



For God and Country

Seward Post 5 Newsletter

October 2013
Volume 10, Issue 10

American Legion Seward Post 5
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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

By Clare Sullivan



Here we are already in the cooler weather! I was a bit worried that autumn blew by us when we had all the termination dust creeping down the mountain. Fortunately, it didn't stay on Marathon too long and we are seeing the beautiful colors of Fall.

With the cooler weather we also get back into our Winter projects and fundraising events. We have Veterans' Day right around the corner, followed by Thanksgiving, and of course the Auxiliary has the ever fun and successful **Toys for Tots Dinner and Auction** to get us going into the Holiday Spirit. It is a big event that sets the groundwork for lots of gifts to be purchased for our Seward kids when Santa and Mrs. Claus come to town to ride in the Christmas parade and then give out gifts to all the kids who come and brave the elements to meet Santa, Mrs. Claus and an elf or two! ☺

The post will also be starting to get the packages organized for our yearly "**Operation Apple Pie**" where we send out gift and care packages to our young service men and women from Seward who are serving their country and are away from home. We like to let them know we're thinking of them and want to send them a reminder that we appreciate what they are doing for this great country and send them some fun goodies that remind them of friends and family. If you know of any Seward men or women who are in the military and you think they could use a gift package, let us know and give the post a call, we'll get them something nice that will be comforting and remind them of home.

This past month we were fortunate to be visited by the crew of the **USCGC Healy** who spent about a week in Seward after a long trip out



at sea. They are now somewhere between Seward and the Arctic for missions up there and we wish them all the best and thank them for stopping by Post 5! It was fun meeting everyone and hosting them here. We thoroughly enjoyed their visit and are happy they chose to spend time here in Seward. Thanks to Capt John and the amazing crew who visited us, had some fun, a few good laughs (including of course Karaoke), and good camaraderie with our American Legion Family! We look forward to the return of the Healy.

With the onset of October we'll be preparing ourselves for

the **Department Commander's Visitation**. It sounds formal, but it really isn't at all. The purpose of the visit is for the department commander to visit the post and have the opportunity to meet and greet the membership. The date of the visitation is **19 October**,



and of course we'll have a yummy dinner for all, and that is a bit of encouragement to bring folks in. It is designed not only for fun for all in attendance but also informative for members who want to know more about who we are and what we do. We'll be having the Department Commander, the Department Auxiliary President, and the Son's Detachment Commander in attendance. These folks are good folks and have a wealth of experience in the American Legion. So mark your calendar for this event, you never know what might happen but for sure you'll get a good meal and you might just learn something along the way. ☺

September was a busy month - as it seems most of our months are fairly busy, and I'd be remiss if

I didn't thank everyone who volunteered their time in helping around the post to make this a community center, and place not only to come and have fun but a place to turn to in times of need.

We couldn't do any of these activities for our members or the community without your selfless dedication and hard work. With that in mind, I want to acknowledge the continued dedication of the folks who run our nightly events of Texas and Omaha Poker, the Auxiliary's Bingo, kitchen help during our nightly tasty meals, participating during the celebrations of our patriotic holidays throughout the year, and those impromptu and unscheduled events where we really need the help of members to get things going. I am thrilled that you all "rise to the occasion" and make it happen! Because of you, we are a success!



Come on by the post, we always have something going on and always welcome folks coming in with ideas for functions, activities or just coming by and saying hi! We're a members' organization, and as such, the members provide the direction in our mission of support to our veterans and the community. I hope to see more people coming by now that the frenetic pace of summer is done and we can collectively "catch our breath." We can spend some time now with our friends and neighbors since the tourist season is just about over. The pace has slowed, the town is returning to its residents, and the quiet and peacefulness of the cooler months are returning.



See You at the Post!

Vet Groups Reject Proposed Retirement Changes

Veteran service organizations pushed back against a recent defense panel's recommendation that the Defense Department make the military retirement system look more like private sector plans.

"The American Legion's position is that we oppose any changes to the current military retirement system because we believe if there are changes, such as those [that have been] proposed, it would negatively impact incentives for enlistees," said Joe Grassi, deputy director for the Legion's National Security Division.

The Legion is aware that times are tight, Grassi said, but "the Legion believes the budget shouldn't be balanced on the backs of people who make sacrifices for this country."

Paying too much to retired troops?



The Defense Business Board made a similar pitch two years ago that military retirement should be more like a 401(K), with contributions by the servicemember. It was floated by the Defense Advisory Committee of The Stimson Center, a bipartisan Washington think tank.

The Defense Advisory Committee's 37-page report did not say if it endorsed all of the particulars in the original Defense Business Board's recommendations. For example, the Defense Business Board's plan would require retirees to wait until age 60 or 65 to begin drawing retirement pay. Both reports recommend that retirees pay higher premiums for TRICARE. However, the Defense Advisory Committee noted that military retirees and their dependents currently "pay only a fraction of what their civilian counterparts pay." The low premiums provide incentives for non-essential medical care that overloads the system, according to the report.

The 17-member DAC, in its report, cited a Bloomberg Government analysis of the Defense Business Board's retirement recommendation that claimed implementing some variation of the proposal would save \$700 million in the first year, close to \$2 billion in fiscal 2015, and then grow to \$7 billion annually by 2020.

The board's proposal to raise retiree premiums, including increasing means-tested beneficiary cost sharing requirements for "TRICARE for Life," would save about \$5 billion by fiscal 2015 and continue to grow after that, according to the report. The advisory committee is made up of 17 members including two former vice chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a former Air Force chief of staff and former chief of naval operations. It also includes former executives from defense industries.

"With the budget contracting, the military retirement system must be reformed," the Defense Advisory Committee report states.

The committee, like the Defense Business Board before it, noted that under the current system servicemembers may put in 10 and 15 years or more but get nothing for retirement if they leave before 20.

By adopting a plan more like civilian retirement packages a servicemember leaving before 20 years would still get something for the time he or she has put in.

However, veterans service organization officials said the military is not like the private sector, and the kind of changes recommended by the Defense Business Board and now the Defense Advisory Committee would actually cause harm to the all-volunteer force that the U.S. has come to depend on. Joe Davis, national spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said retirement, including low-cost healthcare for the member and spouse that comes with it, are "the only two carrots the Defense Department can offer to first get someone to volunteer 20, 30 or 40 years of their [life] to the nation."

"To earn it, however, also requires moving a dozen or more times, uprooting children from multiple schools, preventing spouses from any semblance of a career, and zero equity in homeownership," he said. "Add in multiple family separations, dangerous deployments, the threat of age discrimination when starting a second career, and now having to listen to so-called think tanks continue to compare military service to civilians is insulting to the long-time service and sacrifice of all military retirees."



News From the Road.....

By ALR Director Bobby Dunno

Well with the exception of a few cool yet sunny days it looks like our riding season is coming to an end (sniff-sniff ☺). So now we focus not on riding our bikes but working on them, which is almost as much fun as riding, the real downside of working on the bike is you want to cuss more! Hopefully by the time this article is out we will have the Winter Storage Checklist up a link on the ALRA Book-Face (Facebook) page and I hope to have it as a link on the ALRA website found online at <http://alaskalegionriders.org>. I hope this will assist some with getting their ride settled in for the winter or provide the more experienced riders a means of ensuring we have not forgotten anything or taken something for granted. (Yea I do it too!)

It makes our lives easier when we properly store our bikes especially when we are prepping for getting the bikes ready in the spring. Who wants to spend time fixing the bike from problems caused by neglect when the snow starts to melt and the roads are dry. There will also be a Spring Safety Checklist that will be appearing on the website soon.

Planning for the 2nd annual ROMP (Riders on Motorcycles Parade) is getting ready to begin in earnest. I will be forming a committee that will meet over the winter months. The goal is next June to have a good plan for a fun and organized event without any last minute "Oh My Gosh" moments. Of course following the excellent example set by Chapter 30 at our first ROMP Ice Cream will be involved.



It's the one thing that I have learned riding with the ALR these last couple years. Riding and Ice Cream go together! So we will be soliciting ideas and suggestions if you want to be involved in an event that is a whole lot of fun and entertaining let me know. I will be contacting Lisa and Vicki since they planned the first ROMP and we can always learn from experience. Also for those "snowbirds" who will be attending the ROMP, Marilyn and I will be experimenting with the Skype Program so that even those out of state will not be out of mind and can be part of the planning process.

October is also the last ALR meeting until March of 2014 so we have a lot of business to discuss, with Officer Nominations, End of Season Dinner and of course the ROMP Committee. Please plan to attend there is a lot of important decisions to make and this is everyone's opportunity to provide input. October also brings with it the Fall Workshop at Post 1 on Fireweed Lane in Anchorage we will likely have an ALRA meeting sometime Sunday afternoon. SO if you have not made plans for that weekend you can attend the meeting and catch up with other ALR members around the state.

So unlike many winter off seasons the ALR is going to be busy and there is plenty to do as we watch the snow rapidly make its way down the slopes leaving only dreams of a time when the pavement will be dry and once again we can **Get On Our Bikes And Ride!**



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House and Vice Report..... By Mike Calhoon



Hello from the Second Vice/Club

What a quick transition from Summer to Fall!! Summer was very busy at the Club with lots of fun activities, good functions celebrating our nation and supporting our veterans and active duty service members.

Fall has started out with a bang beginning with our week long visit with the USCGC Healy. Thanks to our great volunteers we were able to host the crew for dinner on the 23rd and for a "Wetting Down", which is a promotion party Coast Guard style, on the 26th.



This month we will have the **Department Commander's Visitation Dinner** on the 19th, our **community breakfast** on the 20th, and **Halloween** on the 31st. If you have time to assist with any of these functions please let me know and we will get you lined out for some fun volunteer time!!



Our member's only pool league will begin on Saturday the 12th. This is open to all members (no guests) and we have all skill levels. It is a fun night to shoot some pool, and hang out here at the club. It begins around 6:30pm and usually is over by 9:30-10:00pm depending on the number of participants.

We will have a Post fall clean-up day on October 12th starting around 10:00am so we can prepare for our transition to winter.



Remember, we are in the new membership year. If you have not renewed your membership please consider doing so and help us continue our service and support to the veterans and community of Seward.

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"

Sounding Off from the Sons.... By Mike Calhoon



Greetings from the SAL First Vice Commander.

The new membership year has begun so please consider renewing if you have not done so.



David "Ozzie" Osborn continues to do a great job maintaining the Legion Cemetery and we truly appreciate his tremendous support and effort.



Al Dykstra has been very busy helping to track down and eliminate the leak above the downstairs men's restroom. It looks like we are close to having that mystery solved and should be able to plan repair of the water damage for this winter. We will keep you informed as we lock down a timeframe for the work.

Thank you to **David Osborn** and **Ozzie Walters** for accepting the positions of Sergeant-at-Arms and Historian for Squadron 5. These appointments give us a full slate of officers and we can continue to move forward with our mission of Post and community support.



Thanks to all squadron members for your continued support and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 224-5440 or 362-2029.

OCTOBER MEETINGS



- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 03 October | ALR Meeting |
| 08 October | Post Meeting |
| 09 October | Auxiliary Meeting |
| 10 October | SAL Meeting |
| 19 October | Dept Cdr's Visitation |



Operation Urgent Fury

25 October 1983



In 1983 the United States invaded the island of Grenada and overthrew the communist government in favor of a pro-Western one in a span of less than two months. Problems between the US and the Caribbean nation began in 1979 (while the Cold War was still in effect) when a bloodless coup placed the pro-Marxist Maurice Bishop as the Prime Minister, which led to strengthened ties between Grenada and communist nations like Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Bishop was eventually murdered in October of 1983 during a power struggle with hard-liners in his own movement, creating a breakdown in civil order that threatened the lives of American medical students who were living on the island. In response, and at the request of allied Caribbean nations, the US launched "Operation Urgent Fury," sending the Marines to the north of the island and Army Rangers to the south.



U. S. Army Blackhawk helicopters on Grenada

During the fighting, the US suffered from lack of sufficient intelligence data, which made it difficult to find the medical students who needed to be rescued. The Grenadian Army and its Cuban allies also offered greater resistance than the Americans expected.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT:

The U.S. invasion of Grenada and the toppling of its Marxist government can be seen as part of a greater regional conflict. This conflict involved the U.S. and its Central American and Caribbean allies on one side and Fidel Castro's Cuba, the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and various Marxist guerrilla armies on the other. President Reagan and his administration were concerned that the Marxist government of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was allowing Cuba to gain undue influence in Grenada, specifically by constructing a military grade airport with Cuban military engineers.

On October 13, 1983, the Grenadian Army, controlled by former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, seized power in a bloody coup. The severity of the violence, coupled with Coard's hard-line Marxism, caused deep concern among neighboring Caribbean nations, as well as in Washington, D.C. Also, the presence of nearly 1,000 American medical students in Grenada caused added concern.

However, along with concern came opportunity. With President Reagan's worldwide efforts to confront what he viewed as the threat by the Soviet Union and other Communist countries (such as Cuba), the turmoil in the Caribbean provided a timely excuse to eliminate a Marxist government and give Fidel Castro a black eye.

It should also be noted just a few days earlier on **October 23, 1983, American foreign policy and pride suffered a terrible shock when a Muslim suicide bomber destroyed the Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 240 U.S. Marines.** A successful campaign in Grenada would prove helpful in alleviating the pain of that setback.



Despite the difficulties, the Americans were able to take the island by mid-December. An Interim Advisory Council was established and it governed Grenada until December 1984, when Herbert A. Blaize, the head of the New National Party, was made Prime Minister through parliamentary elections.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT:

The Marxist, pro-Cuban governments of Bishop and Coard were eliminated and a regime friendly to American interests took over.

The Reagan Administration proved willing to use force to combat what it considered hostile governments in the area.

America's European allies expressed disapproval of the unilateral invasion of Grenada.

The invasion sent a message to Cuba and Nicaragua that they could only go so far in exporting revolution in Central America and the Caribbean without provoking an American military response.

As a result of the Cuban defeat in Grenada, Colonel Pedro Tortolo, who was the commander of Cuban military personnel on Grenada when the U.S. forces invaded, was court-martialed and sent to Angola as a private, along with most of his Grenada command.

Operation Enduring Freedom Beirut Barracks Bombing

Oct. 7, 2012 was designated as Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans Day by the US Senate. The bill was introduced by Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal, Wyoming Senator Mike Enzi, New Hampshire Senator Kelly Ayotte, and Alaska Senator Mark Begich.

The bill began when U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Andrew Koenig of Wyoming contacted Enzi, saying he wanted that day to honor the men and women still serving in Afghanistan.

"A grateful nation thanks the heroes of Operation Enduring Freedom for their bravery, service, and sacrifice and that of their families," said Blumenthal in a press release. "This resolution honors the brave men and women who served in Operation Enduring Freedom for stepping forward when their country needed them and achieving the mighty task that is the namesake of their mission."

"We can't forget that our men and women in uniform are still fighting for our freedom," said Enzi in the statement. "This day recognizes the sacrifices of our Afghanistan veterans and their loved ones. It is a thank you from America for all of their service."

"This resolution affirms our deep gratitude to the thousands of American service members who have served in Afghanistan. They have carried out their missions with courage, perseverance, and skill," said Ayotte, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, in the release. "We must never forget their sacrifices - nor the sacrifices of their loved ones - in answering the call of duty. I join Americans in thanking our military men and women for their brave service and dedication to advancing the cause of freedom."

"October 7, 2001 marked the beginning of the end for insurgent forces in Afghanistan intent on terrorist activities both there and abroad," said Begich in the release. "This resolution honors those dedicated men and women who have fought and sacrificed so that others may realize a life of freedom and democracy."

Oct. 7 will mark 12 years since the war started. Over 500,000 American military members have served in the war, and around 2,000 have given their lives.



October 23, 2013 marks the 30th anniversary of the Beirut bombing. The Marines in this bombing were sent by President Ronald Reagan in 1982 to Lebanon on a peacekeeping mission in the region.

On October 23, 1983, at 6:22 am, a truck carrying 2000 pounds of explosives drives into the Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon and crashes into the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regimental Battalion Landing Team barracks.

The Beirut mission started out as an effort to stabilize a fragile peace in a war-torn country. Lebanon had been in turmoil since the Palestine Liberation Organization, having been expelled from Jordan, took refuge there in the 1970s.

In 1975, a panoply of Christian and Muslim militias, some backed by neighboring powers such as Iran, Syria and Israel, turned what had been a Middle East oasis into a no-man's land of urban warfare.

Israel invaded in 1982, hoping to crush the PLO. In exchange for an Israeli withdrawal, the U.N. sent in a peacekeeping force made up of troops from Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States.



U.S. Peacekeeping forces set up camp at Beirut International Airport, a spot difficult to defend because the airport remained open for business and because warring factions controlled strategic hillsides nearby. It was generally believed the location was set for political and diplomatic reasons, not necessarily tactically defendable.

The situation fell apart quickly. Militia leaders began to view the United States and its allies as favoring the Christian-led forces of the Lebanese government. Tensions increased as evidenced by a car-bomb attack at the U.S. Embassy in April 1983 that killed 63 people emphasizing the point.

The Marines' departure brought Beirut no peace. The civil war raged for seven more years until a settlement left Syria firmly in control of the country for many years. Yet the peace in this region is never guaranteed with the continual religious and political factions seeking influence and control.



Auxiliary Update

By Connie Kullander, 2nd Vice

Well here we are in October already. My how the time does go by so very fast.



First off, I would like to thank those who helped while we had the USCGC Healy in. They were a great group of folks!! I am very proud of our post. It seems we have a great reputation of hosting our military and making them all feel at home. Without the help of our volunteers we would not have this reputation. "THANK-YOU", to our volunteers.



We have Department fall workshop coming up. President Suzi and board member Jacki, will be attending. We will be waiting for the information when they return on the 6th.

We have to regrettably tell you of the loss of three members. We have lost Doris Corcoran, Alice Bibler, and Lettie Buchanan. May they be forever in the hands of God.



October 19th is Department Dinner, which we will be helping the Post host. We are going to need help, so if anyone is so inclined to step up to the plate, it would truly be a huge help. We are also going to be decorating for Halloween and once again we need talent, ideas and help. Any thing would help.

I can't think of anything else going on for the ladies, except for we are getting close to toys for tots. We are going to need lots of help in all areas for this event so put your ideas together and bring them to the meeting for discussion. Remember BINGO is still every Monday!!! Bring a friend or two and come have some fun!!!

For God and Country

VA benefits in peril if government shuts down

WASHINGTON (Sept. 30, 2013) -- In a statement issued Sept. 28, the Department of Veterans Affairs warned that funding for veterans benefits "will run out by late October" if the federal government shuts down. "At that point, VA will be unable to make any payments."

While claims processors at the Veterans Benefits Administration would continue working after a shutdown, funding for any benefits that might be awarded to America's veterans would soon dry up, VA warned.

"Congress has an obligation to put veterans ahead of politics," said American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger, leader of the nation's largest veterans service organization. "The fact that funding for VA benefits could disappear in a month ought to be incentive enough for our elected leaders to achieve a solution."

According to the VA statement, "The Administration strongly believes that a lapse in appropriations should not occur. There is enough time for Congress to prevent a lapse in appropriations, and the Administration is willing to work with Congress to enact a short-term continuing resolution to fund critical Government operations and allow Congress the time to complete the full-year 2014 appropriations."

According to VA's "Veterans Field Guide to Government Shutdown," other services would be impacted by a potential lapse in appropriations, including:

- No decisions on claims appeals or motions will be issued by the Board of Veterans Appeals.
- The recruiting and hiring of veteran job applicants will cease.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Education counseling will be limited.
- Interments at VA national cemeteries will be conducted on a modified rate.
- The VA secretary's correspondence with veterans and veterans service organizations will be suspended.

"Our federal government must never put veterans in this kind of position," Dellinger said. "It is imperative that Congress understands The American Legion strongly objects to the cessation of any VA benefits or services that put our country's veterans and loved ones at risk."

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October 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Mexican Martes 1	2	3	Steak Night 4	5
			 Burgers and Dogs	 ALR Meeting 7pm Lasagna	 <u>KARAOKE 7PM</u>	 Fried Chicken
6 "Texas Hold 'em" 6PM  <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	7 OMAHA POKER 7PM <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>  BINGO 6:30PM  <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	8 Post Meeting 7pm 	9 Auxiliary Meeting 7pm  Canneloni	10 SAL Meeting 7pm  Meat Loaf	11 <u>KARAOKE 7PM</u> 	12 Chinese Chicken Pool League
13 "Texas Hold 'em" 6PM  <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	14 BINGO!!! 6:30PM  OMAHA POKER 7PM  BINGO!!!! 6:30PM <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	15 	16 Italian Sausage and Peppers 	17 Pot Roast 	18 <u>KARAOKE 7PM</u> 	19 Commander's Visitation Dinner 
20 "Texas Hold 'em" 6PM <u>Luscious Leftovers</u> 3rd Sunday of the Month Breakfast	21 OMAHA POKER 7PM  <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>  BINGO!!!! 6:30PM	22 	23 Beef Stroganoff 	24 Chili and Corn Bread 	25 <u>KARAOKE 7PM</u> 	26 Fried Chicken Pool League 
27 "Texas Hold 'em" 6PM <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	28 BINGO!!! 6:30PM  <u>Luscious Leftovers</u> OMAHA POKER 7PM  Swiss Steak	29 	30 Swiss Steak 	31 HALLOWEEN 		

