Delegate from the Department of Texas observed as one of our own was elected to the high office of National Vice Commander, Dellano “Shorty” Simmons of Vidor.

Dellano “Shorty” Simmons was born in Mittie, Louisiana and graduated from Fairview High School in Grant, LA. After graduating he entered the U.S. Army and served from March 1963 to January 1965.

He retired in 1995 from Texaco Inc. Refineries in Post Neches & Port Arthur, after 38 years of service.

He has been a member of The American Legion for over 37 years and has severed in all leadership positions from the Post level to the Department level, including Post Commander, District Commander, Division Commander, Department Vice Commander and Department Commander.

He has served on numerous National and Department Committees over the years to include National Security Council, Children and Youth Commission, National Americanism Commission and has served as the Chairman of the Department’s Board of Trustees.

Shorty has been married to his lovely wife Donita for over 10 years, she is a long time member of the American Legion Auxiliary, he has three children, Troy, Todd and Tiffini and 2 Granddaughters.

Shorty and Donita reside in Vidor and are members of Butler – Redd Post 493 in Nederland. He is also a member of the Sons of The American Legion, AMVETS, Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite & El Mina Shrine and the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

As National Vice Commander, Shorty will be assigned to the southern states and we can all count on him to show off Texas and make us proud as he visits the Department he is assigned to.

Congratulations Shorty and Good Luck for the coming year!
To Quote National Commander Dave Rehbein, when he describe the feelings of being elected as National Commander of The American Legion - “WOW”

“WOW”, what a convention, so many historical events took place during the 90th National Convention from the opening ceremonies to the closing of convention. If you were not there this year, you really missed a great convention.

The Delegates from the Department of Texas converged on the City of Phoenix for the 90th Annual National Convention of The American Legion to conduct Legion business and to have some fun. While the weather was an average of 100+ degrees each day the Delegates enjoyed the great hospitality of the Department of Arizona.

Over the week the delegates attended various Commission and Committee meetings to review resolutions, hear reports and conduct other Legion business.

Due to the heat, the American Legion Family Tribute to Service replaced the traditional American Legion National Convention Parade. Representatives from all American Legion departments marched before the crowd at the arena. The event also included performances by the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon, along with music from The Four Tops and Michael Peterson. The highlight of the entire program was the massive enlistment/reenlistment of over 600 current or soon to be soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. American Legion National Commander Marty Conatser asked the crowd, “You want to know what’s good about America? It’s standing right there.”

To the young troops, he offered words of understanding. “We, like generations before us, know the commitment you are making. All of us in The American Legion family have either taken that same oath or represent the families of those who have served before you. You all know the challenges facing our world today, and the role you will play in the defense of freedom everywhere in the free world. And yet you willingly make this commitment to us and to your nation. For that, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. From this day forward, you will hold a special place in our hearts and minds. From this day forward you will become our brothers and sisters in arms, our comrades.”

(continued p. 3)
While there were many highlights to this year’s convention the most historical had to be when Past National Commander John Geiger of Illinois read Resolution 1 – bestowing upon National Adjutant Robert Spanogle the title and privileges of Past National Commander. On Thursday at the Post National Executive Committee Meeting; National Commander Rehbein announced the retirement of National Adjutant Robert Spanogle on October 16, 2008.

We had several key note speakers address the 90th Annual National Convention to include Vice President Hon. Richard B. Cheney, Arizona Senator Hon. John McCain, Illinois Senator Hon. Barack Odama, Hon Bob Filner, Chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and the Hon Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

This year there was 6 award recipients from Texas – Xentri Garza of Fort Worth, the 2008 Junior Shooting Sports Precision Champion; HM2 Kedrick D. Thorn from Houston, the 2008 US Navy Spirit of Service Award Recipient; Don Collins of Lubbock, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program of the Year Award Recipient; Reach of Denton, the Employer of the Disabled Award Recipient; Work Source Career Center of Lubbock, the Employment Service Office of the Year Award Recipient and KRIV-TV of Houston the 2008 Recipient of The American Legion Fourth Estate Award.

One of the highlights of the Convention was the presentation of checks to National Commander Conatser for the American Legion Riders and the Members of The American Legion Family for the Legacy Memorial Scholarship, this year we raised $515,346.23, Converse Post 593 presented a check for $30,000.00.

Thursday’s final order of business; Delegates from every Department at The American Legion’s 90th National Convention chose David K. Rehbein of Ames, IA., to lead the 2.7 million-member organization of wartime veterans for a one-year term.

Rehbein served as an infantryman with the 4th and 1st Armored Divisions in Germany from 1970 to 1971. After leaving the Army, he attended Wayne State College and Iowa State University, graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in physics and a Master’s degree in metallurgy. Following graduation, he accepted a position as research metallurgist at the Ames Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, a position he held until his retirement in July 2008.

A member of Ames Post #37, he served as its commander and adjutant as well as 12 years as finance officer. He has been district commander and state vice-commander and represented Iowa on The American Legion’s National Executive Committee. He served on many department committees, including Membership, Oratorical, Strategic Planning and Junior Shooting Sports. During his term as department membership chairman, Iowa achieved target membership three times in 1991, 1992, and 1993. He was appointed by Iowa Governor Vilsack to a position on the Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs.

Rehbein served on the National Americanism Commission 1989-99, with service as an instructor on the National Information Conference staff, conducting the judge’s briefing for the National Oratorical Contests and as Match Director of the Junior Shooting Sports national finals. He has served as chairman of the National Foreign Relations Commission, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and the Legislative commission.

Cmdr. Rehbein took the oath of office along with five other national officers. Serving as national vice commanders are Michael J. Landkamer of Columbus, Neb., Harley W. Ray of Albany, Ore., Dellano “Shorty” Simmons of Vidor, Texas, James W. Davis of McMechen, West Virginia, and James A. LaCoursiere of Old Lyme, Conn.

National Historian Charles J. Zelinsky of Champaign, Ill.; National Sergeant at Arms Randy L. Freal of Nevada, Iowa; and National Chaplain Lawrence L. Vollink of Ypsilanti, Mich., were appointed to their positions by Cmdr. Rehbein following the close of the national convention.

While Phoenix was fun, it sure is good to get back home to Texas where it’s cool; next year’s National Convention will be held in Louisville, KY.
Greetings to our American Family. We are approaching our Fall Department Executive Committee meeting September 18-20 in Austin Texas. We hope to get off to a real good start with our Programs Committee’s and Membership. We do have some Post through out the Department that have not Certified and some that have not transmitted any membership for 2009. I ask that Post, District and Division Commanders review your procedures and see what is not working, moving into our third month every Post should have transmitted some membership by now. Remember Communication is a great tool all we have to do is use it. We had a great National Convention in Phoenix AZ many of you were there but for those who did not go you missed a good time. We need to continue to recruit young members in the American Legion to strengthen our future and Renew the old ones to keep it going. Congratulation to the 18th District for their support of the American Legion Riders Legacy Run for scholarship funds to The National Convention. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our Fall DEC.

“RESULTS COUNT”

James McNair
Department of Texas Commander
2008-2009
Love Field Post 453 Commander Freddie Cotten was proud to honor Major General Charles Bond, 94, in a special ceremony in Dallas on July 26.

General Bond’s achievements during his military career are exceptional. He is one of the original Flying Tigers and developed the Flying Tigers paint scheme on the P40s. He retired in 1968 as Commander of the 12th Air Force in Vietnam. Gen. Bond currently lives in a retirement home in Dallas.

Post 453 Legionnaires, Auxiliary and S.A.L. members joined the General’s friends and family at the retirement center, where Commander Cotten presented Gen. Bond with an American flag that had flown in Iraq. The ceremony was covered by local news media.

Gen. Bond’s comment to Commander Cotten was, “If I were 26, I would do it all over again!”
MANKATO, MN - September 4, 2008 - According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 61 million people volunteered through an organization at least once in 2007. While this represents 26% of the U.S. population, it was the second straight year of decline in the country’s overall volunteer participation rate. One of the most revealing reasons for people who are not volunteering is that they are not being asked.

The Volunteer Challenge is a new web-based group volunteer competition designed to change this trend by challenging people, their friends, family, or coworkers to volunteer their time in a fun and spirited way.

On October 6, 2008, the first annual Volunteer Challenge begins the first of its 4-week or 28-day group volunteer competitions. Nationwide, participants are being sought to reach a goal of 1,000,000 volunteer minutes in 2008.

To take part the challenge, people can register at www.thevolunteerchallenge.org and challenge themselves and others to volunteer or perform acts of kindness. The site includes information on local volunteer opportunities and ways to get involved. During the challenge, participants can log their time spent volunteering, start or join a team, and track their progress against teammates and other teams.

One of the most revealing statistics in volunteer recruitment is the power that personal contact plays. According to the Independent Sector of Giving and Volunteering, personally asking people to volunteer is the number one way to recruit volunteers. Of people asked to volunteer, 70% will actually volunteer. The volunteer participation rate among those who are asked to volunteer is nearly 250% greater than those who are not asked.

Jerry Oman, spokesperson for The Volunteer Challenge says, “While some people may have thought about or have good intentions to volunteer, the purpose of the Volunteer Challenge is to get people to take action. Because it can take time to establish a new habit, getting involved through a competitive event is just the spark some people need to start and continue the practice of volunteering.”

Volunteers are one the nation’s most important resources. According to a Corporation of National and Community Service study, the number of hours that American’s volunteered in 2007 totaled over 8 billion while the value of that time was estimated to be over $153 billion dollars.

Oman adds, “Volunteers know there is tremendous power in volunteering and getting involved. Spending time helping others is one of the most selfless things people can do. Whether it’s a feeling of accomplishment or joy, there’s no doubt that volunteering affects people in a big way. Some of the biggest ways include making people feel needed, learning new skills, breaking down barriers of misunderstanding, mistrust and fear, creating new personal and professional contacts, and improving lives-those being helped and those of the volunteers.”

The Volunteer Challenge is free of charge and open to anyone who wants to participate. Group categories include friends, family, companies, schools, churches, fraternities/sororities, and organizations/clubs.

About TheVolunteerChallenge.org
TheVolunteerChallenge.org is a first-of-its kind web based group volunteer competition. The challenge is seeking volunteers to help reach its goal of 1,000,000 volunteer minutes in 2008. The purpose of the challenge is to encourage those who otherwise wouldn’t volunteer to take action and volunteer. Through volunteering, people not only do good, but feel good and realize benefits only volunteering can provide.

For additional information, contact:
Jerry Oman
TheVolunteerChallenge.org
440-306-0525
jerryo@thevolunteerchallenge.org
http://www.thevolunteerchallenge.org
USA SHOOTING RANGE, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – Xentri Garza, a seventeen year-old female shooter from Ft. Worth, Texas, capped off a championship year to capture the sporter crown at the 18th annual American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship, August 7-9.

Garza who earlier this year won the National JROTC Championship, added The American Legion sporter championship to her long list of victories by firing a 2286.8/2509. She shoots for the R. L. Paschal H.S. JROTC marksmanship unit, which is sponsored by Post 569.

Eighteen year-old Ethan Settlemires of Walnut, Miss., won the Precision championship with a score of 2462.2/2509. Settleimires, who was a 2006 precision national finalist, is a member of the Cross Roads Shooting Sports Association sponsored by Perry A. Johns Post 6.

Also observing the competition again this year was 1992 rifle Olympic Gold medalist Launi Meili. Meili, got her start as a youth through a shooting program sponsored by the Cheney, Wash., American Legion Post. Meili is the rifle coach for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Rounding out the top five in the two categories were:

Precision competition – Aaron Holsopple shot a 2457.2 to take second place honors. Holsopple is from Wilcox, Pa., and shoots for the Ridgway Rifle Club Jr. Team, sponsored by Edward Lehman Post 467.

Gina Cheliras of Hubbard, Ohio, fired a 2448.0 to capture third place. She is a member of the Ashland Eagles, sponsored by Frank Bender Post 473.

Michael Kulbacki finished in fourth place with a 2445.5. He is from DuBois, Pa., and shoots for DuBois Rifle and Pistol Club, sponsored by DuBois Post 17. Kulbacki also was a 2006 precision national finalist.

Rounding out the top five was Courtney Duncan of Newman, Ga., who shot a 2437.5.

Duncan shoots for the East Coweta H.S. MCJROTC marksmanship team, sponsored by Post 57.

Sporter competition - Second place went to Kim Goldberg of Germantown, Md., with a score of 2270.5. She is a member of the Damascus Air Rifle Club, sponsored by Post 171.

Steven Arrington of Los Lunas, N.M., fired a 2266.2 for third place. He shoots for the Valencia County 4-H Shooting Sports team sponsored by Post 85.

Taking fourth was Mathew Brewer shooting a 2261.9. Brewer, of Hampton, Va., is a member of the Lafayette Gun Club of Virginia, sponsored by Post 273.

Taking fifth place honors was James Keith of Albuquerque, N.M., with a 2253.1. Keith is a member of LaCueva H.S. Marine Corps JROTC marksmanship team, sponsored by Post 49.

The tournament staff selected James Keith as the recipient of the annual Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship award. The Francis M. Redington Sportsmanship award was established in May 2005 in the memory of Redington, a long time tournament staff member, who passed away in 2003. Keith was selected as the athlete competing in the national championship who best exemplified good sportsmanship and fair play.

The American Legion’s Junior Shooting Sports program offers junior shooters the opportunity to participate in Olympic-style competition while also providing instruction on the safe handling of firearms.
The Chili Appreciation Society International, Inc (a 501 c (3) organization) hosts its 42nd International Chili Championship on November 1, 2008 in Terlingua, Texas. Over 325 qualified chili cooks will be competing for the title “Terlingua International Chili Champion”. In appreciation of the men and women serving in the military, CASI will discount the regular admission fee of $30.00 per person to $15.00 for active duty, reserves & retired military. You must present your valid military ID at the admission gate.

The admission fee is for the entire week, which includes dry camping and entertainment with bands on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening. Wade Hatton and the Texas Hat Band is the featured band this year. Admission fee for Saturday only is $10.00. Food and craft vendors will be displaying their products.

On Friday, October 31st, there is a competition in beans, wings and salsa with prizes awarded to the top ten places in each category and anyone can enter these events. All proceeds from the Friday events go to the CASI National Scholarship Fund.

For more information, look at the CASI Web site – www.chili.org and www.krazyflats.com or call 210 887 8827.

TYLER VA OPC VETERANS FORUM
Sept. 25, 2008
5:30p.m. - 6:30p.m.

The Tyler VA OPC will be holding a Veterans Forum on Thursday, September 25, 2008, 5:30pm at the clinic. All Veterans are welcome to come for a general question and answer session concerning the VA processes and procedures.

There will be a VA representative from the Dallas Veterans Administration present at this meeting as well as a local Veteran Service Officer.

We look forward to having you at this question and answer session.

Thank you,

Laura Reeves
Operations Manager
Your ad or announcement could go HERE!

Please contact us to find out more!

times@txlegion.org