Well we made it through another summer and what a summer it has been! Great weather for all and we had the opportunity to visit with many of our membership who come to Seward in the summer to work and play. It always good to see these folks, and it is bitter sweet when they leave because we enjoy their company while they’re here but are a little sad when they have to go back to the Lower 48 to their families and their regular lives. We wish them well and look forward to their return next summer!

In the past month we’ve said farewell to another of our active members – Richard Smith. Richard is a past Commander of Post 5 and past Western District Commander, and also one of our best ambassadors, not only of Post 5 but the American Legion as an organization. Richard always had a kind word and warm handshake for all who came through our doors. He is on a retirement adventure and we look forward to his return and the stories he’ll have to share.

On a different and sad note, I’d like to share the unfortunate news that we have lost two long time post members in the past month. George Werner and Gilbert Ollestad have passed to Post Everlasting. I want to extend on behalf of our American Legion Family our heartfelt condolences to their families in this difficult time.

It looks like we’re heading headlong into Fall; hopefully it will be as nice a transition as we had into Summer. The daylight will be getting much shorter; we’re starting to drive with headlights on at night now in town. It is a sure sign that the colder days are on their way. With this in mind, we need to think about getting our homes ready for the cold weather and for many we’ll need to budget for the increased heating and utility charges with the cold and dark.

I’d like to mention the great job that David Osborn (Ozzie) has done throughout the summer at our cemetery. It is a big piece of land with a lot of headstones memorializing the loved ones of many in Seward in their final resting place. It is of great comfort that Ozzie has done such a superb job in a place of dignity of our American Legion Family. Thanks Oz, your selfless service truly helps our post, our veterans and their families, and the community of Seward.

During this month we have a few days of remembrance and celebration. We have Patriot Day (Sept 11th) where we remember the tragic day of 9/11 and those lost in the terror attack in NY, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. We also have POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept 21st where we remember and honor the sacrifices made by this nation’s prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. We also have a day of celebration in the American Legion Day on Sept 16th. This day was dedicated in 2009 on the anniversary of the establishment of the American Legion in 1919.

The American Legion Day celebrates the 94 years of service that the American Legion has accomplished throughout the country with over 14,000 posts honoring veterans and providing community support. Seward Post 5 has been in existence since that time and well and remains committed to carrying on that tradition of supporting local veterans and the community, as well as our military service members.

We assist our veterans in securing benefits, treatment, and compensation from the Veterans Administration commensurate with their military service. We work hard to keep patriotic holidays alive in the minds of our community, because we know our holidays are a celebration of our incredible history as a country, and if you lose your history you will lose your sense of who you are as a nation. We work to provide help to those in need when times get hard and provide scholarships to our graduating seniors and others in post-secondary schools for their educational goals.

As with all things in life, we see change; people come and go and some leave to go onto bigger and better things or just head out for some long earned R & R. Some leave a lasting impression for those whom he has left behind, and one such person is Al Stone. Al has been a huge part of our American Legion Family and worked diligently in years past being one of the core group who were the catalyst in making this place the success it has continued to become. All I can say Al, is thanks for what you did “back in the day” and know you will be missed. Know too you always have a home to come back to at Post 5!

As you can see, we have an incredibly dedicated group of people who work hard in our American Legion Family and we still manage to have fun in the service of our veterans and the community. Thank you for all you do and for your service to this community and this great nation.
Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

As my year as your national commander winds down to a close, I can’t help but think about some of the great people I met during my travels.

Thanks to the kindness of American Legion Family members everywhere, I accompanied Legionnaires on Operation Comfort Warriors deliveries at Fort Jackson, Fort Gordon and just this week at Fort Hood. During these events, I was honored to meet many brave servicemen and women who are recovering from their injuries. I will long remember their stories and their gratitude toward The American Legion.

I was inspired to meet Legionnaire Isaac “Feet” Jensen, an Iraq War veteran who lost both his legs in combat. Jensen, a Utah resident, was taken in by Legionnaires who helped him assimilate into their lives, their post and their Riders group. Be sure to learn about Jensen’s journey and motorcycle riding in the September issue of The American Legion Magazine.

Along with Auxiliary National President Peggy Thomas, I was honored to attend ceremonies commemorating our heroes who were laid to rest in the American cemeteries in Normandy and Brittany, France. Behind the scenes of the solemn pageantry are dedicated individuals – Americans and French citizens – who work tirelessly throughout the year to preserve the memories of our fallen heroes.

Last but not least, I enjoyed meeting thousands of Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons. I will long remember my visits to posts large and small, and the comradeship we shared. There are many more memories, too many to share here. But taken all together, they represent a year in which every day was indeed Veterans Day.

Thank you for what you do every day on behalf of veterans, servicemen and women, and the communities in which they live.

For God and Country,

James E. Koutz
National Commander

From the Desk of the Service Officer
By John Christensen

SUBJECT: DESKS! (verified by Snopes)

Back in September of 2005, on the first day of school, Martha Cothren, a Military History teacher at Robinson High School in Little Rock, did something not to be forgotten.

On the first day of school, with the permission of the school superintendent, the principal and the building supervisor, she removed all of the desks in her classroom. When the first period kids entered the room they discovered that there were no desks.

Ms. Cothren, where are our desks? She replied, you can’t have a desk until you tell me how you earn the right to sit at a desk.

They thought, Well, maybe it’s our grades. No, she said. Maybe it’s our behavior. She told them, No, it’s not even your behavior.

And so, they came and went, the first period, second period, third period. Still no desks in the classroom. Kids called their parents to tell them what was happening and by early afternoon television news crews had started gathering at the school to report about this crazy teacher who had taken all the desks out of her room.

The final period of the day came and as the puzzled students found seats on the floor of the desk-less classroom, Martha Cothren said, throughout the day no one has been able to tell me just what he or she has done to earn the right to sit at the desks that are ordinarily found in this classroom. Now I am going to tell you.

At this point, Martha Cothren went over to the door of her classroom and opened it. Twenty-seven (27) U.S. Veterans, all in uniform, walked into that classroom, each one carrying a school desk. The Vets began placing the school desks in rows, and then they would walk over and stand alongside the wall. By the time the last soldier had set the final desk in place those kids started to understand, perhaps for the first time in their lives, just how the right to sit at those desks had been earned.

Martha said, you didn’t earn the right to sit at these desks. These heroes did it for you. They placed the desks here for you. They went halfway around the world, giving up their education and interrupting their careers and families so you could have the freedom you have. Now, it’s up to you to sit in them. It is your responsibility to learn, to be good students, to be good citizens. They paid the price so that you could have the freedom to get an education. Don’t ever forget it. By the way, this is a true story. And this teacher was awarded Veterans of Foreign Wars Teacher of the Year for the State of Arkansas in 2006. She is the daughter of a WWII POW.
News From the Road......
By ALR Director Bobby Dunno

Well first I must apologize for not making time to write a few notes for the last newsletter. Although I thought it was quite funny when our Commander took my e-mail and published it instead. But the truth is I was just too busy wringing out the amount of riding time as summer is fading and selfishly did not make time to sit down and write a few lines or words of safety, but......I was having just too much fun! We got our son a side car and we were wearing the newness off of it.

As most of us realize by now the riding season is rapidly drawing to a close so it is time that we who create the wind in our faces to think about (can you hear the low drum sounds of doom in the background) storing our bikes for the winter ☹. On the positive side of this it is also the time for us to work on and fix all the small nagging issues that had been bugging us while we ride. Unusual noises and rattles, soft brakes, slipping clutches, etc. can all be taken care of after we have decided to put them away for the winter. Of course I would be willing to bet a nickel that more than one of us has improvements planned and at least the beginnings of a mental work-list developing on things to accomplish. Who can say “Honey I want __________ for my motorcycle for Christmas!” I will be publishing a Winter Prep List that will assist some with getting their ride settled in for the winter and make prepping for the coming spring a lot easier. I will bring copies of the checklist to the next ALR meeting on the 5th of September and I will e-mail it to Lisa Williamson our ALRA Webmaster extraordinaire so she can put it up on the website so everyone can download it.

Enough of the depressing stuff we still have riding days remaining and some of us went to Wildman’s for Ice Cream a few weekends ago and we had a pretty good time. We left with four of us riding but unfortunately lost Don and Marilyn when his exhaust busted (Can you say winter fix it list) and they we forced to turn around. But we picked up Troy who got a bike on the road after working a little creative engineering and tracked us down on the return trip. It was a good time and something we need to repeat, maybe next time we can go to Soldotna for lunch.

The Legacy Run is over for this year and Chapter 5 raised and donated another $1500.00 bringing the total sent by the chapters of the ALR Alaska to $7500.00. The final tally for the entire Legacy Run was $775,000.00 Nationwide bringing the total amount in the scholarship fund for the children of our fallen hero's too more than 4 million dollars. To everyone who donated or will donate and bought overpriced deserts at our dessert auctions - I Thank You. It is a wonderful thing to be part of and I am proud to play a small part in it also.

On another somber note we will be missing Richard for the long winter months and the foreseeable future. He is off on one of the greatest adventures to tour and see a fair part of our great country from the saddle of his motorcycle. I pray he finds plenty of fair riding weather, smooth roadways with excellent corners. I know he will be seeing some awe inspiring scenery as he rides the hi-ways and byways of our fair country. I know I am more than a bit envious and can't wait until his friendly smile and graceful manner gets back to the post to grace us again.

So while the days are getting shorter there is still riding to be done. Take advantage of the days we have left (especially the ones with no rain) and get a few extra miles in. Because you know come next March while we are sitting up at the post waiting for the snow to start melting we will be wishing we had taken advantage so Get On Your Bike And Ride!
House and Vice Report

By Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice/Club

We are starting to creep towards fall and we can all be thankful for the great summer we’ve had!!!

We have met lots of new friends from other Legion Posts around the country and have gotten to spend time with some of our own members who are only here during the summer. We have said goodbye to some members who have moved out of state and some who have moved on to Post Everlasting.

I am continually impressed at the dedication of our membership and their generosity and support towards the mission of Post 5. We will have many opportunities this month for volunteer support as we have the Early Bird Dinner on the 14th, our community breakfast on the 15th, the USCG Icebreaker Healy coming to town the last week or so this month, and some work around the Post to be determined.

I would like to thank Todd and Jeff Schroder for another generous donation of new cocktail tables. We truly appreciate everything the owners of Tony’s Bar do to support Post 5 and its mission.

We are saying goodbye to our Monday Night Football guru and emcee extraordinaire Al Stone. Monday nights will never be the same and we will miss Al tremendously!! Thank you Al for you years of dedication to Post 5 and our club!!

Please remember, if you bring a guest, friend or family, you are responsible for them and their conduct while visiting our legion home. Let them know it is a privilege and not a right for them to be allowed in the club. We try to provide meals and beverages as inexpensively as we can to help support our members and provide a service to them and this includes our “Luscious Leftovers”. Luscious leftover nights were developed to keep food waste to a minimum and to allow members access to good food for little or no money and should not be seen as an invitation for non-members to come get free food. Thank you for being considerate of our members when you bring guests to the club.

Thanks to everyone who continues to support the Post and the Club. Without you we would not be able to serve our veterans and the community of Seward.

Sounding Off from the Sons

By Mike Calhoon

The new membership year has begun so please consider renewing if you have not done so. The Post will be holding its’ Early Bird dinner on September 14th and all members who have renewed their membership will be invited to attend for a free meal.

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

The SAL is still planning a project in support of the Post and we will keep you all informed once that is solidified.

The SAL is looking for a new Sergeant at Arms and a new Historian. If you have an interest in finding out more about these volunteer positions please contact Al Dykstra.

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.

Gaming Update

Bonnie Low of Fairbanks was the winner in the Ballers on Purpose 4-wheeler raffle with the drawing being held on August 17, 2013. Congratulations Bonnie and thanks to all who supported this fundraiser by purchasing tickets.

We still have a raffle going to support the local Boy Scout Troop. The prize is the grill on display at the Post and the tickets are $5.00 each. The drawing will be help on Saturday, September 7th at 7:00pm.

Remember, playing pull tabs at Tony’s Bar, Thorne’s Showcase Lounge, The Yukon Bar, and here at Post 5 helps to support our charity efforts in Seward. Think about where you spend your gaming money.

Thanks to everyone who supports our fundraising efforts throughout the year and if you have any questions concerning pull tabs, raffles, etc. please feel free to contact me at 224-5440.

Mike Calhoon, Member in Charge of Gaming
Patriot Day

Patriot Day is an annual observance on September 11 to remember those who were injured or died during the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Many Americans refer Patriot Day as 9/11 or September 11.

On the direction of the President, the flag of the United States of America should be displayed on the homes of Americans, the White House and all United States government buildings. The flag should be flown at half-mast as a mark of respect to those who died on September 11, 2001. Many people observe a moment of silence at 8:46 AM (Eastern Daylight Time). This marks the time that the first plane flew into the World Trade Center.

On September 11, 2001, four planes were hijacked. The hijackers then deliberately flew three of the planes into two important buildings, the Pentagon in Washington DC and the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The fourth crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The loss of life and damage that these hijackings caused form the biggest act of terrorism ever on United States soil. Nearly 3000 people died in the attacks and the economic impact was immense.

The attacks have greatly increased attention to national security in the United States. This has had huge implications for United States national and international politics. This is particularly true for the relationships between the United States and Islamic countries in the Middle East.

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution by thirty-nine brave men on September 17, 1787, recognizing all whom are born in the U.S. or by naturalization, have become citizens. Now Constitution Day is the time to carry on their legacy and develop habits of citizenship in a new generation of Americans.

In 1952 Congress passed a law that September 17 was the official date to commemorate "the formation and signing of the Constitution of the United States" but the day was also designated "Citizenship Day" and retained its original purpose of recognizing all those who had attained the status of American citizenship.

Every September 17th (unless it falls on a weekend or other holiday) Constitution Day, also called Citizenship Day, is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. This is one of the newest federal holidays to be established by Congress, as it was passed in just 2004. Citizenship Day was the name given to the holiday prior to its official designation.

However the roots of Citizenship Day stretch much farther back beginning in 1940 when I am an American Day was initiated by Congress for the third Sunday in May. The day of September 17th was reached by citizens themselves. In 1952 Olga T. Weber of Ohio successfully convinced her municipality to name the date Constitution Day. The next year she went a step further and petitioned the Ohio government to celebrate the holiday statewide as Constitution Week from September 17-23 and the movement was soon passed.

Today we consider Constitution Day as a birthday for our country and it serves as a means for American citizens to express their pride in their citizenship. Constitution Day also designates a time to honor the Constitution of America and learn more about the famous piece of legislation. The Act that passed the holiday also states that federally funded schools are required to provide lessons on the U.S. Constitution during the holiday.
POW/MIA Empty Chair

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion.

At the beginning of every American Legion meeting, we remember the incredible cost paid by those who gave their all to help preserve the freedoms we enjoy, those gallant individuals who fought and died for our country. Yet, it is in remembering our fallen comrades that we are reminded of those whose fate is still unknown, those still listed as Missing In Action and Prisoners Of War. More than 78,000 Americans are still unaccounted for from World War II: 8,100 from Korea; 120 from the Cold War; 1,810 from Vietnam; and 3 from the Gulf War. These courageous Americans, who dedicated their lives to preserving and protecting our freedom, will never be forgotten.

To honor these men and women, we perform the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony. It symbolizes the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs...we call them comrades.

They are unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we join together to pay our humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.

The table set for one is small... it symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his oppressors.

The table cloth is white... it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep faith awaiting their return.

The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn on the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing.

A slice of lemon is on the bread plate... to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is salt upon the bread plate... symbolic of the family's tears as they wait.

The glass is inverted... they cannot toast with us tonight. The chair is empty... they are not here.

Remember... all of you who served with them and called them comrades, who depended on their might and aid, and relied on them... for surely... they have not forsaken you.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

For years, The American Legion supported a National POW/MIA Recognition Day, it is now recognized annually on the third Friday of September. This commemoration is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families.

Until July 18, 1979, no commemoration was held to honor POW/MIAs. In the first year, Congress passed resolutions and the national ceremony was held at the National Cathedral in Washington. The 1st Tactical Squadron from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia flew the Missing Man formation.

A poster was published by the VA which contained only the letters POW/MIA. That continued until 1982, when a black and white drawing of a POW in captivity was used to show urgency of the situation.

The National League of Families proposed the third Friday of September as a commemoration date. Most of the National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies have taken place at the Pentagon. Now, They’re held throughout the nation and around the world on military installations, ships, schools, churches, etc. The focus is to ensure that America remembers its responsibility to stand behind those who serve it and to make sure that we do all that is possible to account for those who have not returned.
IRS Targets the American Legion
Excerpt from the Wall Street Journal (30 Aug 13)
& The Daily Caller (29 Aug 13)

The Internal Revenue Service is facing fresh criticism from Congress after the American Legion alleged the IRS has recently been unreasonably tough in its reviews of the tax-exempt status of individual American Legion posts.

The House Committee on Veterans Affairs on Wednesday, August 28th requested the IRS respond to complaints its inspectors are asking posts to provide official discharge papers or service records during reviews of their tax-exempt status, a policy the committee says is "unduly burdensome and completely unwarranted."

Noncompliance brings with it a $1,000 a day fine. The American Legion said Post 447 in Round Rock, Texas, was fined $12,000 for lack of compliance before rounding up the necessary official documents to satisfy inspectors. The IRS said it cannot comment on individual taxpayers or organizations.

"As former military members, the one thing we know how to do is follow regulations," said Louis Celli, national legislative director for the American Legion. "The inspection manual they give to inspectors tells them to look for documents that we're not told to maintain in the first place."

Mr. Celli said the problem stems from unclear guidance laid out in official IRS publications that explains the requirements for a group to qualify as an IRS-recognized veterans organization. The Tax Guide for Veterans' Organizations lays out the requirements for a 501(c)(19) organization, which includes, in most cases, maintaining a list of members and their dates of service. The document doesn't say that veterans organizations have to maintain official discharge forms, according to the legion's interpretation of the regulations, Mr. Celli said.

Under the latest iteration of the IRS field manual, updated in January 2011, inspectors are directed to inspect "membership applications, DD Forms 214, or other discharge documents." The Legion claims inspectors don't accept membership applications as being good enough anymore, even though regulations are worded in a way that makes them seem like one of the acceptable types of documentation.

The IRS has until 3 September to respond to the request from the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

"There is no special enforcement effort underway regarding 501(c)(19) organizations, just regular compliance activity," the IRS said in a statement. "The IRS also has a variety of special publications and other outreach to assist these groups in meeting the criteria outlined under the federal tax law."

"As if we needed more proof the IRS is completely out of control. After illegally targeting innocent groups solely on the basis of their political beliefs, the IRS now appears to have America's veterans service organizations in the cross hairs," said Rep. Jeff Miller (R., Fla.), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Rep. Miller was referring to the recent dust-up over allegations the IRS had unfairly targeted conservative political action committees.

American Legion legal counsel Philip Onderdonk told The Daily Caller: "Unconscionable" is an overused word in describing the abuses of power and the continual overstepping of legal and constitutional boundaries by this administration, but it certainly applies in this case. The American Legion is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit veterans organization chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919, and now has more than 2.4 million members in 14,000 posts worldwide, according to its website. It has never had to deal with such a requirement until now.

I assume that some individuals falsely claim to have served in the military. But the notion that American Legion posts may be enjoying tax-exempt status under false pretenses — the premise of the IRS' new inquiry — is as absurd as it is offensive.

Sen. Jerry Moran asked Acting IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel, "at a minimum," to put a halt to the audits until a review of the practice is completed. He also asked Werfel these questions:

• What legal authority does the IRS have in carrying out a mandate for personal, military service records? Was this mandate reviewed by IRS general counsel? Please provide documentation that gives the IRS the authority to collect this information.

• Under whose leadership was this mandate initiated, for what direct purpose, and who had approving authority for this mandate?

• Were veteran service organizations ever specifically notified of the requirement? If so, please provide the documentation that was issued to these organizations. If not, please explain why organizations were not notified; and

• Is it true that an organization unable or unwilling to provide this information could be charged penalty fees of $1,000 per day? Please provide clarification regarding the penalty for noncompliance.

This is particularly troubling as posts are self-sustaining entities relying on membership dues, fundraisers and daily activities to keep the doors open. Our efforts are to support veterans and our community, not to enjoy tax exempt privilege for self-serving purposes.
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<td>Baked Chicken</td>
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