



NEWS & VIEWS



Richard S. Bell, Sr. – Department Commander
 George Duncan & Carl J. McGee
 Department Vice Commanders

Tony Betts, Editor Pat Reeves, Assistant Editor

COMMANDER'S CORNER

Richard S. Bell, Sr.



I would like to thank everyone who voted for and supported me during my campaign for Department Commander for the 2021-2022 year.

This year has been a challenge, but my staff and I will finish the course. We need all our members to work together as a team to get the job done. When we started, the Department membership was 44th, near the bottom in National standings. Now we are 28th from the top and will reach our goal to the top of the list.

We stand behind our National Commander Dillard that *No Veteran Left Behind*. We do need a better billing system for the V.A. Hospital System for all our veterans. We must inform Washington and Congress that Veterans are suffering from mental distress and homelessness on the streets. Let's get better living conditions and free health care for all veterans. As your Commander, I will fight until somebody hears us and our concerns for the veterans.

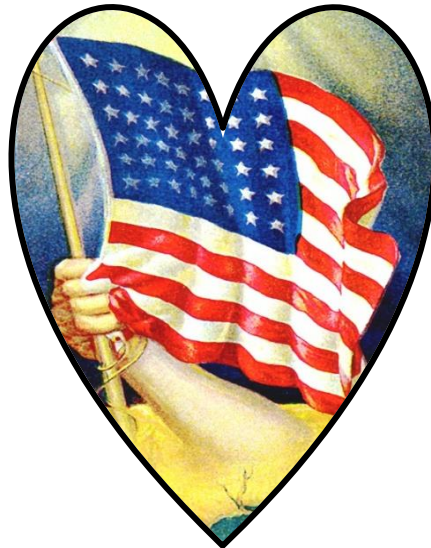
From June 2021 through November 2021, I attended 18 funerals in the state of Louisiana. Most of them were for American Legion members and some were for family members who went home. My prayers go out to the families in this time of sorrow.

If you have problems within your Post, your first step is to discuss it with the Post Executive Committee and Post Judge Advocate. The next step, if the problem is not resolved, is to bring it to the District level. If the problem can't be solved on both of those levels, then the Department Judge Advocate will hear the complaint.

Don't forget about membership dues! Pay yours and then call somebody and remind them about theirs. It is a pleasure serving as your Department Commander!!!!

FOR GOD & COUNTRY

On Valentine's Day And Always



"When the Lord calls me home, whenever that day may be, I will leave with the greatest love for this country of ours and eternal optimism for its future. I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life. I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead.

~ Ronald Reagan ~

This month we celebrate those and what we hold dear. Let us take a moment to send a Valentine wish and prayer for our great nation and all who are keeping the light of freedom burning for all of us.

FROM THE ADJUTANT

Tony Betts



IRS Non-Profit Status: National Judge Advocate's office will issue a letter for your Post upon request. Our status is extended to

Department and Posts from under the National Umbrella. Coverage depends upon your Post having a current EIN, Charter, and in good financial standing with the IRS (filing 990). You can research online: *IRS guide for veteran's organizations, IRS auditor's guidelines, Legion 990 compliance, and Post Operations Guides*. Each Post receives a copy of the *Post Commander's Guide and Adjutant's Guide* annually. Each Post needs to review the guidelines and comply.

Membership: For the 2022 year – Our goal for the year is 15,585. The February 9th goal is 85%. The March 9th goal is 90%. We need your help to stay on goal. **REMEMBER: YOUR MEMBERS THAT FAILED TO RENEW BY DECEMBER 31 ARE IN DEFAULT STATUS.**

Legionnaire: We ask each District Commander, each Post Commander, and Committee Chairman to submit an article to show what has been going on in your Districts and Committees. This is your *Legionnaire* to let all our members know what is going on. **Send your articles and pictures all year long, as your events happen. Articles not used now will be considered for future issues.**

NEF: Members and Posts have received almost \$150,000.00 this year from the NEF. Please make a donation from your Post

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FROM THE ADJUTANT

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or a personal donation to help replenish the fund.

Poppy Fund: Funds derived from Poppy sales are the funds we can use for Children & Youth programs and Temporary Financial Assistance. The goal is at least \$0.50 per member. Posts of 200 or less should donate at least \$25; Posts over 200 should donate at least \$40.00.

What's Coming Up:

Post Data Form: This is a mandatory form from National. The forms are being sent to each Post via USPS mail. They are due to Department by April 15, 2022.

Post Officer Certification

Form: This is a mandatory form to be completed and sent to Department following the Post spring elections.

Consolidated Post Report:

This is a mandatory form. Please return to Department not later than June 1, 2022, so Department can get them to National by July 1, 2022. The information on this report is what National uses to compile and provide information to Congress. Every active Post does something for Veterans, the Community, and/or Youth. Easy to fill out, please report! The form is available online at Legion.org and are being sent to the Posts in the January mailout.

Awards Nomination Forms:

Posted on the Department website www.lalegion.org.

Spring District Conferences:

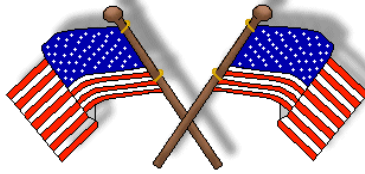
Some dates have changed, check the website for updates! Plan to attend your District Conferences. You and your Post members elect your officers and policies.

Department Convention:

We are preparing for our annual Department Convention at the Holiday Inn Downtown, Alexandria, LA. **This year the Department Convention will run from 2-5 June 2022.**

Above all, be safe, recruit new members and support our current American Legion Members and our American Legion Family!

FOR GOD & COUNTRY



Vice Commander's Views

George Duncan

No formal column was submitted for this issue of the newsletter.



2022 Department Oratorical Contest

Update

**From Department Oratorical Chairman,
Dennis Hart**

Reminder to all District and Post Oratorical Chairmen: The Department of the American Legion High School Oratorical Contest finals will once again be held at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches on Sunday March 6th, 2022.

We urge all students, school speech clubs, or other groups, as well as American Legion Post officers, members, and other interested persons, to come out and enjoy the experience of the American Legion's great "Constitutional Speech Contest". The competition is always amazing and the contestants all will give testament to their hard work and dedication to this great program.

The Department contest will feature the winner from each of the 8 Districts, with the Finals winner certified to represent the Department of Louisiana at the National contest to be held in Indianapolis April 23-24, 2022.



Vice Commander's Views

Carl J. McGee

No formal column was submitted for this issue of the newsletter.



The 2022 Boys State will be held on June 26-July 2, 2022 at:

**Northwestern State University
715 University Parkway
Natchitoches, LA 71497**

For more information on Boys State, you may contact Boys State Commission Chairperson Tina Cielatka at 318-791-4181, email pctc122@yahoo.com or The American Legion Department of Louisiana.

2022 DISTRICT SPRING CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

AS OF 2/2/2022

(Changes in red)

1st District - March 13 - 0900
Council on Aging, 2475 Canal
St., N.O. 70119

2nd District – March 26 – 0900
Post 267, 3001 River Road,
Jefferson 70121

3rd District – April 30 - 0900
Post 031 Host, Plantation Inn,
Houma

4th District – April 2 - 0900
Post 014, 5315 S. Lakeshore
Dr., Shreveport 71109

5th District – March 12 - 1300
Mangham High School, 810
Main St., Mangham 71259

6th District – April 23 -
0900 Post 502, 1566
Rosenwald Road, Baton Rouge
70807

7th District – Mar 20 – 0900
Post 179 Sulphur, 1403
Napoleon St., Sulphur 70663

8th District - April 24 – 0900
Post 387, 426 Vernon St., New
Llano 71461



Holidays 2022 (HQ Office Closed)

Mardi Gras

3/1/2022

Good Friday

4/15/2022

Easter

4/17/2022

Memorial Day

5/30/2022

Independence Day

7/4/2022

Labor Day

9/5/2022

General Elect. Day

11/8/2022

Thanksgiving

11/25/2022

From Department Chaplain Gerald Theriot

We have been attending a lot of funerals lately. The question of how to wear the Legion cap comes up often.

Legion protocol for cap etiquette is provided below from the Legion Emblem Sales catalog. Legion members, in a group, should decide how they will wear the cap during viewing and funerals. In no case should a cap be worn in a church or venue after a service starts. If possible, ensure that you are in agreement with the wishes of the presiding officiant.



CAP ETIQUETTE

The left side (emblem side) of the cap is reserved only for the Legion emblem, city, district, or state lettering.

If desired, the following items must be placed on the right side of the cap:
(A) Additional lettering, restricted to either the name of a Post, or to an officer title (such as "Past Commander");
(B) Cap insignias or badges (For Past or Present officers);
(C) Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars, and/or authorized Legion or military services decorations.

Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.

The Legion Uniform Cap should be worn only by its members when in attendance at official Legion meetings or ceremonies, or as official guests at patriotic or other civil functions, or by individuals when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions.

A member is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official Legion cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear the cap while eating a meal at an official Legion or civic luncheon or dinner.

A cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard and Commander of same while

in marching order or standing guard. When returned to and seated in pews, the cap should be removed.

Legion members not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship and remain uncovered during the entire service and will cover again after leaving the place of worship.

Legion Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover, at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart until the arrival in the pews and commanded to take seats, remaining uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the Post shall arise, the members holding the cap with the right hand over the heart will march out of the place of worship and recover after marching through the door.

Legion members not in formation will uncover upon entering the place of worship and remain uncovered during the entire service and will recover after leaving the place of worship.

When at a funeral, the cap should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket, and is not at any time worn in a place of worship (except by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard or Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard). At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be worn.

In Legion meetings, the cap should be worn except during moments of the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, and when standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades, when the cap should be held with the right hand over the heart.

Female members of the Legion should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for female personnel of the armed services.



From the Sons of The American Legion

FROM CAMILLE A. LEJEUNE, JR. – NEC/DETACHMENT ADJUTANT



I hope this issue finds our family members back at home and recovering from the virus as well as the hurricane. It has been rough for lots of us, but we are Louisiana Strong.

Membership is coming in weekly, and we are ahead of all targets. Let's keep that trend up. We remain in the top ten since the beginning of the membership year and we can continue that to the end. Please send in your membership, do not hold. Members that have not paid their 2022 dues are now expired.

We did have our National Commander Michael Fox come to our Mid-Winter Conference. Please make plans to attend to see what happens at all these meetings. New faces bring new ideas.

2020-2021 accomplishments included consolidated reports from 1,143 Squadrons (19%). Total dollars donated: \$5,076,095, total volunteer hours: 1,119,680 and total volunteer value \$35,531,391.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Department Convention in Alexandria on June 2-5, 2022. Hope all of you have a wonderful New Year 2022.

FROM DAN MAURIN – DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Well, it has been a rough twenty months, from COVID cancelling conferences and meetings to hurricanes effecting our Legion family members, as well as mysal computer glitches. Right now, mysal online membership transmittals should be up and running as of January 1, 2022. Please turn in your Squadron data reports so that National can have you entered in the system.

National has our Detachment goal at 1,834, in increase of 71 members from 2021. We can and must do better??? Remember, Recruit-Renew-Reinstate! Detachment membership as of December 8th was 1,183 or 64.19%. Congratulations to those 16 Squadrons that have reached 100% as of November 11th. Let's push past the National goal and set our goal at 2,000 for 2022.

It was a pleasure to see all of you at the Mid-Winter Conference in Alexandria in January and I look forward to seeing everyone again at our Convention in June. I hope you and your family had a wonderful Holiday Season and I wish for you and yours a safe, healthy, and successful 2022!



FINAL THOUGHTS

A Word – From the Editors

From "Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul" - A Valentine Story

During a visit to her parents in West Virginia, Sarah H. Giachino decided to explore their attic. They had lived in the home since 1953, so investigating the attic was a trip down memory lane for Mrs. Giachino. Pulling down the folding steps and then climbing the unstable ladder to the dusty, cold, wood-planked space, she looked around and noticed a very old, barrel-shaped covered basket in the corner. Opening the lid of the basket, she was pleased to find it filled with old letters her parents wrote to each other during World War II. The letters had sat there in the basket, faded and dirty, untouched since the day they had been tossed there.

Mrs. Giachino thought it seems such a shame to just leave them that way and decided to ask her parents if she could take the letters back to her home to read and organize them by day and month. They agreed and soon after returning home, she started her little project. As she opened each letter, all of them delicate with age, she discovered a new previously unrevealed page in this private chapter of her parents' lives. Her father had served in the Army as a first lieutenant, 117th Infantry, in the 30th Division. His letters were full of frontline accounts of landing on Omaha Beach and continued all the way through the Battle of the Bulge. He wrote about his daily experiences with civilians, German POWs, refugees, foxholes, helmet baths, and more. Each of her mother's letters was sealed with her 1944 magenta lipstick kiss. Her dad wrote that he sealed his return letters by re-kissing her lipstick kiss. This ritual filled a void in their lonely, war-torn lives.

After reading six months of the letters, Mrs. Giachino discovered there were at least eleven months of letters missing and promised herself she would look for them on the next visit. Just six weeks after her initial visit, Mrs. Giachino's father became very ill. This time, he was fighting a different kind of war – a new prescription for arthritis had been introduced to his system and had almost killed him. Since he was scheduled for kidney dialysis while on her return visit, Mrs. Giachino discussed the letters with her father. He told her how much receiving those lipstick-kissed letters had meant to him when he had been so far from home.

Leaving his side, the thought raced through her mind that the next day was Valentine's Day, but since her father wasn't in any kind of shape to shop for a valentine, her mother would understand that her valentine would just have to be skipped that year. Her parents had been married for 56 years. Later that evening, she and her mother revisited the attic in search of the lost letters and began digging through a large 60-year-old trunk. Under tattered clothes and toward the bottom was an unmarked gold cardboard box. Holding their breath, they slowly lifted off the top and saw the missing letters. Lying on top separately was a large envelope and inside was the valentine card Mrs. Giachino's father had sent her mother in 1944. The next day she and her mother visited her father and handed him the old envelope. He carefully opened the card and when he recognized it, his eyes filled with tears. In a voice quavering with emotion, he read the loving message he'd sent to his wife 56 years earlier...and this time, he could read it to her for Valentine's Day in person.

"At different stages in our lives, the signs of love may vary: dependence, attraction, contentment, worry, loyalty, grief, but at heart the source is always the same. Human beings have the rare capacity to connect with each other, against all odds. ~ Michael Dorris ~"

And aren't we blessed because of it. Happy Valentine's Day to all! **PR**