Vol. 24 No. 7

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Dispatch
March 2014 A National Headquarters Publication

100TH ANNIVERSARY

Bob Ferrebee of Post 41 in Berryville, Va., has spent the past eight years researching and compiling the rich history of his post.

Photo by John Napolitano

STEPS AHEAD OF THE CELEBRATION

Virginia post adjutant and historian has early start on American Legion's centennial.

By Laura Edwards

Bob Ferrebee grew up in Berryville, Va., then served in the Army during the Vietnam War and taught high school math. Now retired, one of his hobbies is history, from the personal – Ferrebee has family photos going back several generations – to that of Lloyd Williams American Legion Post 41 where he's adjutant and historian.

Thanks to his father, a World War II veteran, Ferrebee's knowledge of Post 41 is extensive. The post was founded in 1919, shortly after the Legion itself, and received its permanent charter in 1934. The first post meeting included support for a building "dedicated to the community," he says. Members agreed on a 20-year commitment to provide a home for clubs, nonprofits and other groups, completed in 1938. As a boy, Ferrebee was a frequent visitor at the building and its backyard swimming pool. "Growing up here, that was the social hub," he says.

In the mid-'80s, with a declining membership and dwindling resources, something had to change for Post 41. One member, an insurance agent, approached the Dollar General Corp., and since 1989 Post 41 has met in the basement of the building it constructed, renting out the top part to the discount store. Roughly $40,000 in yearly income pays for all the post's programs.

The post has hit all-time highs for the past 11 years – 80 percent of its members are active in post activities and 40 percent attend meetings. The post gives away about $20,000 a year, and to Ferrebee, that only helps Post 41's visibility. "The best way to get members is to get out in the community and show them that you're doing something," he says.

For nearly a decade, Ferrebee has been compiling Post 41's history. Among his discoveries were notebooks with meeting minutes going back to 1945, the post's original charter and a stack of purchase invoices. He's worked hard to complete a list of past post commanders, and researched the history of the post's namesake, World War I Marine Corps hero Capt. Lloyd Williams, famous for telling a French colonel at Belleau Wood,

See Steps Ahead of the Celebration on Page 4

NEWS ALERT

Paid Up For Life membership

American Legion members interested in the discounted Paid Up For Life membership can easily join online. Once registered, members can either pay in full or pay in 12 monthly installments. Join the other 200,000 Paid Up For Life Legionnaires by visiting:
www.legion.org/join/pufl

Watch 77th Oratorical Contest live

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest," is April 4-6 in Indianapolis at the Wyndham hotel. Watch the top three finalists compete live April 6 at 10 a.m. (EDT):
www.legiontv.org

Register online for Legacy Run

Online registration is underway for this year's American Legion Legacy Run. The run departs Indianapolis Aug. 17 and arrives in Charlotte Aug. 21. Last year, nearly 400 Legion Riders raised $334,000 during the Run to support The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship. Register for the Run online:
www.legion.org/riders

Apply for Legion Legacy Scholarship

The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship ensures that the children of parents who died while on active-duty military service on or after Sept. 11, 2001, achieve their dream of attending college. Scholarship applications are due to National Headquarters by April 15. Download an application:
www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Celebrate America's young people

Dan Dellinger
National Commander

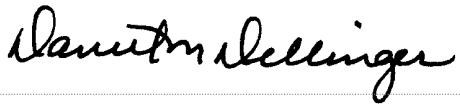
As Americans, we encounter tribulations on a daily basis that may be related to the environment, unemployment or financial uncertainty. But in the midst of these tribulations, we need to remember our young people, because our future, hopes and dreams rest in their hands. That's why The American Legion has celebrated April as Children & Youth Month for the past 76 years – we are committed to supporting and promoting our national theme, "Children... Our Most Precious Natural Resource."

The support we provide to our nation's young people can and does have a lasting impact on their lives. For example, a recipient of The American Legion's School Award Medal shared how he was thrilled that the local post and its veterans, whom he "admired and looked up to," took the time to honor him in a special way. The teachers who nominated the young man for the award and the Legionnaires who presented him with the certificate and medal have most likely forgotten about the event, but the award recipient said he "will always remember."

Now is the perfect time to think about the potential impact you and your post are having on the young people in your community. Future generations will long remember what we are doing now when we have forgotten.

I encourage Legion Family members to promote Children & Youth Month through their local newspapers, radio and TV stations, civic groups, schools, social media, and in conversations with other veterans and their families. They need to know that American Legion services are available and why young people matter so much to us. For ideas on how to promote and support Children & Youth Month in your community, download a copy of the "April is Children & Youth Month" brochure on the Legion's publications web page: ***www.legion.org/publications***

And remember to share how your post supported Children & Youth Month by visiting: ***www.legiontown.org***



FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

NEF goal: $1 million

The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) program is National Commander Dan Dellinger's primary fundraiser this year.

A natural disaster can strike at any time, devastating the lives of men and women who honorably served their country. While we can't prevent a natural disaster, the Legion does provide relief to veterans and their families affected by devastation.

Since 1989, the NEF program has provided more than $8 million in direct financial assistance to posts, Legionnaires and their families. The program helps with out-of-pocket expenses, including but not limited to food, temporary housing and clothing. All donations made to NEF go directly toward the program.

To donate: ***www.legion.org/nef***

NEF Commander's Challenge

American Legion department commanders are challenged to assist in fundraising efforts for the Legion's National Emergency Fund. The departments currently in first place for their respective membership category include:

- Category 1 (100,000+): New York
- Category 2 (65,000+): Indiana
- Category 3 (40,000+): Maryland
- Category 4 (25,000+): Nebraska
- Category 5 (10,000+): New Mexico
- Category 6 (9,999-): Hawaii

www.legion.org/emergency/challenge

MEMBERSHIP

Recruiters to be honored with 'Building for Tomorrow Today'

During the 2013-2014 membership year, American Legion National Commander Dan Dellinger will award his national commander pin to any Legion Family member who obtains five new members.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2014 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2013 membership year.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of the American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

To maintain the integrity of the national commander's pin program, only one pin will be awarded per individual.

Upon receipt of the certification form, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it. Commander Dellinger's "Building for Tomorrow Today" pin incentive program will end June 30, 2014, or when supplies are exhausted.

Also, National Commander Dellinger will award his "Building for Tomorrow Today" coin to any Legion Family member who recruits 15 new members.

www.legion.org/commanderpin

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

Where Legion heroes are laid to rest

The American Legion Cemetery in Florida is the final resting place for 736 Legionnaires from all wars.

By Daniel S. Wheeler

American Legion Post 5 in Tampa, Fla., has a nearly 100-year-old tale that resulted in the only stand-alone American Legion cemetery in the country.

In 1921, Unit 5 Auxiliary President Mrs. Bie witnessed police attending to the lifeless body of a homeless World War I veteran. Appalled that a war hero was placed in a pauper's grave, Mrs. Bie purchased three acres of land and dedicated it to Post 5 for the creation of a sacred place that would never forget another veteran – The American Legion Cemetery. To date, it's the only veterans cemetery in Hillsborough County, which has a population of nearly 1.3 million.

The American Legion cremation-only cemetery is open to any Legion member in good standing, as well as his or her spouse. The cemetery is the final resting place for 736 veterans who served in every war conflict, including the Spanish-American War. All five branches of the U.S. military, 11 countries and nearly every state are also represented.

"We are very proud of our cemetery," said Bill Hamblin, commander of Post 5. "It's beautiful."

On its website, Post 5 has a record of all the service men and women buried at the cemetery, including their war era, branch of service and military rank. Hamblin said in his research on those laid to rest, "a so-called movie star" is among them: World War I U.S. Army combat veteran Rondo Hatton. After his war service, Hatton was diagnosed with a disease that grotesquely distorted his face, head and extremities. His unusual features helped him star in several small Hollywood films where he played a "creepy" character, such as "The House of Horrors" and "The Brute Man" in 1946.

Hamblin also found a World War I veteran whose rank was WGNM – wagon master. "Horses and wagons were their transportation in World War I and that was his actual rank."

About 60 burial spaces remain at The American Legion Cemetery, which is located next to Post 5 on the corner of a busy intersection in Tampa – Dale Mabry Highway and Kennedy Blvd. Care of the cemetery is provided by the Hillsborough County American Legion Veterans Cemetery Corp. The corporation board has six members, three from Post 5 and three from Unit 5.

The American Legion Cemetery in Tampa, Fla., is maintained by three Legion Post 5 members and three Unit 5 Auxiliary members. *Photo by Shelli Romeu*

Besides burial services, Post 5 and Unit 5 members have hosted a Memorial Day service at the cemetery for the past 91 years where luminaries are placed at each headstone. And during the holiday season, wreaths are placed at the headstones as part of the Wreaths Across America program.

Post 5 members call The American Legion Cemetery a "sacred ground" and a "protected ground." Read more about the history of Post 5 on The American Legion's Centennial Celebration web page: ***www.centennial.legion.org/florida/post5***

Visit Post 5 online: ***www.post5tampa.org***

Follow Washington Conference March 23-26

www.legion.org/washingtonconference

Dispatch

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From Steps Ahead of the Celebration on Page 1

"Retreat, hell! We just got here."

Last fall, Ferrebee saw an announcement on the Legion's national website about the organization's Centennial Celebration and followed it to the new Web platform designed for posts to upload their histories.

Ferrebee found the site's structure and companion workbook helpful, particularly the idea of establishing a timeline. "I took all the bits and pieces I had and sat down and started putting a timeline out there with significant events and the history of the post."

Ferrebee quickly adds that Post 41's page "is still very much a work in progress. I don't think you ever complete a history." Even so, he's happy to encourage and offer advice to Legionnaires eager to build a page for their own post.

Start with some basic research, keeping in mind that "you can't put together a history in two weeks," he says. Look at documents and other information already on hand. Other helpful sources may include senior post members, local newspapers and the Internet.

Start now, because "2018 is going to be here before you know it," he adds. And remember that compiling a post history is not a one-person job. Ferrebee says he's relied on fellow post members and others in Berryville as he's gathered bits and pieces.

While Post 41 hasn't created a centennial committee just yet, Ferrebee considers posts' participation in this Legion milestone "very worthwhile – it helps you understand where your organization's come from and where it's going. It also makes you very proud."

Ferrebee also says he's looking forward to seeing The American Legion's history, as told through the individual stories of posts nationwide, published for veterans and their communities.

In fact, Legionnaires and communities should relish the opportunity to get involved in the Legion's 100th anniversary, he says. "I think it makes people appreciate and take pride in their organization. People see an active and vital post, and they want to be part of that."

Read more about Post 41's history online: *www.centennial.legion.org/virginia/post41*

ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

Get service-connected disability compensation

Cajun Comeau
Department Service Officer, North Carolina

Q. Am I eligible to apply for service-connected disability compensation?

A. If you are suffering from a disability that was caused or worsened while you were on active duty for the military, you may be eligible for VA's service-connected disability compensation.

Remember, with each service connection, you must be able to prove your medical condition is related to your service. This can be done through a medical statement from a qualified provider. The following are five ways to establish if your disability is service-connected:

Direct service connection. First, you must have a disease, injury, illness or occurrence in service which produces a chronic, debilitating condition. Second, you must have the same or closely related condition presently. And last, there must be a link between the two, either through interval medical treatment for the condition or a statement from a qualified medical person. Direct service connection may also be established when the chronic, debilitating condition did not begin to produce symptoms while on active duty but did manifest within a certain time period after exit from active duty.

Presumptive service connection. The veteran must have served in certain places in the world, at certain times and/or during certain operations. Examples include exposure to Agent Orange and other criteria as outlined in 38 CFR 3.309.

Secondary service connection. This is when a service-connected condition is shown to be the cause of another disability. For example,if a veteran is service-connected for a right-knee disability, and his or her left knee begins to have issues due to uneven weight bearing, then the left knee would be service-connected as secondary.

Aggravation. If a veteran enters active duty with a pre-existing condition and the condition becomes worse, this may result in service connection due to aggravation.

U.S.C. 1151 Claim. This is when will full negligence and/or misconduct occur in a VA health-care facility, resulting in a chronic debilitating condition.

Find a Legion service officer in your state: *www.legion.org/serviceofficers*

Kenneth Orrock
National Membership & Post Activities Committee Chairman

A MESSAGE FROM MEMBERSHIP

Give public recognition

"Departments, districts and posts oftentimes have membership recruitment incentive programs to give Legionnaires a reward for their hard work. An important part of (the incentive) is giving public recognition when somebody reaches a goal, or someone does a good job with membership. It's not enough that we send them a check or give them a pin – they need to be recognized at that post meeting; at that district meeting or at department functions for the good job they have done in recruiting.

"Put a spotlight on the Legionnaire even if it's only for a few minutes to tell everybody else what a good job they did (with membership recruitment) to encourage others to do the same."

Share how your post is recognizing its members. Send an email to: *dispatch@legion.org*

Learn more about membership messages from watching American Legion videos online: *www.legion.org/recruiting*

MEMBERSHIP

Florida membership challenge: Who will jump?

American Legion Department of Florida Commander Art Schwabe has never parachuted out of an airplane before. However, that could all change come May when the department's 2013-2014 membership numbers are announced. And he may not be jumping alone — Department Adjutant Mike McDaniel may be right behind him.

During the Department of Florida's convention last summer, Schwabe told Legionnaires that if membership reaches 108 percent, he will parachute out of an airplane — an idea that originated from watching the movie "The Bucket List." "Sometimes you just have to do fun and crazy things to get people fired up," Schwabe said. McDaniel, who Schwabe included in the membership challenge "without telling him," will jump if membership reaches 110 percent.

"I put it out there as a challenge, but I'm not going to do it (jump) just for fun," Schwabe said. "They have to work for it if I'm going to jump. It's a challenge to every Legionnaire in Florida."

Schwabe and McDaniel have enjoyed the excitement the challenge has sparked among Florida Legionnaires, as well as the chatter it has created between the two of them.

"All year we have been bantering around and he (Schwabe) says, '110 and go to heaven,' and I say, '109 and stay fine,'" McDaniel said. "He's been telling (Legion) members that I'm jumping, and I tell them 'No, no, no. He's confused.'

"If they hit the magic number, I will jump." Or, according to T-shirts being circulated around Florida, be pulled out of the plane.

Schwabe and McDaniel have been handing out lime green and orange T-shirts to Legionnaires that show a caricature of McDaniel holding on to a plane saying, "We haven't validated the @!#@! numbers yet!!!" as Schwabe is trying to pull him from the plane saying, "That's 110 & you're jumpin'!!!!"

The airport has been reserved for Schwabe and McDaniel to take flight and jump in May. Now, "it's a matter of the department getting behind the goal," Schwabe said. "I'd like to see the adjutant jump as well."

Does your department have a membership challenge?

Send an email to: *dispatch@legion.org*

Did you know?

As a member of The American Legion, you can receive discounts on services such as travel, relocation, personal finances, medical, technology and more. Access your discounts now: *www.legion.org/benefits*

The American Legion's new mobile app had 5,000 downloads in its first 10 days on the market. The app offers a direct route to join the Legion, renew membership, donate, follow the Legion on Facebook and Twitter, or find a local post from any smartphone or electronic tablet.
Download now for free: *www.legion.org/mobileapps*

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

VA issues new, secure ID cards

The Department of Veterans Affairs is in the process of issuing new Veteran Health Identification Cards (VHICs) to about 4 million veterans and family members enrolled in VA's health-care system.

The new cards provide a more secure means of identification due to Social Security numbers and dates of birth no longer being contained in the card's magnetic strips or bar codes. The cards now display an Electronic Data Interchange Personnel Identifier number as the "member ID" on the front of the card and embedded in the magnetic strip. These numbers will be unique to each cardholder.

A new VHIC will be automatically mailed to veterans who have the old Veteran Identification Card (VIC). Veterans enrolled in VA's health-care system who do not have the old VIC may contact their local VA medical center's enrollment coordinator to arrange to have their pictures taken for the new VHICs, or they may request one at their next VA health-care appointment. Veterans must provide proper identification in order to receive the new cards.

The VHIC is not required to receive VA health care, it cannot be used as a credit card or an insurance card, and it does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA facilities. The VHIC is for identification and check-in at VA appointments.

To receive the new VHIC in a timely manner, veterans enrolled in VA's health-care system should verify that their mailing addresses are correct. To update or confirm an address with VA, call *(877) 222-VETS (8387)*. If the post office is unable to deliver a VHIC, the card will be returned to VA.

DATELINE: CAPITOL HILL

VA's 2015 budget proposal

Brett P. Reistad,
Chairman, National Legislative Commission

The Department of Veterans Affairs is asking Congress to approve a $163.9 billion budget in fiscal 2015, an increase of about $10.1 billion over the department's fiscal 2014 funding.

The 2015 budget would provide $68.4 billion in discretionary funding, which includes $56 billion for VA medical care, about $1.6 billion to help end veterans' homelessness, and $1 billion to create the Veterans Job Corps. The budget also includes $95.6 billion for VA's mandatory programs, including disability compensation and pensions for veterans.

The funding would provide health care for 9.3 million enrolled veterans, 6.7 million patients, and about 97 million outpatient visits. It would also provide disability compensation for 1.5 million veterans or survivors, and vocational/educational benefits for another 1.2 million veterans.

In VA's ongoing war against its disability claims backlog, $138.7 million would be allocated for the Veterans Claims Intake Program, which would continue to implement the paperless claims system and improve veterans' access to benefits information.

Looking ahead to fiscal 2016, the budget is proposing $58.7 billion in advance appropriations for VA medical care programs.

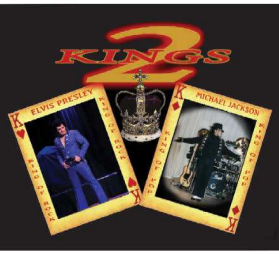
More than $7 billion in the budget would be used to expand and improve mental-health services for veterans, including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and military sexual trauma. The funding would allow VA to continue its collaborative work on mental health with the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Finding effective treatments for PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI) are a primary concern of The American Legion. It conducted a month-long survey in February for veterans suffering from one or both of these conditions. Results of this survey will be announced and discussed at a TBI/PTSD symposium the Legion is tentatively planning for the spring.

The $1.6 billion budgeted to help homeless veterans would include $500 million for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, and $321 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing program. This investment is intended to help achieve VA Secretary Eric Shinseki's goal of eliminating homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015.

Veterans benefits bill falters in Senate

On Feb. 27, the Senate voted 56-41 against **S. 1982**, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014. **S. 1982** focused on in-state tuition protection for returning servicemembers, mental health and treatment for victims of military sexual assault and the construction of 20 community-based outpatient clinics.



Need a great fundraiser?
Put on a show!

Call **TBA Presents** to discuss the possibility of doing a fantastic fundraising concert for your post.

Give us a call to find out how easy it is for us to help you put on a great show that could become a great fundraiser. When you call, also be sure to ask about

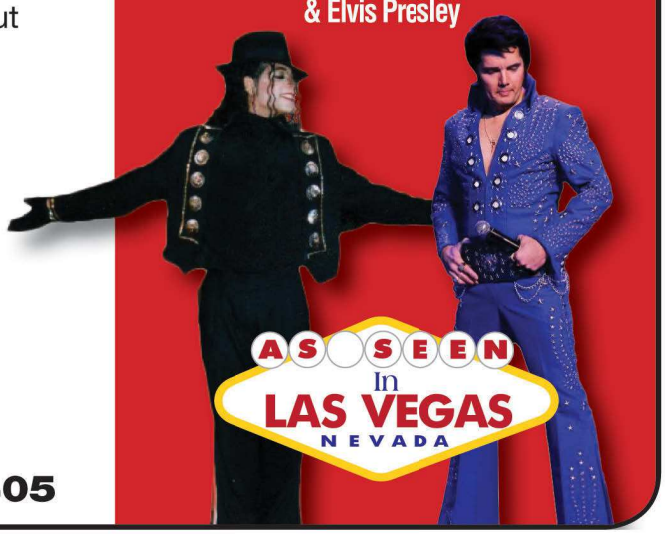
THE 2 KINGS SHOW
a tribute to Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley

To find out more about
THE 2 KINGS SHOW
go to www.2kingsshow.com

To discuss doing a concert and find out about The 2 Kings Show and all our other great acts, call TBA Presents right now!

Call Robert Barrows at 650-344-4405

Ask about
THE 2 KINGS SHOW
a tribute to Michael Jackson & Elvis Presley



MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES AND AWARDS

EAGLE INCENTIVE

Six American Legion departments showing the highest percentage of membership gain in their respective size categories between Oct. 9 and May 8 of this year will receive eagle statues (pictured below).

The Commander Dellinger Eagle Award will be awarded to the top department in each Big Twelve category showing the largest percentage of membership growth between the 55 and 100 percent target dates. A seventh eagle will be presented to the national vice commander whose region displayed has the highest percentage of membership gain during the same period.

The Big Twelve categories are:

- Category I – departments of 100,000 or more members
- Category II – departments of 65,000 - 99,999 members
- Category III – departments of 40,0000 - 64,999 members
- Category IV – departments of 25,000 - 39,999 members
- Category V – departments of 10,000 - 24,999 members
- Category VI – departments of 9,999 or less members

BIG TWELVE COMPETITION

The Big Twelve Competition recognizes departments that meet or exceed their pledged membership goal percentage by the March target date. The percentage does not include members gained through DMS.

The competition is broken down into six categories. The winner in each category will be reimbursed for computer equipment purchases of up to $2,000, while the runners-up in each category will be reimbursed for computer equipment purchases of up to $1,000.

The six categories in the Big Twelve Competition are:

- Category I – departments of 100,000 or more members
- Category II – departments of 70,000-99,999 members
- Category III – departments of 40,000- 69,999 members
- Category IV – departments of 25,000-39,999 members
- Category V – departments of 10,000-24,999 members
- Category VI – departments of 9,999 or fewer members

Read more about the Big Twelve Competition by downloading the online National Membership Points Award Manual publication located under Internal Affairs.

www.legion.org/publications

DISTRICT COMMANDERS RACE-TO-THE-TOP

The District Commander Race-to-the-Top award is given to district commanders who attain at least 100 percent of the district's assigned membership objective by March 31, 2014. Competition is divided into five categories based on the membership of the district without regard to geographic locations.

Race-to-the-Top categories are:

- Category I – districts of 15-1,499 members
- Category II – districts of 1,500-2,999 members
- Category III – districts of 3,000-4,999 members
- Category IV – districts of 5,000-7,499 members
- Category V – districts of 7,500 or more members

First Place Award is a trip to the 2014 National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. The award will be presented to the top district commander and guest in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the greatest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. This entitles each winner and guest to a trip to attend the National Convention as a distinguished guest of the National Commander, including round-trip airfare, tickets to the National Commander's Banquet, and hotel accommodations for six days/five nights. These district commanders will also be awarded a Legion cap that signifies they are a Race-to-the-Top winner that will be awarded on stage at the National Convention. Plus Race-to-the-Top ribbons for each of the district's posts.

Second Place Award is presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the second highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. Winners will receive a $500 check.

Third Place Award is presented to the district commander in each category whose district membership on March 31 represents the third highest percentage over the final previous year membership of that district. Cannot be less than 100 percent to qualify. Winners will receive a $375 check.

Dispatch

March 2014 A National Headquarters Publication

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NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND

Legionnaires' 50 cents raises NEF donations

Donations toward The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) program are arriving daily from departments, posts and districts, including District 6 from the Department of Texas. The 20 posts in the district donated $1,500 to NEF by following National Commander Dan Dellinger's lead – asking for 50 cents per member.

Dellinger stated in his national commander's speech at the 95th National Convention in Houston last August that his fundraising goal for the Legion's NEF program was $1 million – "a lofty one, but one that came down to just 50 cents per member," he said. Department of Texas District 6 Commander John Hince reiterated Dellinger's remarks during a district executive committee meeting last fall at Post 50 in Cleburne, Texas, and a motion was made to support Dellinger in his fundraising efforts by contributing 50 cents per member based on the district's 2013-2014 membership goal. It was also agreed in the motion that the $1,500 would be donated from District 6 funds, and posts would reimburse "as they were able to," Hince said. "With no objection, the motion carried. And when brought to (the department's) convention floor, it passed unanimously. We are very proud to have made this contribution."

www.legion.org/nef

PLANNER

APRIL

1 Eagle Scout of the Year applications due to National Headquarters

4-6 77th annual National High School Oratorical Contest, Indianapolis

9 95 percent membership target date

15 American Legion Legacy Scholarship applications due to National Headquarters.

MAY

5-8 2014 Spring Meetings, Indianapolis

www.legion.org/dispatch/calendar