



# THE LEGION TIMES

Official Newspaper of The American Legion, Department of Texas

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

**If so, please send all submissions to [times@txlegion.org](mailto:times@txlegion.org) by the 20th of every month and it will appear in the following issue**

### Message from the Commander

Greetings,

*Spring is here and the districts have started their conventions. Therefore American Legion members are busy all across the state. It also means our department convention is only 3 months away. My year as Commander has gone by quickly. I suppose it is due to always being on the go.*



*April is Children and Youth Month. I hope all of the Posts are working on selecting their candidates for Boy's State. We have extra space available this year at UT. I certainly hope we are able to fill all of the openings. If your Post does not have the funds there are many companies and organizations that are willing to donate the money to insure that a student may attend. This is a well-respected program. If you are able to attend the "Legion Night" please do so. It is a unique experience.*

*Baseball season is here. This program has been around since 1925 and is well recognized throughout the United States.*

*Please show your support by attending American Legion Baseball games. We have some very talented young men playing this year.*

*Membership is not doing as well as I had hoped for this year. Please do not stop now. There is still time to meet your goals. There are many Posts that are at 90% or higher. I know those Post have time to make 100% before the deadline if they just keep working. If everyone will sign up 1 new member this month we can make goal.*

*I hope you can take some time to enjoy the spring weather because summer will be here soon.*

*For God and Country,  
Lynn*

**THE LEGION TIMES**  
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**Editorial deadline is the 20th of every**  
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## **HINTS FROM HINCE**

OK...so it is that time of year again and it is time to get going on those awards nominations, awards programs and recognitions for all who have been part of our great programs.

I have been honored to be at some oratorical contests and we have some great contestants.

**HINT:** Write a note to each student (and maybe their parents) thanking them for being part of our program and encouraging them for next year..if not a senior!

The small town of Franklin hosts an annual award dinner for their law enforcement force...and some are even veterans!! It is a special night for all involved and Commander Bruce Boller always makes everyone feel special.

**HINT:** If you hold these events, take the paperwork and put them in for State and National Awards. Would love to see Texas back on the National Stage like last year in Charlotte!

We are just now back from DC where we met with our legislators about veteran's programs and all were so proud of the work that our Legion families are doing. The more they hear from each of us, the more they can help.

**HINT:** Put your folks in both Austin and Washington on a mailing list and just email them when you have something great going on!

As someone who is not eligible for the VFW , I still read their magazine. This last month Texas A&M was recognized as being #1 in taking care of veterans!

**HINT:** Make a call to your local colleges and you will be surprised how many programs are available to vets.

God bless  
Gerry Hince

# 2014-2015 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Lynn Sparks, Department Commander  
Fred Rogers, Department Vice Commander  
Jim Prendergast, National Executive Committeeman  
C. W. Sparks, Alternate National Executive Committeeman  
William West, Department Adjutant  
Cheryl Williams, Department Chaplain  
Walter Ivie, Department Treasurer  
Steve Watkins, Department Judge Advocate  
Cyndi Miller, Department Historian  
Terry Bigley, Department Sergeant-at-Arms  
Glen Scott, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms  
James Fleming, Immediate Past Department Commander  
Michael Simon, Director of Internal Affairs  
Edward Reyes, Department Service Officer  
Michael Lacy, Department Service Officer  
Renee Monczynski, Department Service Officer  
Donald Brideschge, Department Service Officer

## DIVISION COMMANDERS

Tom Kelly, 1st Division Commander  
John Hince, 2nd Division Commander  
Lloyd Buckmaster, 3rd Division Commander  
Roger Folmar, 4th Division Commander

## DISTRICT COMMANDERS

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Glenda Simon, 2nd District Commander  
John Brewer, 3rd District Commander  
Terry Cloninger, 4th District Commander  
Gary Smith, 5th District Commander  
Billy Winter, 6th District Commander  
Ed Jarvis, 7th District Commander  
Joey Garamillo, 8th District Commander  
Jerry Kubala, 9th District Commander  
Steve Miller, 10th District Commander  
Sandy Kousman, 11th District Commander  
Joe Page, 12th District Commander  
Ken Horn, 13th District Commander  
Ricardo Hankerson, 14th District Commander  
Harlan Lucas, 15th District Commander  
Phillip Westerman, 16th District Commander  
Bret Watson, 17th District Commander  
John Overton, 18th District Commander  
Ralph Langley, 19th District Commander  
Robert Masten, 20th District Commander  
Charlie Baker, 21st District Commander  
Juan Torres, Jr., 22nd District Commander  
Jerome Iltis, 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 simple guidelines for submissions.

- Submit your text in Microsoft Word format (.doc) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf). **Save your file as the name of the article, so we can 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.
- Please include any photos and/or artwork for articles *separately* (NOT embedded in your text file) 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, 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 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 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!

## **Fred's Focus**

### **Message from the Vice Commander**

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word tool as - "something (as an instrument of apparatus) used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession. Example; a scholars books are his tools." Wikipedia defines tool as "any physical item that can be used to achieve a goal".

The American Legion has many tools available to help us grow in knowledge. One such tool is the American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) course, which can be taken online or in a seminar setting.

We also have tools available to help us grow our membership such as the Department Membership Report which is updated daily. To view this tool - go to [txlegion.org](http://txlegion.org), select the Membership tab, then Current Reports, then at the top of the page select your District number and then look for your Post name. As you read the report pay special attention to the following:

- Observe your All-Time High and compare it to your current goal. How are these two numbers different and why? Is your membership growing or declining?
- Reflect on the number of New members for this year. Does it equal 15% of your goal? To account for attrition each Post must have 15% new members each year.
- Look at the On-Line Renewals column. If this number is less than the combined State average of 12% (National is 15%+) you may be missing an opportunity.
- Study the 345 T'fers number. Is it at least 5% of your goal? If not you are missing out on the greatest opportunity to grow membership that we have.
- Review the 2015 Total number. Is your Post leading or trailing in your District? Has your Post attained at least 98% of your assigned goal? Will your Post have 100% by May 6, 2015? How are you helping to ensure your Post attains goal this year?
- What is the date in the Last Trans column? If it is more than 30 days old you could be in violation of the Department Constitution & By-Laws.

Tools are designed to help us be successful, but only if they are used effectively.

**"Let's Lead The Way"**

**Fred**

## **Veterans Visit Castroville to Hear Speaker**

**CASTROVILLE.** “A Special Event ... Just for Veterans” was hosted by The American Legion’s Weiss-Wurzbach Post 460 on Saturday March 21 in Castroville. The free event, which included a job fair and a veterans benefits seminar, was held in conjunction with the Spring Convention of The American Legion’s 23rd District.

Highlighting the event was a very informative talk by renowned speaker Thomas J. Lynch of the Thomas More Law Center. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Lieutenant Colonel Lynch assumed the newly created position of Director of Mission Advancement at the Law Center after retiring from the U.S. Army. He reports directly to the Center’s President and Chief Counsel.

During his talk, Lynch discussed the involvement of the Law Center in many court cases, especially those cases in which religious freedom must be defended, and cases that defend students against unwanted indoctrination of the Muslim so called “religion” in our public schools.

“The Christian values upon which this Nation was founded are under attack,” Lynch said. “The ACLU and like-minded organizations are using sympathetic courts to destroy the religious and moral foundations of our great nation. Using the metaphor, ‘a wall of separation between church and state,’ which is found nowhere in our Constitution, they attack crosses, Ten Commandment monuments, Nativity displays, Christmas celebrations in public schools, the Pledge of Allegiance, our national motto, ‘In God We Trust’ and prayers at public meetings. The main battleground in this culture war is the courtroom and that is where the Thomas More Law Center is defending the religious freedom of Christians.”

23rd District Commander Jerome Iltis said, “We had the privilege to hear Mr. Lynch courageously speak about the serious attacks to our Constitution that could adversely affect the freedom of our children and grandchildren.” Lamenting the absence of reports about these issues in the mainstream media, Iltis continued, “Every citizen, especially Legionnaires, should know about the domestic threats to our national security and about the blatant infringements to our constitutional rights that are occurring more frequently without our knowledge.”

The Thomas More Law Center is a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Its mission is to preserve and promote America’s Judeo-Christian heritage and moral values, a strong national defense, and an independent and sovereign United States of America.



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## TEXAS LONE STAR RECRUITER PIN

**Have you earned 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](http://www.legion.org/renew)

## ***Response to Legislative Commission***

Legionnaires of the State of Texas, on March 9, 2015, the Legislative Commission and Committee met in Austin. We received briefings from members of the Texas Coalition of Veteran Organizations about Bills that the Legion felt were beneficial to all Texas Veterans.

On, Tuesday Morning, March 10, 2015, we converged on the State Capitol to visit the Senators and Legislators representing our Districts, for the next two days. I want to thank each member of the Committee that attended and walked the halls of the Capitol.

I and the whole Legislative Committee want to thank Commander Lynn Sparks for this opportunity to serve and represent our great Organization before our elected Officials. I know from responses from Committee members; first of all it was great time, and second a very productive time.

On Tuesday afternoon, Commander Lynn Sparks, ANEC Butch Sparks, Department Adjutant Bill West, and I were provided with the opportunity to have a meeting with LT. Governor Dan Patrick in his Capitol Office. Each of us walked away knowing we had a great meeting and a deep respect for Mr. Patrick.

Now, I must say one of the better highlights of our Capitol visit was being able to take time to go out and see the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which was dedicated just a year ago. If you come to Austin, you must go see it. It is amazing!!

Again, thanks to this great opportunity to serve you.

Bobby Baker  
Chairman  
Department Legislative Commission

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- ★ **Medicare Supplement** — Pays Legionnaires age 65 and over benefits to supplement what Medicare doesn't cover, such as deductibles and co-payments.
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