stage #5, Death. The awesome news is that Texas is showing great signs of improving membership and attaining 100% of Post Goals. Year to date 122 individual Posts have achieved the goal of 100% in membership. Congratulations to those Posts. Four Districts have surpassed the District 100% membership mark and a few more are well on their way. As you can see The Department of Texas American Legion is doing its part to push our organization into Stage #5, Renewal and not Death. Thank you to our Membership Chairperson, Chris Holt for leading the way to improve membership here in Texas!

Do you have an article or announcement for The Legion Times?

If so, please send all submissions to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month to appear in the following issue.
Just this week I heard an amazing quote that I would like to share with you that is indicative of the effort of the Texas Legionnaires in keeping The American Legion in the “Renewal” cycle, opposed to the alternative “Death” cycle. “The sun will never set on a Veteran’s loyalty to our Nation and The United States of America.” Upon hearing this, it reminded me of the tremendous amount of effort that Texas Veterans who have assumed the membership status of American Legionnaires are putting into keeping our Posts alive. Texas Legionnaires are displaying a level of loyalty by keeping our organization’s Purpose and Mission vibrant within the local communities where we live and serve in.

As the 2024 membership starts the last half of its life cycle I am encouraging all members to continue the momentum of renewing expired Legionnaires and Recruiting New Members. With your continued loyalty, together we can keep the American Legion alive and continue to “Change Lives and Save Lives!” Together we can make a difference and help reduce Veteran Suicide, Veteran Homelessness and introduce help and assistance for a Veteran to receive Mental Health Support. “Be The One!”

Gene Toohey  
State Commander  
The American Legion  
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**Membership Corner**  
Submitted by Chris Holt

As of 18 Feb 2024 the Department is knocking homeruns in the membership arena. We have four Districts that are already over their 100% goal before Valentines Day and already competing for The Race To The Top for National Awards as a District. Those Districts are Districts, 7, 11, 22, and the 2nd. The amazing part is they are all out of the 2nd Division. By March 15, 2024 we should have another four or five districts to add to the 100% goal status.

In another ground breaking announcement, 14 of our 23 District’s have already made the 90% goal status with 6 of those 14 actually at 95% or better. Every Division hit their 85% goal this month and I want to congratulate each one of you. Three of our Division’s are already over the 90% mark and the 2nd Division is already over the 95% goal.

With all these numbers above, where does this have us Nationally? We are currently in 19th place in the Nation. However, if all of our posts would have hit the 85% goal, we would have been in 5th place at this point or better. This is a good time to ensure that you have current membership updated as you start your Post election season. Do not forget to mail in or scan and email you Post Data Forms ASAP. There is no need to sit on these forms.

Keep up the great work!!!
Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Texas? If so, please follow these guidelines for submissions.

- Submit your text in Word format (.doc, .docx) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf) or as a PDF.

- The ideal word count for our format is 200 - 500 words (maximum), preferably with no double spacing.

- Give your article a TITLE! Create a HEADLINE and save with a proper file name so we can easily recognize it.

- Tell us who the author is, whether it’s you or if you are just forwarding it to us.

- Attach any photos and/or artwork for your article separately in your email. DO NOT simply embed them in your Word or PDF file. Larger photos are best, and high resolution JPG files of 300 dpi or better are preferred. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article.

- Let us know in your e-mail of any corresponding photo captions, name of the photographer, etc. Please note that due to spacing and layout requirements, we may not be able to use every photo submitted (preferably 2 - 3 photos per article).

- Please spell check everything! Especially people’s names, web addresses, etc. We do our best to catch typos, and make corrections, but sometimes they still slip by. You can help us greatly by simply running the spell check function in your word processing software.

- We publish on our Website on the FIRST FRIDAY of the Month, with few exceptions. E-mail everything directly to times@txlegion.org by the 20th of every month, for it to appear in the following issue. This way we have plenty of time to work with in case we need to clarify anything with you.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and hope you continue to help us grow and improve The Legion Times!
Greetings Comrades! Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father.

Welcome to the month of March, the month of 2 major seasonal changes. On March 10th we will move to Daylight Saving Time and then on the 19th the spring equinox will occur. We will have more daylight hours to witness the glorious sunshine after months of gray skies and dull days.

We will behold the bright, aromatic, and cheerful display of colorful spring blossoms. The ultimate sign of a new season are those brightly colored tulips whose blue green leaves emerge from the earth. The bright blue and purple hyacinth fills the air with a perfume-like fragrance as they dance to the new season. The colors come alive. The old is passed away and behold all things become new.

This is exactly what takes place in our lives as we enter a new season. Our new season may be learning to live this life with an empty chair at the family gatherings. Perhaps our new season may be the joy of becoming a new parent or grandparent. Even still, our new season may be connected to new employment opportunities or promotion. All of these situations, and so many more, can lead us to the experience of a “New Season.”

I am reminded of the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah when he wrote “Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth.” So often when I read this passage, I am compelled to know that my situation will soon change. My time of grief, mourning, loneliness, or despair will soon past. And God Almighty will do a new thing. My season is about to shift.

Today, I want to encourage you to begin looking for your change of seasons. Begin looking for the vibrancy of your life to return. Start expecting to thrive in your life again. Walk in full confidence that your passion will be ignited, so that you will BE THE ONE!

Yes, you will BE THE ONE within your career, within your family, within your spiritual walk, and within The American Legion. Be the One who seeks out homeless veterans and offer your knowledge and expertise to aid them. Be the One who makes calls for the Buddy Checks. Be the One to help with membership. Be the One to encourage, mentor, empower, and guide new members.

Comrades, it is a new season! So, expect new members, new leadership, new strategies for Post management, and new levels of responsibility because old things are passed away and now all things are made new.

Keep me in your prayers as I continue praying for each of you!

Your State Chaplain,
Cheryl Williams
Legionairres attended the Mid-Winter conference at the Austin Southpark Hotel.

There were committee and commission meetings, along with training and workshops.

National Commander Dan Seehafer and Medal of Honor recipient Donald “Doc” Ballard spoke to us on Sunday.

Awards were presented to various districts, divisions and posts for their continued efforts with membership.

It was also a great time to catch up with friends and Legion Family members from all over the state.
SAN ANTONIO – (Feb. 5, 2024) – To further educate and inform the community about The American Legion, Post Commander Burrell Parmer of Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828 was invited to serve as the guest speaker at the bi-weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of San Antonio Pearl held at the Botika Restaurant, Feb. 2.

His speech focused on the beginnings of The American Legion and its four pillars (Veterans, National Defense, Americanism, and Children & Youth).

Additionally, Parmer provided information on the history of Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828.

“I truly thank Rotary Club President Karen Allen-Mirabeau for inviting me and my fiancé to the Mardi Gras-themed meeting,” said Parmer, of Monroe, LA. “It’s important to inform our civic groups on those various programs that are important to us, such as Texas Boys State and Post 828's Project Shoes.”

He also urged those in the audience to join The American Legion Family, if eligible.

On Feb. 3, Parmer, and his fiancé Tesha Leggett, attended the 5th Annual Jacqueline Smith Foundation Dancing with the Vets held at the Double Tree by Hilton.

(continued next page)
Annually, the Jacqueline Smith Foundation hosts a Valentine’s dance, and Volunteer Veteran Awards Program to educate veterans on resources available to them in the community.

“Most veterans do not know what resources are available to them, or how to tap into them,” said Foundation Founder Jacqueline Smith. “We are here to change that! On this night veterans can speak to veteran service organization (VSO) representatives, and schedule appointments to seek assistance.”

After the presentation of awards and the keynote speech by retired Marine David Sherman, 3rd vice president of the San Antonio Branch of the NAACP, the dance battle of the services was on with the Marines taking the title.

Ending the evening was the contest for prom king and queen with Parmer, a Marine Veteran, and his fiancé coming in second to Legionnaire and Marine Veteran Richard and Natasha Delgado Jr.

The Jacqueline Smith Foundation thanked all their honorees for their hard work, and dedication to our community and for the phenomenal leaders that they are.

The mission of Fred Brock Post 828 is to enhance the well-being of San Antonio’s veterans, their families, the military, and the community by its devotion to mutual helpfulness.
HOUSTON, TX (February 02, 2024) – The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, TX held its 81st Anniversary Four Chaplains Day Ceremony February 02, 2024, 1:00 pm 2nd Floor in the VA Chapel.

Many join as they commemorate the lives of four Army Chaplains of different faiths who joined together and sacrificed themselves to save others during WWII. Today, as it has these many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless services to every part of our country.

To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood, and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel established the Legion of Honor Program. The Legion of Honor Award is given in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of his or her community, and to the spirit of interfaith cooperation.

The National Chapel of the Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Awards was presented to Cedric Patterson who is the Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, Hospital & VAVS Commission Chairperson, 2nd Division Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation & Hospital Charman VAVS Representative Michael DeBakey Medical Center. The American Legion Houston 8th District Chaplain & formal David H. McNerney Post 658 Crosby Chaplain Cedric Patterson was also presented with the Star of David Believer Pin.
SAN ANTONIO – (Feb. 15, 2024) – Cub Scouting has so many benefits for kids today, such as meaningful friendships, exciting adventures, independence, personal accomplishments, and a sense of community – [www.scoutsmarts.com](http://www.scoutsmarts.com)

To continue supporting Scouting, Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828 became the charter organization of Cub Scouts Pack 353 which consists of 35 youth.

A chartered organization is a community-based group whose objectives, mission and methodologies are compatible with those of the Boy Scouts of America. It agrees to use the Scouting program to further its mission to serve young people.

This will be the second cub scouts pack that the Post serves as the chartered organization. The Post became the chartered organization of Lackland Cub Scouts Pack 561 in December 2022.

“The Fred Brock Post 828 supports its youth,” said Post Commander Burrell Parmer. “Scouting is a very important program which provides youth with valuable skills.”

The American Legion has been a supporter for Boy Scouts of America since the Legion’s first national convention in 1919 and honors the Eagle Scout of the Year during its national convention with $10,000 scholarship while three runners-up each get $2,500.

Fred Brock Post No. 828’s mission is to enhance the well-being of San Antonio’s veterans, their families, the military, and the community by its devotion to mutual helpfulness.
Post 174 Judges Pinewood Derby Cars
Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Commander, Post 174

On January 27th, members of American Legion Post 174, served as judges for Pack 151 (chartered by the Post), Pinewood Derby Car Contest. They judged the cars on thirty categories. The categories included most patriotic, best paint job, most unusual, best engineered, best overall design, fastest looking, among others. A member’s son accompanied his father and brought the car he raced as a Cub Scout in 1985. He raced the car again in the adult race! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the Pinewood Derby!

Post 174 Conducts 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off
Submitted by BJ MacMillan, Commander, Post 174 • Photos by Frank Espinosa

American Legion Post 174 conducted their second annual chili cook-off prior to their regular meeting on February 8, 2024. Scouts and adults from our Boy Scout Troop 1096 were there to help. We had a total of eight pots of chili entered in the contest. Our Auxiliary, Unit 174, brought salads, condiments, cornbread, and dessert. One of the Scouts brought Dutch oven chili to compete. Another Scout made the best cornbread; Honey Butter Cornbread. After the three judges evaluated the chili, everyone got in line for the chili dinner. We had two winners: Mike Meccia won Best No-Bean Chili and Cathy Kohn won Best Chili with Beans. They both received a $50 gift card for HEB. All the chili was delicious. There were no leftovers!
SAN ANTONIO – (Feb. 25, 2024) – The African American Community Awareness Project (AACAP) hosted the 51st Annual Miss Black San Antonio Scholarship Pageant at the Jo Long Theatre within the Carver Community Cultural Center.

The theme of the pageant was “Five Diamonds in the Sky”, to recognize local legendary African-American women leaders: Artemisia Bowden, Ella Austin, Hattie Briscoe, Jessie Mae Hicks, and Hazel Miller.

Established in 1973, the pageant is an official Black History celebration event which enables youth to become involved in cultural activities and knowledgeable about the achievements of African Americans, and present day community leaders.

“The five local legends are selected for their rays of brilliance, determination and gifts of love which have contributed for the betterment of our community,” said ACCAP Director Glenetta Bierria, who is a member of Fred Brock Auxiliary Unit No. 828. “The focus of the pageant is to motivate the young contestants to strengthen their tenacity in reaching their career goals.”

It is Bierria’s hope that the young ladies will remember the sparking value of the “Five Diamonds in the Sky” who served their community through excellence.

(continued next page)
Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828 was presented an honorable appreciation award during the pageant and Post Commander Burrell Parmer served as one of the judges.

“This event was superb!” said Parmer, who also served as an auditor for the Queen of Soul Pageant held at the Carver Community Cultural Center, Jan. 13. “Observing these beautiful and talented young ladies was honor. It was very difficult for the judges.”

The judges scored the contestants in the following categories: Pre-interview, Runway/Modeling, Talent, Formal Wear, and Projection.

As there can only be one winner, the title of Miss Black San Antonio was bestowed upon Dara Mack.

In reference to the Queen of Soul Pageant, congratulations to this year’s Queen, London Nikol Keiler, a sophomore attending the University of Texas-San Antonio.

The 55th Annual San Antonio Queen of Soul Pageant was held at the Jo Long Theatre within the Carver Community Cultural Center. Congratulations to this year’s Queen, London Nikol Keiler, a sophomore attending the University of Texas-San Antonio. (Photo by Tesha Leggett, Auxiliary Unit 828)

The 55th Annual San Antonio Queen of Soul Pageant was held at the Jo Long Theatre within the Carver Community Cultural Center. Fred Brock American Legion Post No. 828 Post Commander Burrell Parmer served as pageant auditor. (Photo by Tesha Leggett, Auxiliary Unit 828)
Legion members gathered at Joe Knott Post 317 in Jarrell to meet and greet active duty Captain Riley Tejcek, USMC. She is a member of the U.S. Women’s Bobsled Team and Ms. Military 2023.

To aid in the quest for gold, Post 317 made a generous donation to Riley and the team since team members are required to pay their own travel expenses.

Riley is the pilot (driver) of the bobsled for Team USA. She also is currently producing workout videos to help female military members to remain fit and maintain the military physical fitness standards of today’s forces.

Go Team USA!
2024 is the 75th Anniversary of the Merci Train when the people of France showed their appreciation in an extraordinary way.

The American “Doughboys” of WWI were transported in small boxcars referred to as “Forty & Eights” and would carry either 40 men or 8 horses and thus marked Hommes 40 / Chevaux 8.

On February 2, 1949, France sent 49 of these WWI boxcars to the United States. Each magnificently decorated and filled with gifts. Today only 43 boxcars remain from the Gratitude Train and are on display all over the United States. For more information scan the codes below or visit WWW.MERCITRAIN.ORG

The Texas 75th Anniversary Celebration Event will be at 1200, Friday, March 22, 2024
Texas Military Forces Museum, Camp Mabry, Austin, TX and at 1400, Friday March 22, 2024, at the Capitol Visitor Center, 112 E 11th Street, Austin, TX
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