



The American Legion Department of Maine

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Weekly Update



March 12, 2010

☺ SMILE ☺

Gain control of your time, and you will gain control of your life.

Congratulations to the following for achieving 100% in membership:

Eastport Post 11 Naples Post 155 Brewer Post 98

State Convention Housing

Please remember that the Department Headquarters handles reservations **ONLY** for Department Officers, Past Department Commanders, Candidates for Department Office, Area Representatives, specified Auxiliary members and SAL Officers. All others need to make their own reservations and the following information will assist you in your planning for the convention in Bangor, June 17, 18, 19, 2010. **Please mention The American Legion when calling as some of these rates are reduced for Legion family members.**

Ramada Inn – 947-6961 – 357 Odlin Rd., single or double \$84.53 tax included

Bangor Motor Inn – 947-0355 – Hogan Rd., double \$68.00, king \$78.00 plus 7% tax

Super 8 – 945-5681 – 462 Odlin Rd., single \$77.00 w/\$5.00 for each person after plus 7% tax

Howard Johnson – 942-5251 – 336 Odlin Rd., \$69.95 single, double \$74.95 plus 7% tax

Days Inn – 942-8272 – 250 Odlin Rd., \$82.00 single plus 7% tax

Econo Lodge – 945-0111 – 327 Odlin Rd., 10% discount, free breakfast, heated pool, \$67.50 single, \$72.00 double, \$76.00 king plus 7% tax.

Holiday Inn – 947-0101 – 404 Odlin Rd., \$89.00 plus 7% tax

Hollywood Slots & Hotel – 974-3500 – 500 Main St., \$149.00 to \$189 plus 7% tax

Department Testimonial

The Department Testimonial for Department Commander Andy Olson, Department President Lois Hubbard, and SAL Detachment Commander Bruce Pierce will be held Saturday, May 15, 2010 at The American Legion Post 5 in Waterville. Social hour will be at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:30 p.m., with program to follow. There will be entertainment in the canteen following the ceremony. Dinner choices are Roast Beef or Chicken Cordon Bleu with baked potato, peas, salad, rolls and cheesecake with strawberry topping for \$20 per person. Send check for dinner reservations to the Department of Maine, P.O. Box 900, Waterville 04903-0900 indicating your choice of Roast Beef or Chicken Cordon Bleu. Cutoff date for reservations is May 7, 2010. Tickets may be picked up at the door upon arrival. For anyone who may wish to stay overnight, please call the Fireside Inn and Suites at 873-3335 to make your hotel reservations, and don't forget to mention the **Legion**. Cost/night is \$59.95 (plus tax).

Agent Orange

Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans with ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease or B cell leukemia should file claims now with the Department of Veterans Affairs for disability compensation, not wait until VA publishes a regulation officially linking these diseases to wartime service.

Advocacy groups are urging the swift filing of claims because veterans eventually found eligible for disability pay for these diseases will be able to receive compensation back to the date their claims were filed. Those who wait for a regulation to add these ailments to VA's list of diseases presumed caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other toxins used in the war could lessen, by several months of compensation, any retroactive pay that they will be due once their claims have been approved.

Help in filing claims is available through the Legion and its service officers as well as through most other major veterans' organizations. A law firm representing the Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) sent a March 1 letter to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki demanding that VA publish by March 12 an interim regulation for adding these illnesses to its list of diseases presumed caused by Agent Orange — or face a lawsuit.

Longer delays in rulemaking, the letter said, will “result in irreparable harm to thousands of Vietnam veterans who suffer from these diseases” because VA compensation is not owed to “new claimants for any period prior to publication of a final regulation.”

What the letter didn't make clear is that veterans can avoid the “irreparable harm” if they don't wait for the regulation to file their claim.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 requires VA to publish final regulations to expand its list of presumptive diseases within 210 days of receiving a report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) linking more illnesses to use of the herbicide during the war in Southeast Asia. That 210-day deadline was reached Feb. 19 without VA having published even an interim regulation.

A VA official said the Office of Management and Budget is expected to complete its review of VA's interim regulation by the end of March. It then will be published in the Federal Register for public comment.

Shinseki had delighted veterans' groups last October by announcing that VA would not challenge a July 24 report by the IOM that found sufficient epidemiologic evidence to suggest a link between wartime herbicide exposure and Parkinson's disease, B cell leukemia and ischemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease.

Veterans who set foot in Vietnam from 1962 to 1975 and suffer today from one of these diseases will be in line for a disability rating and compensation once the regulation is final and claim adjudicators begin using it. By one estimate, as many as 185,000 veterans could be eligible for disability pay for these diseases.

The American Legion is sending out fresh guidance to its service officers to urge veterans who believe they have a claim under any one of the three illnesses to come in for free help in developing their claims.

Military Appreciation Night

On Friday, March 19, the Maine Red Claws will be hosting Military Appreciation Night for their game vs. the Albuquerque Thunderbirds at 7:30 p.m. The Red Claws will be wearing special Camouflage Uniforms to show their support of the military. The team is also hosting a special pre-game ceremony for the Helmets to Hardhats and Wounded Warrior Project and will be hosting a 50/50 raffle to benefit those programs.

For this game, the Red Claws have set up a special price for the American Legion friends and family, where the normally priced \$25 Side Center Court tickets are just \$20! \$5 End Zone and \$10 Corner Court tickets are also available. To purchase tickets, please click on the link below that will take you to the Red Claws online ticketing. A special promotional code will be entered automatically from the link and you will see the special military price points. Just pick out and purchase the tickets of your choice and print your tickets right at home.

<https://www.ticketreturn.com/prod2/Buy.asp?EventID=43110&promocode=LEGION>

Directory Changes

Pg.62, Calais Post 3 Commander Michael McLean, P.O. Box 1211, Calais 04619 (594-7653)

District Meetings

District 2 –Cumberland: March 14, Naples Post 155, 2 p.m.

District 3 – Androscoggin: March 14, Auburn Post 153, 2 p.m. mtg.

District 15 – Washington: March 14, Cherryfield Post 8, 2 p.m.

District 5 – Oxford: March 17, Norway Post 82, 7 p.m., elections

District 14 – Piscataquis: March 20, Sangerville Post 165, 6:30 p.m. supper, 7:30 mtg.

District 11 – Waldo: March 21, Stockton Springs Post 157, 2 p.m.

District 17 – N Aroostook has changed their meeting from April 4 to April 11

What's Happening?

1136th TC Send Off Ceremony: Mar. 13, Collins Center for the Arts, on the University of Maine Campus, Orono. On behalf of CPT Peter Carter, please show your support to the soldiers and families of the 1136th as they prepare for their upcoming deployment.

St. Patricks Day Breakfast: Mar.14, Winthrop Post 40, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Bacon, eggs, pancakes, fruit, home fries, sausage, ham, coffee, tea, juice, all you can eat, \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 12.

Flag Assembly: Mar. 16, New Sweden School, 10 a.m. Stockholm Post 136 and Auxiliary will host an assembly on "Americanism". We will have Betsy Ross there and a Legion member will demonstrate how to properly fold a flag. We will talk about the correct and incorrect things to do with a flag. We will then hand out a small flag for each child.

1st Annual Cribbage Tournament: Mar. 20, York Post 56, registration 10 a.m., start time 11 a.m., 4 person teams, \$60 per team. Light lunch provided, cash prizes, limit 100 teams. FMI, please call Paul Morrison at 337-0888. Mail registration and fees to Post 56, 9 Hannaford Dr., York 03909.

Birthday Supper: Mar. 21, Dixfield Post 100, social hour 5-6 p.m., supper to follow. \$6 per person

Women Veterans Luncheon: Mar. 26, Caribou Post 15, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Vet Center would like to thank and honor the women who have served their country. If you are a woman of any nationality, please join us for food, speakers and a gift. FMI, please call Christopher Rowland or John Reed at 496-3900

Home-style Dinner: Mar. 27, Stockholm Post 136, 5 p.m. Legion and Auxiliary will host a home-style dinner at the Caribou Veteran's Home, complete with homemade dessert.

Second Pocket Flag Ceremony: April 15, Seabasticook Valley Middle School in Newport, 9 a.m. This will be in tribute to the 286th. The Nokomis JROTC Color Guard will demonstrate the Flag Folding Ceremony, there will be a variety of music, members of the 286th will be joining us and a few speakers. Following this, students and attendees will be invited to create a message and fold a Pocket Flag which will then be distributed to deployed or deploying troops. This was a wonderful event last April and one that the students wanted to recreate. We welcome all veterans, family members and supporters. For more information, contact Kitty Mitchell at kmitchell@rsu19.org.

Breakfast: 2nd Saturday of the month, Feb thru Oct, Palermo Post 163, again all are welcome. The menu includes eggs to order, home fries, bacon, pancakes, french toast, fresh fruit, juice and coffee all for a donation of \$5.00, all you can eat. FMI, please call Bud Horridge at 993-2003.

Karaoke: Every Friday night, 8 – 12 p.m., Augusta Post 2

Dance: Every Saturday night, 7 – 12 p.m., Augusta Post 2

Donations

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

Donald Best, Winthrop Post 40
Topsham Post 202 ALR
Rumford Post 24
Finance Officer John Hargreaves
Asst. SO Lester Dearborn and
Second Vice Commander Brenda Dearborn
PNC Anthony Jordan
Dexter Post 53
Belfast Post 43

\$100 – National Commander’s Campaign
\$700 – National Legacy Fund
\$100 – National Commander’s Campaign
\$50 – National Commander’s Campaign

\$50 – National Commander’s Campaign
\$125 – National Commander’s Campaign
\$50 – Beals House
\$50 - VAWS

Kudos

Portland Post 17 for their donation of \$100 to the Portland Bayside Little League and also for their donation of two cedar benches for Camp Tall Pines.

Old Orchard Beach Post 57 for their donation of \$1,100 to the Loranger Middle School Band Scholarship Fund Drive and \$500 to Sarah Laverriere for the People to People Ambassador program.

The State of Maine Senate put into the official record of the Senate, two Senate Legislative Sentiments (SLS) honoring two more American Legion Posts of the Department of Maine for their work in supporting our troops and for their efforts in promoting the Blue Star Banner program of The American Legion. Both sentiments, SLS 360 and SLS 361, honored Post 132 Richmond and Post 164 Falmouth. Congratulations to both.

Letters

I would like to send KUDOS to Lloyd Woods of Stockholm and Gary Bulger and his son of Fairfield. On a return trip from Togus this winter, I had the opportunity to experience the brotherhood of the Legionnaires first hand. I lost the transmission in my pickup truck as I was passing Waterville. I was able to coast off the highway and into a gas station. I called AAA and a wrecker came and picked up my truck. I am from Madawaska and I didn't know where to have my truck towed so, I told the wrecker driver to tow it to the garage where he worked. When we reached the garage, a mechanic took a quick listen to it and diagnosed it as being the transmission. Because of the age of the truck, the owner, just as quick, said it wasn't worth fixing and that I would have to sign it over to him so that he could have it picked up by a junk yard. Otherwise, I would have to pay a daily storage fee if I left it there. Feeling pressured, I called a fellow Legion Rider from Winthrop to see if he knew someone reputable I could have check the truck out and get a quote on having it fixed. He suggested I call Lloyd Woods at Maine Legion Headquarters in Waterville, which I did. After explaining my predicament to Lloyd, he recommended I call Gary Bulger who owns a garage in Fairfield, just a few miles away. Lloyd also offered to give me a ride home, which I accepted. Gary said he would tow it to his garage and take a look at it.

When it was all said and done, the transmission was replaced and a few other minor things were fixed for a **very** reasonable price. When I went to pick up my truck, I talked to Gary and found he is the Commander of the Legion Post there in Fairfield and his son, who performed the work on my truck, is the Vice Commander. If it hadn't been Lloyd, Gary and his son I don't know what I would have done. The truck is my only transportation and I live on a fixed income unable to afford a new one. So, if you ever find yourself in a bind call a fellow Legionnaire. If he can't help you I'm sure he knows someone who can.

Mike Gantnier
Director, American Legion Riders Post 147, Madawaska, ME

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone that sent me all the wonderful sympathy cards for the loss of my brother. Thank you very much.
Danny Ayotte

I and my wife Gisela would like to thank all who have sent cards and the many phone calls. It has been a long drawn out process for us both but am sure we are getting to the end of the medical problems. Again, thanks a million, we will never forget our Legion Family.
Larry and Gisela Dearborn

**Sons of The American Legion
Detachment News**

Membership is moving along, but so is the time to bring in the dues. We all worked hard to get 80 percent for the 10th but we fell short just 34 members. The next target is 90 percent by April 14. We need to transmit 324 memberships to Detachment to make it and we have just a month to do it. I called many squadrons this past week to congratulate the membership leaders and offer help to those with low numbers. If we work together, we can do this.

One of the many signs of Spring are crocuses blooming, maple sugar shacks cooking sap down to syrup and Detachment sends the annual report forms out to the Squadrons. They should be arriving any day now. I will be mentioning them again because they are very important. Your Squadron does a lot and it needs to get reported on the consolidated report. Those reports are used to judge the awards given at convention and then tallied to show the Legion and National all of the good things that we do in Maine. The Detachment of Maine reported \$55,000 and 9,000 hours of service last year. National takes these reports from all Detachments and then the good things really add up. The officers' report is also important and easy to do. After your elections, fill in your squadron officers and their contact information along with your legion advisor and meeting night. This information goes in the American Legion state directory, an invaluable tool for staying connected so we can work together.

The Annual VA&R/VAVS Lobster Raffle is on. Tickets are one dollar each or a book of six for five dollars. See your local SAL Squadron or Detachment officer for tickets. Squadrons, if you sell out of tickets, call Joe Cooper at 342-3098 to get more. First prize is a lobster bake for 50 people anywhere in Maine (\$800 value) which includes lobster, clams and all the fixings. Second Prize is \$75 worth of lobster. We draw the winners on the

Legion Birthday in March, so Squadrons get your money and ticket stubs in to Joe Cooper, Box 44, Searsmont 04973 by March 14. That's this week! The proceeds will go to help Maine Veterans.

If your Squadron has an event and would like it in the SMILE or would like a Detachment visitor at your next meeting, contact me at unclebru2@aol.com.

Yours in service.

Bruce Pierce, Detachment Commander.

Auxiliary Corner

Our "Train" has taken us into March and over the 85 percent GOAL. Congratulations to District 1 for moving into 1st place. Ladies, keep up the GREAT work and let's keep that "Train" moving down the tracks.

March is COMMUNITY SERVICE month and the perfect time to get outside and lend a hand to a neighbor or shut in by raking a lawn, sweeping sand off sidewalks, washing windows or doing a bit of painting. Nothing lifts the spirits more than having one's home spruced up after a long winter. Also, if your community or town does an annual "Spring Clean-up", pitch in and be sure to wear something with the Auxiliary Emblem on it. This lets everyone know that the Auxiliary really does stand for "Service NOT Self".

Camp Tall Pines is still in need of kitchen items. Here are a few of the items needed: Bottles of hand soap, bottles of dish soap, Pine-Sol, Mr. Clean, paper towels, Windex, dish towels and green scrub pads. There will be a display at Convention this year. Donated items may be brought to Convention.

-----**WORKING TOGETHER BRINGS RESULTS**-----

Lois M. Hubbard
ALA President
Email:misslois@mgemaine.com

1561 Mason Bay Rd.
Jonesport, ME 04649
TEL: 207-497-5949
FAX: 207-497-5949

Best Wishes,

Lloyd Woods,
Department Adjutant

WISH LIST – March 2010
Department of Veterans Affairs Center (135)
1 VA Center
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 621-4886
mysti.grass@va.gov

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Drivers for Volunteer Transportation Network (Bangor, Rockland, Rumford, Bath/Brunswick)
2. Mealtime companions for long term care patients (any lunch and dinner during the week)
3. 73 Patriot Place and Dialysis - 1-on-1 visitation/reading and talking with patient
4. Parking Lot Shuttle driver
5. Information Desk
6. Escort Volunteers
7. Supply, Process and Distribution Center
8. Primary Care Customer Service Assistant

ONGOING PROGRAM SUPPORT:

1. Calling cards (60 minutes or more per card)
2. Coffee funds (provides coffee in waiting areas/wards/clinics)
3. Afghans (for a twin bed)
4. Comfort Items, i.e., shampoo, bar soap, deodorant, disposable razors etc. (***No alcohol based products***)
5. Diabetic snacks funds
6. Newspaper funds (provides newspapers in waiting areas/wards/clinics)
7. General Patient Comfort Fund including Memorial Donations
8. Adapted Sports Equipment/Outings - Recreation Therapy
9. National Rehabilitation Events (Golden Age Games, Winter Sports, Wheelchair Games, and Creative Arts)

SPECIAL REQUESTS/PROJECTS:

1. Unit 4 South activity sponsorship (*approx \$50 pizza party, \$25 ice cream social*)
2. Organizations to sponsor entertainment on 73 Patriot Place
3. Parking Lot Shuttle Vehicle Project
4. Electric Razors

NOT NEEDED AT THIS TIME! Books; Used Stamps; any clothing that is stained or torn; Jigsaw Puzzles; Playing Cards; Magazines over three months old; Dental Floss; After-Shave; Hand Lotion; Writing Tablets; Pens; and Envelopes. **Due to Infection Control policies we are unable to take used walkers, canes, or crutches at this time.**

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that under the Tax Code, donations to the Department of Veterans Affairs' General Post Fund for exclusively public purposes are deductible from federal income taxes in the manner and to the extent allowable. The announcement reflects the tax law provision, which makes those donations deductible as "donations to the United States". Donations to support any of the Department's programs are deductible, whether the donor directs that the donated funds be used for a specific purpose or allows the Department to decide how the donated funds will be used. Donated funds made by check should be made out to "VAVS" and sent to the address above.