Hey, the daylight is coming back, and it has been a long winter, although not too bad in the snow department. We’re not out of it yet but at least we have some more sun and the good prospect of the summer and better weather bringing more outdoor activities that do not require a ton of clothes to keep warm.

We have some fun and important things planned for this month including participating in the Seward Break Up Festival, the final round of nominations for for Post, Auxiliary, Son’s, and Riders and we will elect our new officers for the new year. Along with identifying our new officers, we will be planning our Officer Installation Dinner toward the end of March. We will also celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, and of course we will celebrate the American Legion Birthday of the National Organization that was the beginning of all our posts! So hang the calendar on the fridge and look for updates on email for the activities that we have going on and those that spontaneously crop up!

Just to let you know March 15, the designated birthday of The American Legion, is the day in 1919 when the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris. Much as the birthday of the United States is celebrated on July 4 - for the day in 1776 when revolting patriots declared the independence of the British colonies and the spirit of America was born - March 15 is the date on which the Legion came to life. Today, membership stands at over 2.4 million in 14,000 posts worldwide. The posts are organized into 55 departments: one each for the 50 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines.

Over the years, the Legion has influenced considerable social change in America, won hundreds of benefits for veterans and produced many important programs for children and youth. We have quite the legacy and have done some incredible things in our 95 year history and still moving forward with our commitment to service to our individual veterans, community and country.

Speaking of service, we will be visited by the Department Service Officer Jim Pisa on 6-7 March. Give a call for a specific time to meet with Jim or stop by the post after 10am to discuss items that you may have questions on.

We’ve hit our membership goal for March, and to those who have renewed thank you very much. Your membership continues to make us a strong organization with the ability to help others. Every membership makes us a stronger organization locally and through the national level. Our collective membership numbers are a very loud voice for veterans’ rights and benefits. As mentioned last month, we have veterans throughout Seward ranging from WWII to veterans from the ongoing military conflicts in the Middle East and throughout the globe. We have a good representation in Seward and are fortunate that we have many in our American Legion Family, encompassing Post, Auxiliary and Son’s who step up to the plate and help out. And for that I sincerely thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to be of service for our veterans and our community.

Examples of what the American Legion is fighting and representing us on in just the past year:

- Protect veterans and DOD from the harmful cuts imposed through sequestration
- Properly fund VA to ensure quality health care and benefits for veterans
- Provide quality education through Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Focus programs on assisting vets with jobs
- Support veteran-entrepreneurs
- End veteran homelessness
- Eliminate VA claims backlog
- Repeal taxes that penalize disabled veterans and widows
- Protect the American flag

All our members have served and all deserve the consideration due to them for their honorable service. The post is the starting point for them to learn what they are eligible for and can receive in terms of benefits and support, but as you can see, support can be found at all levels of this organization and with the well over 2 million members we have a pretty good fighting force for our veterans and their families.
From the Director...

By Bobby Dunno

OK so yes it has been a weirder winter than normal! I have even managed to get one of the bikes out for a spin around town on some of the brighter and warmer days. Regardless it is time to make sure we get our bikes ready for spring when once again the rumble of our exhuast will sound out, wind will break across our handlebars and all will be right in the world.

The Spring Ride Safety Checklist will once again be available at our Alaska ALR website at alaskalegionriders.org. There you can find a link under the “Home Link” and ALR Direct-ions. On the subject of getting our bikes ready for spring I know that Don has almost got his bike back together with a new “True Dual” exhaust system and is determined to get a full riding season in since his was cut way too short last year when he suffered a cracked exhaust on the ride back from North Pole and the 2013 ROMP. I have a new clutches and brakes going into my Hondas just needing to make the time to finish them up.

Our first ALR meeting will be on the 6th of March and being the first meeting there will be a lot to discuss. Some of the most important items on the agenda being Officer Elections and will we plan on resurrecting the dessert auctions since they did so well last year. We are also looking forward to the American Legion Department Convention. The ALR Alaska meeting will be held Wednesday the 23rd of April at Kenai’s Post 20 at 6pm. I am hoping to ride over there so if you want to ride along I really would enjoy the company, riding with friends is always better than riding alone. There are a few topics for the ALR up for discussion with of course the all-important State ALR officer elections and raising monies for the Legacy Run last year.

Sounding Off from the Sons....

By Mike Calhoon

Greetings from the SAL First Vice Commander.

This month we will be electing the Squadron 5 Officers for 2014-15. Our monthly meeting will be held at 7:00pm on March 13th. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this meeting if you are interested in running for an office or to just see what we do and how we support Post 5.

A big thanks to our dedicated SAL volunteers who continue to support the Post 5 goals and help the Club continue to provide a nice social area for our membership to get together and have some fun or just kick back and relax. Squadron 5 has become an integral part of the Post 5 Family’s mission of providing support to our veterans and their families and the community of Seward.

The Post will be involved with the Spring Break Festival 14-16 March, breakfast on 16 March, and installation of officers on 29 March.

If you would like to help with any of these functions or just have questions in general, please feel free to contact me at 224-5440 or 362-2029.

Thank you again for your support and I look forward to seeing you at the Post.
House and Vice Report……. 
By Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice/Club,

Winter may not be gone just yet but spring is definitely just around the corner. It has been a bit of a tough five month stretch for the club but the Post 5 Legion Family has helped pull us through.

That being said, the club will be altering a few things for a while to help conserve resources. We will no longer be setting up a menu on the calendar each month.

Fridays will still be "Steak Night" and Tuesdays will still be "Taco Tuesday" but we will not offer a home cooked typed meal on the other nights of the week. It was a popular concept initially but seems to have lost its appeal over the last year or so. We cannot afford to lose money each night we put out a meal.

We will continue to have some food available on the off nights but it will tend to be more traditional bar snacks/food and less the great home cooked meals Connie has been preparing for us all the last few years.

There are some great activities coming this month. The Spring Break Festival is scheduled for March 14-16. We will be having live music, Black Water Railroad, on March 14th and we will be hosting a karaoke contest on March 15th. The third Sunday of the month breakfast will be on March 16th and, of course, our St Patrick’s Day celebration will be on March 17th.

The installation of officers for all the legion organizations will be held on March 29th and we will put out more information on that in the near future.

I want to thank all the great volunteers from the Post, the Auxiliary, and the SAL who continue to step up with their time and effort to allow us to meet our mission of service to our veterans and the community. There will be lots of ways to help this month so give us a call if you have the time and would like to volunteer.

Thanks to everyone who continues to support the Post and the Club. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 224-5440/362-2029.

For God and Country

Convention Information 
By Clare Sullivan

This year the Annual Department Convention will occur in Kenai at Post 20 between the 24th and 27th of April, and each of the organizations in our American Legion Family will send "delegates." These delegates represent their respective organization and are designated to vote on issues on behalf of their post, unit, squadron or chapter.

Many people have wondered what is done at these Conventions and some think they are just a big social event; and they are partially right since you have the opportunity to "meet and greet" many other Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons members throughout the state. Essentially, these meetings are designed to bring forward ideas and develop policy that a post wants to have considered beyond just their area of influence. In simple terms, an idea is brought forward to be considered in a resolution and to be approved at the state level, or if it has farther reaching implications, to be moved "up the chain" to National to be considered at the National Convention.

Also found at conventions are seminars to inform and teach the participants about a variety of subjects in the American Legion. They also provide information on ongoing programs inherent to the Four Pillars of the American Legion including oratorical competitions, Boys and Girls State, American Legion Baseball, Scouting, and of course Veteran Rehabilitation and Benefits, etc.

By actively participating in conventions one can go a long way toward contributing to the forward momentum of the American Legion. Earnest participation also addresses future leadership potential by making certain that the post delegate receives correct information at the training sessions provided at these conventions.

Conventions are also a great way to build connections, meet new folks who are like-minded and have the same service oriented attitude. In addition, you will also find that attendance at functions will do much toward building the esprit de corps that makes for a good post.

Another occurrence at the convention is the election of officers. Similar to the elections at the post, there are elections of officers at the state level who have responsibilities in assisting and helping posts in the areas of programs and membership.

Bottom line, conventions are great learning opportunities for the delegates, an opportunity to help shape the direction of the Department, and finally one gets to spend fun and productive time with other Legionnaires while working in service for our veterans and their families.
Operation Iraqi Freedom

On 19 March 2003, an ultimatum given to the regime of Saddam Hussein expired and the United States and an allied coalition began what was known to the United States as Operation Iraqi Freedom. The name of the Operation for British troops was Operation Telic. For Australian Troops involved, it was Operation Falconer.

The military objectives of Operation Iraqi Freedom consisted of first, ending the regime of Saddam Hussein; second, identifying, isolating and eliminating, Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction; third, searching for, capturing, and driving out terrorists from the country; fourth, collecting intelligence related to terrorist networks; fifth, collecting such intelligence as was related to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction; sixth, to end sanctions and to immediately deliver humanitarian support to the displaced and to many needed citizens; seventh, to secure Iraq’s oil fields and resources, which belonged to the Iraqi people; and finally, to help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government.

At the time, Operation Iraqi Freedom consisted of the largest special operations force since the Vietnam War. While the vast majority of special operations forces were American, the United Kingdom and the Australian militaries also provided forces. In northern Iraq there was a significant special operations presence. Coalition personnel worked with Kurdish fighters against the regime. SOF helped bring in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and marked and called in coalition air power on regime targets. Special operations forces were also responsible for attacking a number of specific targets such as airfields, weapons of mass destruction sites, and command and control headquarters.

In the south, special operations personnel gave aid to conventional forces and did some of the work in the cities to help the Shi‘ia elements.

Initial information regarding the number of Coalition sorties seemed to differ depending on the sources consulted. No two figures for the same day were the same, and could differ by as much as 700 sorties. References to the numbers of Tomahawks fired suffered from the same lack of accuracy.
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  Fax 588-1270
  E-mail: hatch@xrtx.net
  http://www.xrtx.net/hutch
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A variety of food will be available every night in addition to what is here - mostly bar food will be available for individual purchase.