Message from the Commander

What is the greatest battle ahead of The American Legion today? For years, we have been told or have said that when we work the programs, our membership will grow. This is true to a point. Working the programs does grow membership but not enough to offset the veterans that pass away or just do not renew their memberships. Even with working the programs for the two Pillars of “Americanism” and “Children and Youth”, the Department of Texas will drop 3,000 members. I believe in all Four Pillars and we should focus our attention on the first Pillar – “Veterans and Veterans Rehabilitation”. Twenty-two veterans commit suicide each day. That is 8,030 veterans each year. We lose the Department of Texas’ membership every seven years with these suicides. The question is, “What do we do as an organization to fight Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?” First, we need to conduct training on what PTSD is. After we understand PTSD, then we need to take the battle to Congress and the Veterans Affairs. I will ask our service officers to provide us with information not only about PTSD, but also what the VA is doing to fight PTSD. I will be asking the Legislative Committee to provide information of what is Congress doing to direct the VA to provide better treatment for PTSD. We need more space at the VA for new service officers. I will ask the National Commander to work with the Secretary of the VA to obtain that space for our service officers. Everyone needs to contact their representative in Congress and the Senators and ask for assistance to obtain the space for more service officers. Our number one Pillar is Veterans and Veterans Rehabilitation. Our veterans need to know we are taking the battle to the VA. This is our greatest battle for today. This is a battle we cannot afford lose.

If anyone has an idea or suggestion on what we can do to fight this battle our greatest challenge of the time, please send your suggestions to: cdrtxlegion@gmail.com.

I pray that all our veterans, families and active duty personnel are safe around the world. This year will be based on FUN and Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness to support The Four Pillars and to support each other.

Thank you for your support and ideas,
Jeff Perkins
Department Commander
Department of Texas
God Bless the United States
God Bless The American Legion Family
February is the shortest month, yet it has many special days. A very special day for me is the Four Chaplains Sunday. I sincerely hope that our Posts honor this day in some way.

Four Chaplains Sunday is the first Sunday in February. The actual day in history was February 3, 1943. Unfortunately, this day gets overlooked by the Super Bowl. As members of The American Legion, we should never forget this day. I don’t have the space to give an in-depth account of this day in detail. I hope to provide enough information to arouse curiosity regarding the events that transpired on that day in history.

The story begins in New York on January 23, 1943, aboard the USAT Dorchester. The Dorchester was a civilian liner converted for military duty. The ship carried over 900 military personnel and the ship’s crew. Also aboard were the Four Chaplains; George Fox, a Methodist minister who had served in World War 1 as a medical Corp assistant, Alexander Goode, a Rabi, Clark Poling, an Evangelical minister, and John Washington, a Catholic priest. They were headed across the Atlantic to Greenland.

The captain of the Dorchester had put everyone on high alert because of warnings of German U-boats in the shipping lanes. All were told to sleep in their clothing including life jackets. Because of the heat below deck and the life jackets being uncomfortable, many chose to ignore the captain’s orders.

In the early morning hours, the Dorchester was torpedoed by the German submarine, U-223. Hitting the electrical system, the ship was turned into darkness. Panic ensued as all tried to find their way above deck and to the lifeboats. The Four Chaplains worked together directing the fleeing personnel, even offering their lifejackets to some without any. They paid no attention to the religious beliefs of the men they were helping.

As the ship was sinking below the water, those in lifeboats could see the Chaplains standing on deck praying for the survivors and singing hymns.

According to some reports, survivors could hear different languages mixed in the prayers of the chaplains, including Jewish prayers in Hebrew and Catholic prayers in Latin. Only 230 of the 904 men aboard the ship were rescued. The Chaplains as heroes who saved countless lives, they went down with the ship.

My email address is chtxlegion@gmail.com and my cell phone is 713-569-0959. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you or your post.
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.

- Name your article! 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.

- Please 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!
On January 4th in Royse City, Texas, the 4th District held its annual Oratorical Contest. 3 contestants participated in the contest, Ethan Hall sponsored by the Sherman American Legion Post, Katelynn Mitchell sponsored by the Wylie American Legion, and Erik Rorem sponsored by the Frisco American Legion Post. All three contestants performed exceptionally well, but Katelynn Mitchell came out on top. She will be representing the District at the Division contest. The District wants to thank the judges and volunteers that helped put this together.

**A Special Invitation**

The 2020 Department of Texas Oratorical Scholarship Contest will be held at 0900 hours on February 17, 2020 in the Conference Center at Collin College, Preston Ridge Campus, 9700 Wade Blvd., Frisco, TX

All four Divisions have contestants registered for the event.

Your attendance will make a great impression on the contestants and their families, and you will be impressed and motivated by the speeches.

**ATTENTION CHAPLAINS AND CHAPLAIN WANNA-BES!!!**

Your Texas Chaplains Association Workshop will take place at the mid-winter gathering on Friday, 7 February at 9:30 am.

All past and current Chaplains in the Legion family are invited to attend and those who are open to this blessed position are also invited to join us!

Please email any questions you have or suggested topics to be discussed.

Chaplain ED Kegley can be reached at mr.ed@consolidated.net

Chaplain Gerry Hince can be reached at hince57@msn.com

Remember it is a Legion wide group so it is open to all Legion family members.
American Legion membership is faltering. We have trouble getting the younger members involved, and we often fail to keep the older members we do have. There are many factors involved, but one that stands out is our membership dues structure. The American Legion has a Paid Up for Life (PUFL) option that is a very good long-term deal but is not financially feasible for many people in today’s depressed economy and is especially onerous for our seniors who may be on a limited income.

Our Greatest Generation veterans from the World War II era are literally a dying breed. It is estimated by the Department of Veterans Affairs that there are less than 400,000 WWII veterans still alive as of 2019. A large percentage of these are in civilian nursing facilities across the nation. Some of these were once members of the American Legion but have been forgotten by us.

Why? There can be many reasons.

• The veteran has moved many times since his membership, and our current system of tracking past members has made him invisible. If you let your membership lapse long enough, you won’t even show up in the system anymore.
• The family member that is responsible for the financial arrangements may not even know what American Legion membership means. It’s easy to misplace a renewal notice, and that is assuming that contact information has been kept up with notices actually making it to the family.
• Some older veterans may not have active family members to even take care of their financial arrangements. Their Social Security, Medicaid, or VA benefits take care of their basic needs, but do not provide for non-essential expenses such as Legion membership.

Other veteran service organizations have recognized the potential hardship that membership dues can create for aging veterans and have implemented significantly reduced dues. The Vietnam Veterans of America has gone to a straight $100 Life Membership. Life membership in AMVETS is currently $250. The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) waives membership dues for those veterans age 80 and older.

I believe it is time for the American Legion to recognize our remaining World War II veterans and offer free membership to those heroes for the remainder of their life. Our post has sponsored several older veterans and voted to recognize them with Honorary Life Membership, and we have seen them since pass on to the Post Everlasting. But that only scratches the surface. We knew these were previous members when we elected to do so. However, hardly a week goes by without reading an obituary of a WWII vet that we didn’t know about.

I would urge all posts to formally initiate resolutions to amend the National Constitution and By-Laws to waive membership fees and grant Life Membership to all remaining WWII veterans, and submit said resolutions through the formal process.

For those that would argue that this could be a financial burden the Legion, I would counter that we aren’t receiving dues from the majority of these aging veterans to begin with. The administrative costs would be minimal compared to some of the things we spend funds on, and the implementation of this change could be used to publicize the American Legion.

It’s time to recognize these heroes and get them on our rolls. All WWII veterans should be recognized for their sacrifices and be honored by the American Legion. Their family should have those certificates to pass down to remember their heritage. When the veteran passes on to the Post Everlasting, it should be recognized that they were a Life Member of the American Legion.

It can be done, but it will take work. The Department of Texas can lead the way.
Americanism: A Conversation with Grandpa
Submitted by Brad Henderson, Squadron 179, Chairman, Americanism Committee

Grandpa, what is Americanism?

“What Americanism is many things. It’s a word or expression that is characteristic of America. It can also be a custom or a quality of the United States. It may be an allegiance to the traditions or ideals of the United States.”

Like the Pledge of Allegiance?

“Yes. The Pledge is a promise of love, loyalty, and devotion to America.”

I get it. Americanism is like the Fourth of July!

“It’s important to show Americanism anytime; not just on special occasions like Independence Day, Veterans Day, or Memorial Day.”

Who does Americanism?

“Every native-born or naturalized citizen can show folks what Americanism is. We feel connected to our country because patriots from the Revolutionary War, up to modern times, let us know what they stood for.

“In early times, many countries were monarchies, ruled by kings and queens. What we call ‘America’ was a collection of colonies that belonged to England. The King of England made rules for just about everything. Some rules were unfair but when the colonists protested, the king wouldn’t even listen to them. Some colonists felt that we could have a better life if we made our own rules, became our own country. The idea that the colonies should break away from England and become the United States of America was considered treason; punishable by death.

“Our country was founded by farmers, doctors, lawyers, and businessmen. Some were born into wealthy families. Some came from humble beginnings. It takes courage to build a country. After a series of passionate discussions, the colonists signed a Declaration of Independence. The founders risked everything they had - their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Theirs was the spirit of America.”

Wow – the founders were brave!

“They weren’t the only ones. In those days, women were expected to stay at home, get married and raise children. A young lady named Deborah Sampson believed in our country so much, she dressed like a man and joined the Continental Army as “Private Robert Shurtleff”. She fought courageously alongside the men and never complained. They only learned Deborah was a woman after she contracted an illness. Impersonating a soldier was a crime. She was taken into custody and brought before her commander for punishment. He was so impressed with her bravery that he gave her an honorable discharge. Deborah Sampson had served her country for almost two years. Today, American women can be whatever they want to be.

“America has many heroes, but there are different kinds of bravery and courage. Thomas Edison failed a thousand times before he successfully invented the electric light bulb. Doctor Jonas Salk spent twenty years before successfully developing the first vaccine for a disease that crippled children, called polio. Today, polio is almost unheard of in America. Because of the legacy of these and many others, we know who we are as Americans.”

(continued next page)
Grandpa, what does Americanism look like?

“Well, Americanism isn’t something you can put into a box, but you can see it everywhere. We recognize Americanism in the way we run our country. The United States of America is a constitutional republic. Our representatives are elected by the people to govern them in accordance with the law of the land. Ours is government from the people to the leaders; not from the leaders to the people.

“You can see Americanism in the way we honor our heritage and our history. We honor our culture and traditions with national monuments and museums. We take great care to preserve and protect our most sacred historic documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

“We are a nation of strength, which comes from our faith in God and the application of the talents of our people. Working together, we have survived disasters, wars, and the Great Depression.

“You can see Americanism in our community service. I’m a member of two organizations: The American Legion, and the Sons of The American Legion. We sponsor youth cadet law enforcement programs, junior shooting sports, scout troops, high school oratorical scholarship and ‘Get Out the Vote’ programs. We sponsor Boys and Girls State programs, which give our young men and women hands on experience in how a democracy works. We sponsor flag education programs, teaching our young folks about the American flag; how to fold, display, honor, respect, and retire her.

“Americans can recognize and serve our veterans by volunteering at VA hospitals, by offering job training, donating to veterans’ organizations, and supporting programs such as Homes for Heroes, Soldiers’ Angels, and Wreaths Across America.

“We can perform random acts of kindness, like helping a veteran with medical appointments, running errands, or assisting with home repair. We can pay for a veteran’s meal at a local restaurant. We can nominate a veteran and serve as a guardian for an ‘Honor Flight’, so our heroes can see their national monuments.

“America is a giving nation. Americans volunteer to assist with natural disaster relief in our country, and around the world. We send teams for firefighting, search and rescue, and we use the Internet to share advanced medical technology with anyone who needs it. American doctors and surgeons volunteer their time and skills each year to improve the lives of thousands of people around the world. We provide food and clothing, build shelter, dig wells for fresh water, and teach villagers how to raise crops for food.

“Those things and so much more, are what Americanism looks like.”

Grandpa, why do we do Americanism?

“We show Americanism to ourselves and to the world because we owe a debt to every patriot who helped build our country; to every young person and adult who supports this country; to every elected official who serves this country; to every first responder who helps serve and protect the people of this country; to every veteran including those who fought and died for this country; and to every man and woman who now defends our country and our rights and freedoms around the world, 24 hours a day. When we live our best, America is at its best.”
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Mail to: American Legion PO Box 140527 Austin, TX. 78714
100th Anniversary Order Form

The American Legion is celebrating our 100th Anniversary and the Department of Texas has several commemorative items available for purchase to mark this milestone!

Please see our order form on the previous page. Just fill out and mail to the Department Headquarters with your check or money order and we will send the items to you.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

Simply go to smile.amazon.com, sign into your normal Amazon account and then type in “American Legion Charities Inc” in the search box when the prompt comes up. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

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www.legion.org/renew

TEXAS LONE STAR RECRUITER PIN
Have you earn yours??

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.

CONTACT YOUR POST ADJUTANT TO GET YOURS!

Renew your membership online
Please continue to support your fellow veterans, troops, their families, youth and our nation.

Your annual dues help support programs in your community and across the nation. American Legion programs and services include: Troop Support, Child Welfare Foundation, Heroes to Hometowns, American Legion Baseball, Department Service Officers, Family Support Network, Flag Advocacy & Etiquette, Junior ROTC & ROTC, Operation Comfort Warriors, Scholarships, Veterans’ Job Fairs, and many others.

Thank you for ensuring that The American Legion remains the most powerful voice in America on behalf of veterans, servicemembers, their families, and communities across the nation.

Go to www.legion.org/renew
What if you were Bob?

George and Bob both go on a solo fishing trip to a beautiful, but remote, town in Alaska every summer. While enjoying the idyllic scenery, they both notice chest pains — they are having a heart attack!

What happens next?

They call 9-1-1 and are admitted to the hospital

Both require

Medical specialists to monitor their care

They pay:

George pays $0

Bob pays $400

Medical evacuation to a facility that is able to properly treat their condition

They pay:

George pays $0

Bob pays $1,100

Travel assistance to bring a loved one to their bedside

They pay:

George pays $0

Bob pays $1,800

A driver to drive their car/RV back home since they are unable to drive

They pay:

George pays $0

Bob pays $16,000

Bob's Total: $19,300!

George's Total: $0

Emergency Assistance Plus is an emergency medical transportation service that goes beyond health and travel insurance. It covers expenses for medical transportation, medical evacuation and travel and companion assistance — services that your insurance usually does NOT pay for. You must call EA+ during your emergency so EA+ can make the arrangements for you.

**This is only an outline of the plan's features. Please read your Member Benefit Guide carefully to understand all the services available to you, as well as any terms, conditions and limitations.**

Learn more about how you can be protected by EA+. Call today to speak with a customer service representative at 1-888-310-1547. Or to apply online, visit www.thellt.com/Emergency-Assistance-Plus

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