



# THE LEGION TIMES

Official Newspaper of The American Legion, Department of Texas

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### Message from the Commander

Well, we have completed the District and Division Commander's school and now is the time to act on the knowledge our talented instructors, Department Adjutant West, Mr. Rogers, Vice Commander Hince, Department Treasurer Ivie, and Alternate NEC Butch Sparks, have shared with us. It is imperative that we share the information with our fellow Legionnaires. I asked each of the District Commanders to call or contact the each of the posts in their districts to share the information garnered at the school.



We are already two months into the year and some of the posts are already at or above the first target of 50% membership. Well done legionnaires. It is vitally important that we continue to grow so that we can represent those who have no voice. If you asked our heroes before they died, how they would like to be honored, most would probably say, "take care of my family". We can only do that if we remain strong in membership and active in our programs.

**Serving Those Who Served  
For God and Country**  
John McKinny  
Department Commander



**THE LEGION TIMES**  
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**Executive Director**  
**William West**

**Editor**  
**F.G. Adams**

**Send all correspondence**  
**and submissions to:**  
**The Legion Times**  
**PO Box 140527**  
**Austin, TX 78714**  
**T: 512.472.4138 / F: 512.472.0603**

**E-mail: [times@txlegion.org](mailto:times@txlegion.org)**

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## **HINTS FROM HINCE**

By the time you read this, the 2015 National Convention will be a mere memory and Dale Barnett of North Carolina will be our new Commander. You had a healthy contingent of delegates headed by Past Commander Lynn Sparks. The yearly gathering included numerous workshops and speakers and marked the start of the Legion year under the theme "Duty, Honor and Country."

**HINT:** You only start the year once so make it a strong one. Be positive, communicate and remember that we are strong because we have a history of taking care of each other. Our veterans need us now more than ever .

Contrary to what Vice Commander John Hince says, the Black and Gold shirts of our new Command team are not in honor of the Pittsburgh Steelers but let's hope that the Legion and the Steelers are on the winning side in 2016!

Our national membership goal for Texas this year is 67,500. Take a look at our past records and you will see we have been there before. Less than 10 years ago, we were at 90,000. A little known fact is that Texas has the highest saturation of military of all the states... we have active duty, Reserve and Guard and lots of veterans. We (the State) have super programs for veterans but we need to share this great news.

**HINT:** Every Post must have a membership committee Many are now combined Family teams with the Auxiliary and the Sons also involved. We can and must appeal to the young and the old.

This Hince has made the commitment to get one new member each month ...that is not one ask a month but asking until I get one to join! I challenge you to do the same... and let me know about it!

This Yankee grew up less than 20 miles from Yankee Stadium so I got to see Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris (Bill West... not Babe Ruth!)

Our boys from League City took to the mound in the American Legion World Series and did us proud. Thanks to all the young men and their coaches for their commitment ...and to the Posts who supported all our Legion teams. Our Baseball program is nationally recognized as the best and it continues to be a source of great pride.

**HINT:** Now is the time to plan for baseball 2016. Write thank you notes to all those who helped in 2015 and then start writing letters asking for support for 2016!

The September Labor Day holiday meant school was starting up. To the Legion family, we have 2 holidays that provide an educational and patriotic opportunity,

Constitution Day is September 17th and some Posts use it as part of its education process. In some parts of the nation, new citizens are welcomed on the 17th and the Constitution is read in a public gathering. Keep an eye out for special events in your area and ensure that Caps are present!

POW-MIA Day is officially a Friday of the month. Again, most Posts will use the time to make a big deal of these special veterans and the extended POW-MIA ceremony is a key element in an honor.

**HINT:** Use stated holidays as focal points for Post activities. Consider partnering with other service clubs to make it a community wide celebration!

God bless

Gerry Hince

# 2015-2016 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

John McKinny, Department Commander  
John Hince, Department Vice Commander  
Jim Prendergast, National Executive Committeeman  
C. W. Sparks, Alternate National Executive Committeeman  
William West, Department Adjutant  
Harvey Klee, Department Chaplain  
Walter Ivie, Department Treasurer  
Steve Watkins, Department Judge Advocate  
Susan Marty, Department Historian  
Ed Kegley, Department Sergeant-at-Arms  
Jim Forbus, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms  
Lynn Sparks, 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 Bridschge, Department Service Officer

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Dan King, 2nd Division Commander  
Reno Reiley, 3rd Division Commander  
Dan Dutton, 4th Division Commander

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Glenda Simon, 2nd District Commander  
Gerald Holsworth, 3rd District Commander  
Terry Cloninger, 4th District Commander  
Charlie Peoples, 5th District Commander  
Billy Winter, 6th District Commander  
Kimberly Biggerstaff, 7th District Commander  
Joey Garamillo, 8th District Commander  
Bea Trevino, 9th District Commander  
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Steve Cook, 11th District Commander  
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Johnny Franklin, 19th District Commander  
Robert Masten, 20th District Commander  
BJ Seider, 21st District Commander  
Juan Torres, Jr., 22nd District Commander  
Hector Alva, 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 attach 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!

## **Message from the Auxiliary**

What is that sound I hear? Why I do believe its rain! And cooler temperatures.

Elvis' song "Kentucky Rain" comes to mind for two reasons. One, of course because it's RAINING!, and two, because the song talks about searching through the rain for someone who has left. And isn't that what we are doing in membership? Looking for someone (non-renewals) who have left us?

So, this year, our goal is to make a concerted effort to search out and find those members; Legionnaires, Sons and Auxiliary members, who have left us and do everything we can to welcome them back to The Legion Family. Won't you help on this search?

Now as for what I have been up to...

It was a hectic time the weekend of the 1st half of the 9th District Coffee Tour. Lots of stops, lots of good food and lots of Legion Family members in attendance at each stop. I'm looking forward to the 2nd half of the tour in September.

It was a good time in Brenham at the Legion Baseball finals. Meeting the fine young men who played was a wonderful experience for me and I know for Cmrdrs. John and Connie. Throwing out the ceremonial first pitch was fun. I told the banquet attendees that I had been practicing, but I just couldn't throw the ball the required distance from the mound to the plate. But, all was well; the three of us threw from about midway between home plate and the pitcher's mound. I think we all did a good job. The balls were over the plate and the catcher caught them.

The busy season will soon be upon us as we travel to San Antonio for our Department Executive Committee meetings. Please know that the ALA is inviting each of you to join us in Texas' first FLASH MOB! We will gather (wearing Red, White, & Blue or our Parade shirts) and sing patriotic songs at a public venue - location still being determined. Together we can show San Antonio Who we Are...What we do...and Why we matter!

As we all travel to district conventions, I know that I will cross paths with Commander John and Commander Connie this fall and I look forward to seeing many of you at your conventions.

Again, please let us know how we can help advance the causes of The American Legion. The Auxiliary is here to aid, support and follow our veterans and our members in service to our communities, state and nation.

Paula Raney  
Department President 2015-2016



## Chaplain's Corner

A day to remember: September 11, 2001.

Embedded in the memories of everyone who lived through it, this was the day four jet planes were hijacked and crashed into the New York World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, causing the deaths of 2,977 people. The fourth plane (United Airlines Flight 93) was directed at Washington DC, but its passengers bravely attempted to take back control and it crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

In the wake of the World Trade Center collisions, many brave men and women from the emergency services risked their lives to try to help rescue victims of the attacks, and of them 411 lost their own lives attempting to fight fires and rescue people. And so began the war on terrorism.



*Harvey H. Klee, Department Chaplain 2015-2016*

But as so often is the case, out of tragedy comes triumph. It was John Connolly in “The Inferno” that said: “No matter how hard Evil tries, it can never quite match up to the power of Good, because Evil is ultimately self-destructive. Evil may set out to corrupt others, but in the process corrupts itself.”

There is no word which echoes more passionately within the heart than the word freedom. No word that evokes a deeper response. This Nation was founded by men and women who experienced threats to freedom's promise and responded to them with heroism. It has beckoned from its birth to all who hear freedom's invitation, to come and see it lived. Freedom, however, is not about the fact that we can choose. It is about what we choose and what we are willing to defend..

So, just as we “Remember the Alamo” and “Remember Pearl Harbor,” let us this month as we lower our National flag to half mast “Remember Nine-Eleven,” Patriot Day at all Posts throughout Texas with deep reflection and prayer..

Dear Lord, as we remember the evils of September 11th, let us turn our hearts and minds towards the good found only in You; Be close to those who mourn: the parents who lost children, the children who never knew a parent, and all who lost a loved one;

Embrace this grieving nation, and let time never lessen the impact of this day; may we never forget; Protect those who go in harm's way to save others, and those who suffer and die to safeguard our nation;

Give wisdom to our leaders, that they may make choices that prevent another day such as this; Convert the hearts of those who seek our destruction, and banish from the world the darkness that allows such hate to fester and grow;

Let Your love rain down upon us, and let Your peace flourish on the Earth; All these things we ask in Your most sacred name. Amen

Harvey H. Klee, Department Chaplain 2015-2016  
[www.texaschaplains.org](http://www.texaschaplains.org)



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DE-0015-11-01-0011

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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.

**CONTACT YOUR POST ADJUTANT TO GET YOURS!**

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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)

**Echelon #31  
Twenty and Four  
Honor Society of Women Legionnaires**



**Calling Texas Lady Legionnaires!**

Find out about Twenty and Four Honor Society of Women Legionnaires. To be a member in the Honor Society of Women Legionnaires you must be an American Legion member in good standing for two years. And your membership must be current.

2015 is the 60th Anniversary of the founding of Twenty and Four Honor Society of Women Legionnaires.

What is our mission?

Echelon TX-31's mission is to support the Women's Trauma Recovery Center located at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care Center in Temple, Texas.

The WTRC provides treatment for the after effects of military sexual trauma and provides education and consultative services to practitioners and patients.

Come join us.

For information contact:  
Gerry Hince Director VIP  
hince57@msn.com



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The Legion Times  
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Austin, TX 78714

T: 512.472.4138  
F: 512.472.0603  
times@txlegion.org



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Department of Texas

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