



THE LEGION TIMES

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Message from the Commander

November is upon us and the time is going by so fast. I did not realize that being State Commander can be so fulfilling and frustrating at the same time. I have met some fine legionnaires over the past 3 months and have great expectations for our organization. I was fortunate to go to Indianapolis last month to the Fall NEC. The new Department Commanders are as eager to build membership as I am. Several have asked the same question as others, "**How do we reach the younger veterans?**" Hmmm, we must look at our own posts and see what would invite them to join. I do not see very many of them that are into smoking, drinking or old war stories. I see them looking how they can help their community, families and fellow veterans. They are family oriented and we need to include their kids when we can. The thought of us dying off because we did not reach out to these individuals and ask how we might include them is sad.



Time is upon us to start working on awards and finding oratorical contestants. We as an organization have several awards that would bring exposure to your post. The following are listed with timelines for submission:

National Employer Award to be sent to National by January 15th

VA Volunteer Award to be sent to Department by December 31st

Post Adjutant (Jim Lemley Award) to Department by January 1st

Department Media Awards, which cover, dates June 1 – May 31 each year.

To be sent to Department by June 1st

National Security Awards (which are the easiest to apply for)

To be sent to your District Spring Convention then to Department by June 1st

All other awards for Post and District level go to www.txlegion.org and search Department Awards and see the list there.

All information can be found on the website or feel free to contact the chairperson of the committees that each fall under. We have to promote ourselves and the best way is to acknowledge others and promote our four pillars. Once a post starts working programs and sending out awards they need to contact the local press and let them know what they are doing. We do not pat ourselves on the back enough and we should be proud of what we do in the community.

Last Month I had the pleasure of escorting our National Commander Paul Dilliard around El Paso and then back to DFW airport while visiting some posts along the way. Let me tell you it was a great trip and we learned a lot from posts and heard some of the stories from their perspectives. Commander Dilliard was a sight for some of these posts that have never seen a National Commander or much less a State Commander in their post. It has made me think that I need to contact every post personally and hear what each of them are doing. So Post Commanders if you are reading this, if you see an 817-946-0906 come up on your phone, please answer.

As always, let's keep doing the Buddy Checks and getting those memberships in on time. We have reached both target goals so far and still have more to reach.

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"No veteran left behind." Our American Legion National Commander Paul Dillard has taken that motto and made it come alive across our beloved Legion family. It is perfect timing to use for any drives, publicity and especially prayers this year. Our Chaplains across the board in Texas put together beautiful prayers and I encourage you to keep copies of all you write and all you use to share at upcoming gatherings. Think maybe at our next gathering, we will try to have an exchange of services used and prayers offered. Welcome all your thoughts on this.

Growing up in New York City, my memories of 11 November revolve around the American Legion. My dad was an Army-Air Corps vet but never joined any veteran group. However, his first cousins did and we all got to go to their Post for wonderful Veteran Day gatherings. I can still see and feel the love at those activities. This took place during the Vietnam era and it was one of those very special times where I saw my dad open up about his AAC time. Times have changed and hopefully all our Texas Legion families come together as one on 11 November. God bless our media for all the coverage and all the understanding they share with us veterans.

Thanksgiving will be less than one month away when you read this and your Chaplain is asking for a special favor. I want to do a special prayer for this day and share it prior to 25 November so we can be as one. Please send me what you and your Post family are grateful for and we can put it together in one document.

Let's try by 15 November. Nothing fancy... just a piece of your heart!

God bless and keep those ideas coming!

GERRY HINCE
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ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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.
- Give your article a title! Create the 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 articles separately (NOT embedded in your text file) as high resolution JPGs, 300 dpi, or better. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article.

Let us know in your e-mail of any corresponding captions, name of the photographer, etc.

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

Veterans Service Organizations In Georgetown Collect and Deliver Largest Contribution of Clothing for Communities of Williamson and Bell Counties

submitted by Frank Espinosa, Jr.

Veterans of American Legion Post 174; Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 8587; and, Central Texas Base U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI), delivered 75 boxes of new and used clothing on October 12th and October 26th with an estimated weight of 1,875 pounds.

This was the first year of participation for the USSVI.

The donations were spread across three non-profit organizations, each receiving 25 boxes of the clothing. The non-profits included: The Caring Place, Georgetown; Families in Crisis, Inc., Killeen; and, the Salvation Army, Temple.

Delivery of the donations to the three non-profit organizations was a first-time event for the three local Veterans Service Organizations. Similar but smaller donations in the past 12 years were always delivered to a department of the Veterans Administration (VA) in Temple. The department assumed responsibility for further distribution of donations to homeless and at-risk Veterans of Central Texas. However, due to a recent change in policy by the VA, used clothing is no longer accepted, only new clothing is accepted.

Frank Espinosa, Jr., the Event Coordinator for the three local Veterans Service Organizations stated the success of this year's collection was greatly attributable to local businesses in Georgetown who allowed collection containers in their building. The businesses were: David's Barber Shop at 3010 Williams Drive, Suite #228; and, Mel's Lone Star Lanes at 1010 N. Austin Avenue.

Espinosa stated American Legion Post 174 intends to continue to lead this program next year collecting only new clothing.



VFW Post 8587 member Barry Richard and American Legion Post 174 Commander BJ MacMillan hand boxes to The Caring Place's Donations & Facilities Director David Earl. Photo by Frank Espinosa, Jr.



(L-R) Holding the box, Juana Wright of the Families in Crisis, Inc., cautions VFW Post 8587 & American Legion Post 174 member Grant Gee to move out of her way. Taking the photo on October 26th was USSVI member Frank Espinosa, Jr.



Case Worker Grace Ruiz of The Salvation Army, Temple is happy to hand the first of 25 boxes to one of her co-workers. Taking the photo on October 26th was USSVI member Frank Espinosa, Jr.

Post 178 Texas Boys State & Oratorical Scholarship Program Chairs Invited to District-Wide Frisco ISD Counselors Meeting

submitted by Ed Reed

To ensure solid coordination for the 2021-2022 Post 178 Texas Boys State and Oratorical Scholarship programs, the Frisco ISD Student Services – Guidance and Counseling organization invited Larry Wilhelm and Terry Gilbert, the Texas Boys State and Oratorical Scholarship program chairs, respectively, to attend their district-wide Secondary Counselor Meeting on October 21, 2021. Frisco ISD currently has eleven high schools with more than fifty secondary counselors.



Larry Wilhelm-Texas Boys State Program Chair, Post Executive Committee Member at Large



Terry Gilbert-Oratorical Scholarship Program Chair; Post Executive Committee Member, Vice Commander-Programs

Coordination with the counseling staff began several weeks ago. A list of high school counselors and National Speech & Debate member instructors were earlier identified who would orchestrate the coordination of both programs in their respective high schools.

Because of their success, Post 178 plans to continue scheduling future annual face-to-face coordination meetings.

JSSP 159 Lower Flags in Memory of Colin Powell

submitted by James Andrews

Junior Shooting Sports Program youth at Earl Graham Post 159, Bryan, TX lowered post flags to half mast and said a prayer for the family of the late General Colin Powell before their weekly practice on October 18, 2021.



Pictured L-R: JSSP member Eryn Combs (11), JSSP Historian Kaija Combs (13), Post 159 Second Vice Commander James Andrews, and JSSP Finance Officer Shae Combs (16).



Pictured L-R: Post 159 Second Vice Commander James Andrews, JSSP Historian Kaija Combs (13), JSSP member Eryn Combs (11), and JSSP Finance Officer Shae Combs (16).

The Last 13

submitted by Don Currie

Ken Pridgeon is a 86 year old Texas artist, who for the last 14 years has painted Texas Fallen Warriors that died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

He has a Gallery in Houston and has painted over 400 Texas Fallen Warriors. Now he has painted "The Last 13" on one canvas. He sent all 13 Gold Star Families a print of the 13, and a solo print of the Fallen for the families, sent to each state local contact and to be delivered with Honors by VFW and Patriots Guard Riders.

This ol' air Force vet is still doing it, every day. Google him - good story.



Legion Riders House of Horrors

Successful Halloween Community Event for Chapter 164 Katy, TX



Zombie crew from left to right (Isabella, Rebecca, Kelly, Patricia, Virginia, Tiffany)

They thought I was crazy for wanting a meeting 3 months before Halloween, but I wanted this event to be cool and fun for everyone. The planning paid off because as the work began and it was time to put all our extravagant plans into action, everything came together quickly. The set-up night was filled with stress and when some things were left undone for the next morning, I was worried. So worried that I stayed up until 2am to work out some solutions in my head.

I wasn't sure if we would finish but 30 minutes before opening, I paused all activities so we could have a briefing and do some walk throughs before the crowds arrived. I was completely surprised to find that a line was already forming outside. I knew that some actors were not completely finished with their make-up, but we had to do the walk-throughs anyway. No sooner did we have our practice that we had to start letting people in, even though some actors weren't completely ready. The line of visitors quickly became a 30-minute wait. I'm glad that everyone was in good spirits and willing to wait.

I want to say that everything went perfectly, but that just makes me laugh. We were completely unprepared for the number of people who were interested in our little haunted house. This was a completely free community event – the first of its kind – and I was about to pull it off. Wait! I didn't do this alone, it was only with the help from many American Legion members, family, and friends that it all worked out. About 30 volunteers in one way or another helped get an estimated 675-1000 people through the haunted house in three hours. We didn't have a counter, so we really don't know.

We all considered it a complete success and most want to come back and do it again next year. Sometimes when you want to do something bad enough you just need a little planning, determination, and enthusiastic volunteers.

Jody Castro
Director Legion Riders Chapter 164 Katy
American Legion Post 164 Katy, TX



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Awarded to Legionnaires for recruiting "NEW" members into The American Legion. This award is based upon the total accumulative number of New Members the Recruiter has signed up into The American Legion from the inception of this award through their Legion career. The pin will be awarded starting with the #1 for the first new member and then increase in increments of 5 (5, 10, 15, 20, etc.) based upon the accumulative total of new members recruited. Once the recruiter is awarded a pin level, he/she will work for the next higher pin level and once a pin level has been achieved a duplicate pin level will not be awarded.

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