COMMANDER’S COMMENTS

By Clare Sullivan

Hey, the daylight is coming back (yay!), and boy has it been a long cold winter, although it hasn’t been too bad in the snow department. We’re not out of it yet, but at least we have some more sun and with the better weather we’ll soon be able to do 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 hosting the crew of both the USCGC Spar and Hickory and we’ll have the final round of nominations for all our organizations 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 remind you 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 about two million in 13,000 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 VA 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 100 year history and we are still moving forward with our commitment to service to our veterans, community and country.

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 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 nearly every war and conflict as well as our active duty members who are scattered throughout the globe. We have a good core group in Seward and are so fortunate that we have many in our American Legion Family who step up to the plate and help out in all our post activities. 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.

All our post members have served in the military 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 support can be found at all levels of this organization and with the well over two million members we have a pretty good fighting force for our veterans and their families.

Just to inform as well, The American Legion (TAL) works for all veterans and uses our membership funds for efforts to work with Congress to prioritize veterans and their particular needs and entitlements due to their honorable service. Priorities for the 116th Congress are as listed below:

Wartime Veteran. TAL urged Congress to direct VA to expand the definition of "wartime veteran" to include all military personnel who served honorably under Title 10 orders for at least one day during the continuous period of conflict since December 7th 1941. (the Legion Act)

Agent Orange. The American Legion remains firm in its position that all veterans exposed to Agent Orange - on land, sea or air - deserve service-connected disability benefits for adverse health conditions presumed to be linked to such exposure.

American Flag. The American Legion continues to fight for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that prohibits the physical desecration of the American flag. As a physical representation of the ideals that America stands for, protecting the sanctity of our nation's flag has always been a priority for The American Legion.

Con’t
Women Veterans. Women veterans are the fastest growing demographic to serve in the military and to enroll in the VA health care system. Since 2000, the number of women veterans receiving VA health care has more than doubled and that number is expected to increase as more women veterans become eligible to receive care through VA. The American Legion believes that it is vital for VA to develop a comprehensive health care program in order to address health care needs specific to women who have served in the armed forces, and the Legion will continue to advocate for legislation that addresses these shortcomings.

Suicide Prevention. An estimated 20 veterans die by suicide every day and many are not receiving care or support through the VA that may have saved them. The American Legion urges Congress to provide VA the necessary funds to hire mental health care professionals and proper staffing for its Integrative Health and Wellness Program. Getting veterans enrolled in these services is a priority of The American Legion.

Citizenship. Immigrants to the United States often join the military as a path to obtain citizenship. However, veterans have reported being deported after failing to obtain U.S. citizenship while in service. The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through honorable military service is completed prior to discharge.

Veteran Homelessness. VA pledged to eradicate veteran homelessness and The American Legion supports the continued funding of programs to address this serious issue. Congress must continue making investments in affordable housing and programs that help get veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing with supportive services.

VA Benefits. Many military retirees are forced to forfeit a portion of their pension in order to receive VA service-connected disability pay. VA survivor benefits are also offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The American Legion supports legislation to repeal both of these unjust offsets.

GI Bill. Expanding GI Bill benefits to include access to capital for entrepreneurial veterans enables them to overcome a major obstacle in building a small business. The American Legion supports legislation that would expand GI Bill benefits to assist veterans in obtaining access to small business capital.

Veteran Employment Rights. The American Legion will continue to urge Congress to prohibit employers from pressuring servicemembers into waiving their employment rights and protections through arbitration agreements.

National Security. The American Legion supports a defense budget that reverses sequestration and its effects, rebuilds U.S. military end strength and weaponry and fairly compensates military personnel, especially in an ongoing time of global warfare.

From the Director...

By Bobby Dunno

OK so yes it still winter, but it is inevitable that as our days are get longer and that will lead to brighter and warmer days. So what does that mean for all of us who have an itch to sit astride our bikes feel the power through the seat of our pants, give it some gas and let the wind blow across the windscreen and suddenly all is right in the world. Regardless of how many days or weeks it will take for the roads to become ice free, it is time to make sure we get our bikes ready for spring when once again the rumble of our exhaust will sound out, wind will break across our handlebars and any road we choose to ride is going to great, at least if it ain’t raining☺.

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, once again I am going to attempt to get my Gold Wing Trike up and going, along with the 3 other bike projects I have in the works. Between brakes, cables, tires and replacing one set of handlebars I myself have a lot to do before I can safely roll out onto the hi-way with confidence.
Our first ALR meeting will be on the 5th 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. We are also looking forward to the American Legion Rider ROMP which will be hosted by Post 1 the weekend of July 17th - 19th. I believe there will be a great ride to Sterling for the annual motorcycle event on Saturday July 18th when they will be focusing on Veterans and lots of really fun events to watch or participate in. I am hoping to ride over up there and back 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. Regardless of what’s going on the good news is that sooner or later the roads will clear, so get on the prep work, make sure the plugs are not fouled, charge the batteries and warm them up cause we are counting down the days and weeks until we can all...

Get On Our Bikes And Ride!

House and Vice Report…… By Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice!

We have mostly survived winter and we can see spring on the horizon. We shouldn’t get cocky about it just yet, but it is coming soon.

I want to thank everyone who stepped up and helped with all the events hosted, or supported off site, by the Post in February. It was much busier than a normal February and we could not have accomplished everything without the great volunteers of the Post 5 family. You are all awesome. I do not normally name volunteers because I will forget some of them but I want to give a special thanks to Dan, Michelle, Debbie, and Kona for their willingness to forego some sleep and help with the Tsunami Bowl (NOSB) breakfasts. It required arriving around 5:00am and helping feed about 130 folks each of the three days. Thank You!

This month the Post remains busy with a promotion party and two dinners for the visiting Coast Guard Cutters Spar and Hickory. We also have our St. Patrick’s Day celebration, our community breakfast, and our Officer Installation Dinner. Keep your volunteer hats ready and come give a hand when you can.

We have a new pinball machine at the Post. Nostalgic fun for some of us more “mature” members and something new for younger folks that grew up with Xbox. Come by and check it out.

The 2020 membership year is in full swing and we have reached all monthly goals so far. I want to thank everyone who has already renewed their memberships and urge those that have not to consider doing so. Membership is the backbone of our organization and we need to keep that backbone strong to continue to carry the load we do for our veterans and the community of Seward. You can renew at the Post, mail in your renewals, or go to MyLegion.org and renew.

Bingo is going strong on Mondays at 6:30 and we have food every night. Pool league is on Saturday night at 7:00pm when no other function is scheduled.

Thanks to all of you who continue to support your Post and all the activities designed to support our membership, our veterans, and the community. We look forward to seeing you all and please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sounding Off from the Sons… By Mike Calhoon

We are cruising through winter and spring is just around the corner, although, we all know winter will not concede easily around here.

A big thanks to all Squadron 5 members who volunteered time and effort in support of all the Post 5 family events during February. It turned out to be busy with visiting ships and community events. March will provide more opportunities for us to show our support to the mission of the Post.

In March we will help the Post provide dinners for the USCGC Spar and USCGC Hickory. The Post will host a promotion party for the USCGC Spar. There will be a St Patrick’s Day celebration, a community breakfast, and whatever else comes our way.

The March Squadron meeting is on the 12th at 7:00pm will include the 3rd call for officer nominations and final election for the 2020 - 2021 year. We encourage all members to attend these meetings and take a look at becoming a bit more involved in the organization and the decisions made. We are always looking for fresh ideas and different perspectives.

Remember that membership is the key to all the success. The 2020 membership year is here so consider renewing your membership if you have not already done so. Membership is the cornerstone of our organization and we need to continue to strive to be a strong and active part of the Post 5 family.
Thank you again for all your hard work and support of the Post 5 Family mission of service to the veterans and other community members in Seward.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 224-5440. Thanks again for all your support of the Post 5 family and I look forward to seeing you all at the Post.

From the President's Desk
By Debbie VanTassel

Happy Spring! Well Almost. It is March and if nothing else the days are getting longer and we can hope spring is not far behind.

February is behind us and once again our volunteers put in lots and lots of hours to support the ALA projects. Again, thank you to all the volunteers who put in the time and effort to help our Veterans, active duty military and our community.

Thank you to the early risers that came in to fix breakfast for the NOSB students. This is an annual event that the Post provides to support the NOSB. Also thank you to those who stayed on Sunday to help with the 3rd Sunday breakfast. And of course, thank you to those who continue to support the Monday night Bingo games.

It was also nice in February that we had the crews from USCGC Fir, USCGC Hickory and now the USCGC Spar in town while the ships were in dry dock. Please remember if you see these crew members around town or at the Post, thank them for their service.

As we head into March, it will again be a busy month. The Auxiliary monthly meeting will be on the 11th, this will be the 3rd and final call for officer nominations and officer elections. If you are interested in serving in an office, please contact an Auxiliary officer. Also, we will be selecting delegates to attend the Department meeting in April in Wasilla. If you are interested in attending the Department Convention please attend our monthly meeting.

As we prepare for Department Convention, please submit all volunteer hours to Debbie by March 31st so that the year end reports can be completed. It is so important for these hours to be recorded and reported, it shows just how much our members contribute and support the ALA mission and projects. We will also be submitting our Unit scrapbook which showcases all the hours and projects we have completed this year. If anyone has pictures from events or wants to help put the scrapbook together please let Debbie know.

MEMBERSHIP - currently we are at 83.44% for the year. Thank you to those who have already paid their membership dues. For those that haven’t paid yet, please consider renewing your membership. The membership dues are vital to the Unit, Department and National Organizations so that we can continue our missions and projects. It would be amazing if we could reach 100% membership renewal for the year.

Special days in March to remember:

March is Women’s History Month and well over 200,000 women serve on active duty in the U.S. military. The contributions of women to military history (and well beyond) cannot be ignored. While Women’s History Month isn’t a time to focus exclusively on the contributions of women in military service, the contributions of female veterans are certainly an important part of American history.

March 13 is K-9 Veteran Day. With the creation of the United States K9 Corps on March 13, 1942, dogs were officially adopted into US military ranks during WWII. The Army’s Dogs for Defense program trained 10,000 dogs who were again donated to the war effort by American families.

March 15 - American Legion Birthday. The American Legion will celebrate it’s 101st birthday this year. Happy Birthday!

March 25 - National Medal of Honor Day is observed every year on March 25 and is dedicated to Medal of Honor Recipients. Each branch of the U.S. military awards the Medal of Honor to those who have distinguished themselves “conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity” above and beyond the call of duty, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs official site.

March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day - National Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed every year on March 29 and is a way to thank and honor our nation’s Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. U.S. Armed Forces personnel with active duty service between November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service which includes:

- Nine million Americans serving during that time
- 6.4 million Americans living today
- 2.7 million U.S. service members who served in Vietnam
- 58,000 whose names are memorialized on a black granite wall in our Nation’s capital
- 304,000 who were wounded
- 1,253 Missing in Action (MIA) heroes who have not yet returned to American soil
- 2,500 Prisoners of War (POWs)

The commemoration makes no distinction between veterans who served in-county, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years.

Hope everyone has a great month and we will see you at the Post.
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Sam Clemons Jewelry Artist/Owner

Happy St. Patrick’s Day

Sam Clemons Jewelry Artist/Owner
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**Happy Saint Patrick’s Day!!!**

**FOOD SERVED EVERY NIGHT AT THE POST**