



# THE LEGION TIMES

Official Newspaper of The American Legion, Department of Texas

December 2009 \* Volume 91, Issue 5



## CONTENTS

<i>Message from the TEXALPA President</i>	2
<i>Submission Guidelines</i>	3
<i>Message from the Auxiliary President</i>	4
<i>Service Officer Training In Gladewater</i>	5
<i>Anton Post 458 Revitalization</i>	5
<i>Legion Praises Passage of Caregiver Bill</i>	6
<i>VA to Survey Veteran Households</i>	7

### **Message from the Commander**

Greetings from the Department of Texas! This is the season we all need to sit back and contemplate all the things of which we enjoy as a people and certainly Freedom must be foremost in our minds in these trying times. As I travel throughout the State and witness all the support given our troops by our local posts I am amazed at the selfless devotion shown to our troops with sacrifices of dollars, gifts, talents, and especially the personal time contributed by our family members. I am so grateful to be representing this Department and I am humbled by the scenes witnessed between our members comforting the families of our fallen heroes, caring for the needs of those left behind, feeding the homeless veterans, nurturing the surviving children, aiding the wounded warriors, and especially the patriotic send offs and welcome gatherings for those deployed and returning from the terrorist actives through the world. Our department can be proud of our posts and I would like to personally like to thank all who continue to provide the above services and look forward to an expedient end to this terrible war on terrorism and pray for the return of peace.



I would like to announce that the first annual District Hubmasters School will be held on January 23rd, a Saturday, at 2pm at the Midwinter Conference. The school is open to the American Legion Family and all are encouraged to attend to witness this new venture to improve the communications of the Department of Texas and the Local Posts. The information will be networked to inform the Post through emails and announced at the regular meetings and will also be structured to receive any questions, suggestions, or issues that need to be answered from the local posts. I believe this will be an excellent augmentation to our current procedures and will enhance the learning of issues and developments in a timely fashion. We are just getting started so come and learn. The more that understand it, the better it will function. Look forward to seeing you there.

(continued p. 2)

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*I find it disconcerting to say the least when I call a local post and the post is not aware of the most basic announcements from our VA System like a new clinic opening up, a new educational program (New GI Bill), and a policy change (all veterans can sign up for VA health care). When I ask if they are aware of policy changes that will affect their post directly and you get the "deer in the headlights look". Well it is time that the Legion improves its communications and I find that the Post Commanders and the membership are more than ready to embark on a program that does just that. We leaders have to accept the challenge and I know the Hubmaster Network will accomplish this only if we all have the patience to let it develop. Please be receptive to the ideas that will come forth and I promise you will reap the benefits both through our organization and personally.*

*Let me say here that we all need to reflect upon God's blessings in our lives and I want to personally wish all the best during the feasts and festivities of this Holiday Season. My Soul mate and Chauffer Pam and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Let's make this a season that truly reflects our Saviour's Grace.*

*Don Daft*  
*Department Commander*

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**Message from the President of the**  
**Texas American Legion Press Association (TEXALPA)**

*Greetings Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders:*

*The Texas American Legion Press Association (TEXALPA) is an organization of newsletter editors, writers, historians, public relations officers and communications volunteers of The American Legion family.*

*We need to turn around the corner and encourage more Legion family members to join TEXALPA. Turning around means getting more Posts to start newsletters and to have those editors join TEXALPA. Each Post needs to increase their "market share" by publishing a newsletter, web page, or writing articles for the local newspapers. And, we would like to encourage those Legion family members to join TEXALPA. We would also like to encourage all Posts to participate in our Awards program.*

*The goal: find a way to share photos, adventure tales, and information with the members of our Posts, Units, Squadrons, and Chapters. Newsletters and web pages are easy to create, use, and require no special skills. The only requirement is a volunteer.*

*Eldon Erickson*  
*President TEXALPA*  
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# 2009-2010 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS



Don Daft, Department Commander  
Bill Hueske Department Vice Commander  
Charles Edwards, Chaplain  
Kenneth Mueller, Treasurer  
Daniel Corbin, Judge Advocate  
Cyndi Miller, Historian  
Dale Anspach, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Jerry Tatman, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms  
Conrad Roberson, NEC  
Jim Prendergast, Alt NEC  
James McNair, IPDC  
William West, Adjutant  
Michael Simon, Director of Internal Affairs  
Edward Reyes, Department Service Officer (Houston)  
Michael Lacy, Department Service Officer (Houston)  
Reba Hollingsworth, Department Service Officer (Waco)  
Don Bridschge, Department Service Officer (Waco)

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Larry Mims, 1st Division Commander  
Lynn Sparks, 2nd Division Commander  
Robert Squyres, 3rd Division Commander  
Barry Schoenhals, 4th Division Commander

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Milton Chatham, 2nd District Commander  
Linda Reed, 3rd District Commander  
Wayne Thomas, 4th District Commander  
Bernard Aderholt, 5th District Commander  
Bobby Ray, 6th District Commander  
Sheila Schulte, 7th District Commander  
Robert Fleming, 8th District Commander  
Tom Harlan, 9th District Commander  
Walter Ivie, 10th District Commander  
Don Damron, 11th District Commander  
Terrance Bigley, 12th District Commander  
Larry Vess, 13th District Commander  
Pablo Garza, Jr, 14th District Commander  
George Solis, 15th District Commander  
Ruben Banks, Sr, 16th District Commander  
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Roosevelt Sullivan, 18th District Commander  
Patricia Erickson, 19th District Commander  
Joe Duarte, 20th District Commander  
W.L. Fleming, 21st District Commander  
Terry Messinger, 22nd District Commander  
Robert Hester, 23rd District Commander

## 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 basic guidelines for submissions.

- Submit your text in Microsoft Word format (.doc) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf). No “.docx” files please, as these are often problematic. Save your file as the same name of the article, so we can easily keep track of it. And be sure to make it clear who the author is, whether it's you or if you are just forwarding it to us.
- WE LOVE ARTICLES WITH PHOTOS, or any other kind of images! Include photos and/or artwork for articles *separately* (NOT embedded in the article) as high resolution (300 dpi, or better) JPGs. 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, and/or name of the photographer if necessary.

- 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 program.

- **E-mail everything directly to us at [times@txlegion.org](mailto:times@txlegion.org) by the 20th of every month for it to appear in the very next 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!

## **Message from the Auxiliary President**

November proved to be just as busy as October. I had the privilege of attending the Cancer Research Luncheon held at M.D. Anderson in Houston. Due to the contributions from across this great state of Texas the American Legion Auxiliary was able to fund 10 Fellowships in the amount of \$5,000.00 each.

Cancer Research is my special project for this year and it is my hope that we will continue to give 10 Fellowships next year. I know with your contributions we will succeed.

Dr. George Stancel presented the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Texas the book "Making Cancer History". This book is about the history and building of M.D. Anderson Cancer Center into the world-class institution it is today. This book will be placed in the American Legion Auxiliary library at Department Headquarters.

The Corsicana Angels' goal for this Christmas Season is to make, pack and ship 1500 Christmas stockings to service men and women around the world. On November 7, at Post 624, in Mansfield, we filled 1462 stockings. Unit 22 of Corsicana will complete the balance of 1500 plus. It took a lot of volunteers from The American Legion Families all working together to complete this task and I'm extremely proud to be a part of this accomplishment.

My hat is off to Lynda Horton-Turk and Mary Creighton of Mineral Wells Unit 75, for a beautiful Veterans Day Program on November 11, 2009. This was the 27th consecutive year of the Veterans Day Program for the Mineral Wells Post 75.

My thanks to each of you who took the time from your busy schedule to attended my homecoming in Alvarado. I am so proud of Terri Duncan, President Unit 426, Rhonda Land, Commander Post 426, and all members of The American Legion Family for their hard work in making this a night to remember. To Marty Peters for serving as Master of Ceremonies and for always being willing to help were needed. The entertainment "The Cowboy Ain't Dead Yet" was just a bonus for a wonderful night.

In the month of December the Auxiliary has Christmas gift shops at the VA hospitals. At the beginning of my administration I asked the Representative of each of the hospitals to schedule their gift shop so I could attend all of the gift shops. The first two weeks of December will be very busy with gift shops. Each auxiliary unit is assigned to a hospital. Some units prefer to purchase gifts and donate the items to the gift shop some just donate money and the Auxiliary Rep. and Deputy purchase items needed. Hundreds of articles are then put on display, for each patient to go shopping for their families. The gifts that are selected are wrapped and shipped to their families. It puts one in the true spirit of Christmas.

As we prepare for the holiday season remember the men and women serving in harms way.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.  
Barbara Kundert, ALA Department President

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## Service Officer Training in Gladewater

American Legion Third District Commander Linda M. Reed, held a Service Officer Training class in Gladewater. Reba Hollingsworth, American Legion Dept. of Texas, Waco office conducted the 6 hour training. The attendees are present and future Service Officers that gained the information needed to assist veterans with needed claims and assistance. Those attending came from several Districts in the area, and left with the enthusiasm and knowledge to assist our veterans.

The first training held was for American Legion Riders and was also successful by the installation of yet another ALR Chapter in Garland Tx. Commander Reed, ensures there will be further trainings planned for Officers positions in the near future.

**Back row** (left to right) Andy Farrell, Post 140, Carlos Munoz, Post 281, Darrell Burkhart Post 281, Henry M. Falgoust Jr, Steve Black Post 12, Thomas White, Sulphur Springs, Charles Persons, Longview, **Front Row** (left to right) Philip Lockwood Sulphur Springs, Doug Alford, Post 90, Reba Hollingsworth, Instructor, Steve Faught, Post 281. (Not pictured Jack Miller Post 140)



### Anton Post 458 Revitalization

Department Vice Commander Bill Hueske, District 19 Commander Patricia Erickson, and Director of Internal Affairs Michael Simon recently went to Anton Texas to complete a post revitalization project for Post 458 in Anton. Support was also provided by the Legion Riders from the George Berry Post 575 in Lubbock. Many post members were able to meet with the Commanders and share concerns they have about the future of their small post. They were appreciative to see the support from the commanders and head quarters staff.



*Dist. 19 Commander Erickson talks with a member about the goals for the post.*



*Vice Commander Hueske listens as a member shares his concern about the future of the Anton post. The member's son (a navy veteran) signed up by the end of the day.*

## ***The American Legion Praises Passage of Caregiver Bill***

**WASHINGTON (November 20, 2009) – The national commander of The American Legion applauds the Senate for their overwhelming support of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009 with a resounding 98-0 vote yesterday. “This legislation will improve the lives of so many veterans and their families,” said National Commander Clarence E. Hill. “Especially those with serious health care challenges.”**

**Although the primary focus of the bill is to care givers of severely injured veterans returning home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, this measure addresses other serious issues such as health care for women veterans; dental insurance for certain veterans and their families; mental health care services; veterans’ transition from military to civilian life; health care issues facing veterans in rural areas; enhancement of VA medical services; and homelessness among veterans and their families.**

**“Timely passage of this bill was absolutely critical,” said Hill. “This legislation addresses a number of concerns our newest generation of wartime veterans are talking about at Legion Post meetings across the nation.”**

**“This measure now moves to the House where I am confident Speaker Pelosi and her leadership team will take an aggressive approach toward timely passage,” continued Hill. “In my recent visit with the Speaker, her commitment to veterans and their families was crystal clear.”**

**Many of the provisions in this bill were initially blocked by one Senator who exercised his “hold” privileges in order to closely review each provision and determine future costs to the Federal government. “I have the utmost respect for Senator Coburn and his concerns for fiscal discipline,” remarked Hill. “However, most Americans realize that Federal dollars associated with the medical care and treatment for service-connected disabled veterans and their families is the price of freedom and the ongoing costs of war.”**

**Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) recently lifted his “hold” on S. 1963 and offered an amendment to expand the number of eligible caregivers and fund the bill by transferring Federal appropriations going to the United Nations to the Department of Veterans Affairs. That amendment was soundly defeated 32-66 by his colleagues.**

## **VA To Survey Veteran Households**

**WASHINGTON** – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a national survey of Veterans, active duty service members, activated National Guard and reserve members, and family members and survivors to learn if they are aware of VA services.

“By hearing directly from Veterans and their family members, we gain valuable information to help us serve them better. We hope those who receive the survey will respond to it,” Secretary Shinseki said.

In addition to assessing awareness levels, the National Survey of Veterans will collect important health care, benefits, employment, and demographic information that VA will use to inform policy decisions and improve benefits. Recognizing a broader client base than just Veterans, this is the first time VA has included others, such as Veteran family members, in its survey population.

VA is mailing out survey “screeners” to more than 130,000 households to identify potential survey participants. The screener asks if anyone in the household is a member of one of the identified survey groups – Veterans, family members and survivors, active duty, Guard or Reserve members. Eligible survey participants then may be requested to participate in a full-length survey.

Participants will be able to select a preferred survey method: through U.S. mail, telephone or a password-protected Internet address. VA expects approximately 10,000 Veterans to complete the full-length survey.

This is the sixth VA National Survey of Veterans since 1978. The information collected will help VA in its efforts to design and conduct outreach to Veterans. In addition, it will provide a clearer picture of the Veteran population’s characteristics to help evaluate existing programs and policies and measure their impact.

The data collection is expected to be finished by the end of February and the final report released by December 2010.



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