Message from the Commander

In my first article, I stated that this would be a FUN year. I believe in order to have FUN, The Department of Texas will have to Respect and Honor what the Founding Fathers left us. They left us Our Four Pillars to guide us. Many times, we have been told, “By working the programs, our membership will grow.” I say, “By having FUN, we will support the Four Pillars.” When we support our veterans, we have FUN and feel great about what we have accomplished. When we support National Security, we are protecting all U.S. citizens and the Founding Fathers are smiling while they look down on us. While supporting Americanism, we prove to the world just how much pride we have as veterans in this Great Nation. When supporting the Children and Youth programs, we feel younger than what we are because we thrive off the kids’ energy. I personally witnessed a Korean veteran feel like a kid because he threw out the first pitch at an American Legion baseball game. The real question this month is: Which of the Four Pillars provide you with the greatest satisfaction and how do you plan on supporting it? How young do you want to feel or how much pride do you have in being a member of The American Legion?

Each year the Department of Texas sets membership goals for each post. Setting goals only tell us how successful we are at fulfilling the Founding Fathers Dreams. Why are we failing The Founding Fathers? We are allowing their dreams and ideas to die. The Department of Texas has gone from a membership of over 94,000 in 2002 to our goal this year of just over 55,000 members. Yes, it has already been predicted that we will lose another 3,000 members this year. Setting goals only indicates how much we have failed The Founding Fathers. If a post total membership is less than what they had last year – they have failed the Four Pillars. If a post simply retains the total members from last year – they have failed the Four Pillars. We have 1.7 million veterans in the State of Texas. The only goal we should have is to be able to brag that we grew in membership and became stronger to support the Four Pillars. Growing in membership states to the U.S. Congress and the public we will be here for another 100 years. It indicates all the FUN we have been here. Why are you a member of The American Legion? As your elected State Commander, I have 58,000 bosses. They are called “Blue Caps”. As my bosses, do you want me to constantly remind you of how important membership is or do you want me to brag to the public of what we accomplish as an organization and how much FUN we have had.

Each one of us need to think about why we are here and how much FUN we want to have. Not everything costs money. Sometimes it just amounts to spending time with another veteran or someone in need. It is called Comradeship and Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness. The public believes The American Legion is a group of veterans that sit on bar stools. We are the only ones that can prove them wrong. I know we are a great organization. Our success stories need to be told. The Department of Texas has a Public Relations Committee to assist the posts in making the public aware of their success. Please contact them if you require assistance in making your success stories public.

This year will be based on FUN and Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness to support The Four Pillars and to support each other. Send your ideas to: cdrtxlegion@gmail.com and I will share them with the rest of the Department of Texas.

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
September is a month that contains several special days. On the patriotic side we have; Labor Day, Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, Citizenship Day, U.S. Air Force Birthday and POW-MIA Recognition Day. Religious days are Yom Kippur begins (Sundown) and Rosh Hashanah begins (Sundown). Finally, we have the First Day of Autumn, which everywhere else but Texas we see a change in the weather. This would be a good time to start thinking about activities for our Posts and communities.

However, September 11, 2001, Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, is the day I want to concentrate on. It was another day that will live in infamy. This is only the second time in recent history there has been a successful attack on America. Unfortunately, in today’s era of instant news the world keeps spinning and what was and should still be important gets lost in our fast-paced world. Some events should never be pushed out of the minds of patriotic Americans. September 11, 2001, is one of these times. Let us never forget the unprovoked attack on innocent Americans. In New York City 2,750 Americans were killed. At the Pentagon 140 Americans lost their lives. Forty Americans were killed on United Airlines Flight 93, saving countless other lives. I couldn’t find an estimate on first Responders that perished trying to save fellow Americans, but the number in NYC is estimated at 400. I don’t know how many deaths resulted because of aftereffects; one can only guess. If you have been fortunate to visit any of the survivors, the stories are amazing. The point is these were innocent Americans, and as American Legion members we should not allow their deaths to be forgotten.

Let us use this day to honor these fallen Americans and those that were inspired to enlist in the armed forces, because of this catastrophe. These service personnel deserve a special thanks for hearing the call and wanting to protect America. They didn’t have a mandatory draft to worry about as those of my era.

Let’s do something throughout our state to honor all those that perished and those that picked up the flag to keep it flying high. If I can do anything to assist a Post, let me know.

On this Patriot’s Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, let us unite in prayer against a common enemy who seeks to destroy us all.

Almighty and merciful God:

Our thoughts and prayers turn to You in these troubling times. We pray for those that suffered and are still suffering the effects of September 11. Comfort them and protect those that have taken up arms to protect our great country. Give our President wisdom and guidance in these trying times.

Amen.

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.

Robert L. Harvey
Department Chaplain 2019-2020
www.texaschaplains.org
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!
**Turnbow-Higgs American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 240 Honors Joanna Lay**

During its August 20, 2019 meeting, Turnbow-Higgs American Legion Post & Auxiliary Unit 240, honored Unit 240 member, Joanna Lay, for her extraordinary and dedicated service beyond the call of duty.

Earning her American Legion Auxiliary membership through the military service of her brother, Joanna was inducted as a member of unit 240 in 1994. She has served several terms as President, Secretary and Treasurer and was at the helm during a critical Unit re-vitalization period when she, along with Post 240 Honorary Life Members Brad Thompson and John Rogers led a campaign resulting in the $95,000 renovation of the 52-year old building. Joanna holds the distinction of being Unit 240’s longest continuous service member since its reconstitution and continues her service in 2019 as Unit 240 Treasurer.

For her remarkable and momentous service, and unsurpassed dedication to both Unit 240 and Post 240 membership in regular session on August 20th, 2019 unanimously voted to name the Unit 240 meeting room, The Joanna Lay Meeting Room.

The Joanna Lay Meeting Room, Brad Thompson Meeting Room and John Rogers Meeting Room marquee signs will forevermore acknowledge the three persons most responsible for saving the historical 78 year old building constructed under the umbrella of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s WPA/ NYA great depression works programs and a dying American Legion Post 240.

**President Trump Signs Legion Act Into Law**

In a significant legislative victory for The American Legion, President Trump signed a bill July 30 that declares the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941.

The American Legion sought the declaration as a way to honor approximately 1,600 U.S. service members who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared periods of war.

The LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act) also opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

“Recognizing the service of these wartime veterans is the right thing do and it is long overdue,” National Commander Brett Reistad said. “The families of those who were killed or wounded during these wartime acts should take pride in knowing that we recognize their sacrifice and service. Moreover, we are proud to welcome any of the six million living veterans from the previously unrecognized periods into our organization and call them ‘Legionnaires.’”

President Donald J. Trump signs S. 504, the Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service (LEGION) Act Tuesday, July 30, 2019, in the Oval Office of the White House. Official White House Photo by Tia Dufour
For God and Country, Legionnaires associate ourselves together for ten specific purposes. The very first of those ten purposes is “To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.” Since the vast majority of us aren’t serving on active duty in the military anymore, how do we fulfill that purpose?

Many Legionnaires are perhaps unaware that we have a huge opportunity to uphold and defend the Constitution. We can do it by educating our youth about the Constitution through the awesome Legion program called the National High School Oratorical Contest. It is our duty to pass along to our youth – our future leaders – a deep understanding of why it is most important that the Constitution be upheld and defended. Unanimously, contestants will tell you they are much more knowledgeable about the Constitution because of their participation in the Contest. By virtue of this fact, we can appreciate knowing that we have fulfilled our first purpose to those students who participate.

Anyone who has had the pleasure of attending an Oratorical Contest can attest to being thoroughly impressed by the young orators. Simply amazing is their ability to articulate that the Constitution is the reason why our nation is great. Listening to their words of wisdom is inspiring and it gives us a chance to reflect upon our individual obligations to our community, state and nation. For example, at each contest, inevitably a contestant will bemoan the fact that only a fraction of the electorate exercises their responsibility to vote. Expressing dismay over the small voting populace makes us reflect on our own responsibility to vote during elections, a responsibility that our organization strongly emphasizes. The original resolution urging all Legionnaires to vote was approved at the 1920 National Convention. Since then, countless similar resolutions have been passed advocating Legionnaires to not only exercise their constitutional responsibility to vote, but to also encourage others to do the same. Therefore, the Oratorical Contest should cause us to also reflect upon how well we perform our public relations responsibility as an organization to encourage others to vote. Such reflection should result in a comprehensive “Get Out The Vote” campaign which may include posting messages on social media, broadcasting radio public service announcements and issuing news releases to media outlets.

From a broader perspective, the Oratorical Contest may illicit deep reflections on the philosophy that everything we do as Legionnaires should be to fulfill our overarching purpose “For God and Country”. Obviously, it doesn’t take much reflection to know that we are for our country when we uphold and defend the Constitution. But how does the Oratorical Contest help us fulfill those first two words of our purpose: “For God”? Pondering this, we come to understand that God endowed each of us with the gift of a free will. We freely choose to either live by His moral statutes, or not. So, essentially, God gives us the freedom to choose our eternal destiny, either in heaven or in hell. The same is true for our country. The Founding Fathers crafted a constitution that endowed the citizens with a democracy allowing us to choose how we govern our nation... knowing that if we choose to be a moral nation, our country will succeed... and knowing that if we choose to be an immoral nation, our country will fail. Founding Father John Adams proclaimed, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” Mr. Adams’ proclamation was based upon his assertion that “we have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion.”

President Ronald Reagan said it best: “If we ever forget that we are one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.” The Oratorical Contest should help the students realize that being for God not only means having a personal relationship with Him, but it also means keeping our nation under God by keeping Him in the public eye. These young future leaders will be making a lot of important decisions in their lifetimes that will influence many people. Developing their deep understanding of the Constitution by participating in this Contest will hopefully prompt them to consider the morality of their future leadership decisions because, by doing so, they will be affecting the future morality of our great nation. Hopefully they will understand that if our country is for God, then He will be for us... and if God is for us, who can be against us!

Given the enormous educational benefit to the students who participate in the Contest, and given their eventual contribution to our American society, we should reflect on ways to foster and perpetuate participation by more of our youth. Over 1.5 million high school students attended Texas public schools in 2018, but it is estimated that less than 0.01% of those students participated in the Oratorical Contest. No students should be deprived of the opportunity to participate due to our lack of promotion. Again, we must reflect upon our public relations responsibility as an organization and strive to make students, parents and teachers more aware of the Contest.

Our reflections compel us to conclude that Legionnaires are called to lead the effort to maximize participation in this worthy program we call the Oratorical Contest.
As the 2019 baseball season has ended let’s not forget to start making plans to get ready for the 2020 season.

We had four teams compete in Brenham Texas. The Cannoneers Post 8, The Eagles Post 488, League City Post 544 and Texarkana Post 25 Bull Dogs.

Texarkana Post 25 Bull Dogs went on to the Regional Tournament in Hastings Nebraska. We need every Post in the state to get involved within their community to sponsor a team. Everyone knows that baseball is one of the American Legion programs that change lives, “Just Ask”, and the old pros and they will tell you, “Baseball is a game of character”. Does it achieve its purpose? Yes it does, better than any other program.

Your Baseball committee would like to thank everyone who played a part this past year that made this program successful. Remember all you have to do is “Just Ask”.

Submitted by Don Toohey
Flag Retirement Box *(pictured right)*
For his Eagle project, Boy Scout Shawn Couet of Troop 73 in Katy provided a box for the public to deposit old flags. After receiving permits, he installed it in front of the Katy Library where a dedication ceremony was held on Aug. 24. Couet handed over the box keys to Jim McGuire, commander of Jonathan D. Rozier Post 164 of The American Legion. It’s the post’s third flag box in the Katy area. (Photo by David Wallis)

Post 164 Honor Guard *(pictured below)*
At the Aug. 24 dedication ceremony for the flag retirement box, members of Post 164’s Honor Guard presented the colors. (Photo by Greg Clock)
“Centennial Celebration” is the theme of this year’s Tarrant County Veterans Day Parade. Monday, Nov. 11, 2019 will mark 100 years of Armistice and Veterans Day marches through downtown Fort Worth.

The year also marks the 100th anniversary of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Legionnaires from both national organizations will serve as co-parade marshals for this year’s march down Main Street.

The American Legion was founded on March 15, 1919, at the American Club near the Place de la Concorde in Paris, France, by members of the American Expeditionary Forces. Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world’s largest women’s patriotic service organization.

Texans have a long tradition of supporting The American Legion. It’s home to the first elected national commander – Henry Lindsley of Post 1 in Commerce, Texas was elected in 1919. Six other past national commanders hail from the Lone Star State.

Cowtown’s annual Veterans Day parade began as an armistice procession in 1919 to honor those who had fought in World War I. In 1954, the name was changed to Veterans Day.

The Tarrant County Veterans Council is busy planning for the centenary event. A new parade website has launched (www.FW2019VetsDay.org) and the parade committee is soliciting support from individuals and organizations across North Texas.

“What is in the water at Post 159?”

“What is in the water at Post 159?” is a question that may be asked in Bryan, Texas as both the Legionnaire of the Year and the American Legion Auxiliary Member of the Year for the State were named and are from the Post 159.

Legionnaire Gerry May Hince was named at the state convention by Commander Lloyd Buckmaster, selected from over 70,000 members. A Legion member for 26 years in Virginia and now Texas, Gerry is a 31-year Army veteran retiring in 2001. Married for 46 years to an Army Intelligence pilot, she is also the mother two Air Force sons and the daughter of an Army Air Corps member. Her years in Virginia saw her active in the leadership of the organization to include Post Commander of the Year and membership on Americanism and Boys State Programs. Here in Texas, she has been Second Vice Commander, PR Chair and Chaplain at Post level; District Adjutant and PR Chair; Division PR Chair and State Chaplain and State PR Chair. At National level, she is co-chair of the Veterans Education, Other Benefits and Homelessness Committee.

American Legion Auxiliary member Sharron Rosendahl was nominated by the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 159 for the Auxiliary Member of the Year. Sharron has been an ALA member since 2011 and part of the success of many Unit programs. The wife of a career veteran, Sharron traveled the world as a military spouse and has served as the Sergeant at Arms of the Unit for two years and is on the Unit executive board. An active member of numerous community organizations, Sharron took that experience and made use of it in many Auxiliary programs to include weekly coffee and donuts, bell ringing for the Salvation Army and poppy sales. A special project headed by her was the adoption of service dog, Tango, who was adopted and is being supported by the Auxiliary for future use as a service dog. A highlight of the ALA year and Sharon’s contribution was obtaining a grant to purchase blankets for use in the Christmas bags for veterans.
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George pays $0

George pays $0

George pays $0

George’s Total: $0

Bob pays $400

Bob pays $1,100

Bob pays $1,800

George pays $0

George pays $0

George pays $0

George pays $0

George’s Total: $0

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