



The American Legion

District 9 Broward County



For God and Country website: www.aldist9fl.org

SPRING 2007

Volume 1 Number 3



Paul Renneisen, 9th District Commander and candidate for Southern Area Commander, fields questions from Officers of Coral Springs Post 178 Wednesday, March 7th, during one of 21 District 9 Post visitations this Spring.

Membership

DEFEND THE SOUTHERN AREA

The mighty Ninth District is recruiting new members at a pace to keep Southern Area membership numbers high. Thanks to heroic efforts of District Staff and each and every Post Commander membership is growing younger. Commander Paul Renneisen stated during his remarks at Post 178 in March that we need to reward those “Blue Hat” Legionnaires that do get the members in and programs done. “Defend the positive and attack the negative,” said Renneisen, heralding the words of National Commander Paul A. Morin who noted in January that we need to get “rid of the negativity.”

District 9 Officers and staff have addressed many appeals from Posts this year consuming much needed time resources.

Significant time has been spent on appeals from many Posts. Two Posts did not keep Boys State commitments with local High Schools this year leading school officials to contact the Department and District directly. Three other Posts appealed to Department and District for resolution of Post affairs. One Post was saved from extinction and Post funds found when the District acted on incomplete documentation from Department to cancel the Charter of Post 261.

Saving Post 261 is just one act of defending our Southern Area Legion. Commander Renneisen believes defending our Legion requires great marketing skill to keep our image friendly yet disciplined. “We are admired as Legionnaires” said Commander Renneisen, “I have had men in hospital rooms next to the veteran I am visiting render a proper and perfect hand salute when they see the Legion cap on my head. Just seeing a Legionnaire in uniform made for an important moment in their life.”

“When I go to my Post, it is to volunteer and participate, essentially give,” said Renneisen, “If you go to your Post to get more than you came with, well, that leaves our Legion that much poorer.” Commander Renneisen asked Legionnaires to continue to pursue new members. They will stay if they feel welcome. When they feel welcome they will serve.

OUR DISTRICT MEETINGS ARE:

April 15th 2007 Post 310

April 29th 2007 Spring Picnic Elks Lodge

May 20th 2007 Post 321

June 10th 2007 Constitution Conference Post 180

Please check our website or call me for information on each months meeting. 954-441-8735 or 954-559-3202.

South Florida V.A. cemetery ready to open -- and there's already a lengthy waiting list

By Diane C. Lade
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

What began as a dream a decade ago will become reality next month when the first veteran is laid to rest at the South Florida National Cemetery.

The burial ground west of Lake Worthwill open April 16, two years after the original projected date that was rolled back several times. As many as a dozen interments are expected on the first day, said South Florida Cemetery Director Kurt Rotar. There would be more, but only one of the six shelters for services will be ready.

Rotar expects to keep up that pace for months, with as many as a dozen burials six days a week. More than 700 families are holding cremated remains or planning to move their loved ones from other cemeteries to South Florida National -- so many that the Veterans Affairs will not add new names to the waiting list until after April 9.

Service and burial scheduling for new national cemeteries will be handled by a centralized VA system in St. Louis, with requests being taken in the order they were received and juggled with the burials of the newly deceased. Living veterans cannot make reservations, and their interments -- or those of their spouses, who are entitled to national cemetery gravesites, even if they die before the veterans -- are handled by funeral homes at the time of death.

Lois Silverstein called the cemetery office just days after her husband, Joel, died at 72 of pancreatic cancer in 2005, which blindsided him so suddenly that the couple barely had time for a discussion of last wishes.

"We never really had touched on it before, but after he got sick, Joel told me he wanted to be buried in a veterans cemetery," said Silverstein, of Delray Beach. Her husband had been an Army sergeant during the Korean War "and he was very happy being in the service."

Now Silverstein is preparing to move her husband from an unmarked grave in Hollywood to South Florida National, then gather their three children for a memorial service. "I've moved on with everything else in my life except this," she said. "It's that last piece of unfinished business."

Daniel Perrin, general manager of Dorsey-E. Earl Smith Memory Gardens Funeral Home in Lake Worth, said he's already received "a lot of inquiries" about relocations -- some from as far away as Florida National Cemetery near Tampa, the closest veterans burial ground.

The first burials in the 50-acre "fast track" section near the cemetery entrance off U.S. 441, which has room for about 10,000 in-ground and cremated remains, were pushed back last year from this spring to late summer because of wet weather stalling site preparation.

But Rotar said that when he came on board in January, VA officials told him to scramble and make an April deadline. "The feeling was the veterans were asking for it to open and had been waiting a long time," said Rotar, who previously was director of Massachusetts National Cemetery, on Cape Cod, for nine years.

Bulldozers and graders growled over the barren grounds this week as workers plumbed an irrigation system in advance of laying sod and planting trees. The South Florida site will have more water features than most national cemeteries, Rotar said. Three of its five lakes, required to offset environmental impacts, already circle the trailers serving as temporary administration and construction offices.

A columbarium, for above-ground remains, probably won't be completed for up to another five years. When finished, the cemetery will cover 313 acres and have room for 115,000 veterans, enough to meet South Florida's needs for the next 50 years, according to the VA.

South Florida National is the fifth VA cemetery in Florida, home to one of the nation's largest populations of World War II veterans. The VA is purchasing land near Jacksonville and Sarasota for two additional burial grounds.

The 130 families seeking to move already buried remains to South Florida National will have to pay for the relocation, which can cost as much as several thousand dollars. The 570 others on the waiting list, with cremated remains, can bring their urns or boxes to the cemetery themselves. The VA does the burial and provides a gravesite, a marker, a grave liner and a military honor guard at no charge.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Legion to Speed Walter Reed Processing**

WASHINGTON (March 6, 2007) – The nation’s largest veterans organization today signed an agreement with Walter Reed Army Medical Center that will significantly alleviate the long backlogs in out-processing wounded soldiers.

In a Memorandum of Understanding signed today during The American Legion’s 47th annual Washington Conference, The American Legion will establish an office with paid staff at the facility to assist in the transition of wounded service members from the Dept. of Defense to the Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

“This is a natural extension of our Heroes to Hometown program,” said National Commander Paul A. Morin. “Our commitment is to these men and women who have fought valiantly, sustained life-changing injuries and need a helping hand in transitioning to life out of uniform.”

The American Legion Heroes to Hometown program currently identifies returning service members who need direct assistance when they come home. Legionnaires nationwide provide help in understanding the VA health care system as well as other day to day needs that they and their families may be dealing with in transitioning into life back home.

Today’s action is a major step toward ending the problems brought to light at Walter Reed. The delays in timely out-processing of Soldiers caused backlogs that forced them to be housed in deplorable facilities.

“The American Legion’s presence at Walter Reed will assist service members cut through the red tape that now hinders a truly seamless transition between DoD and VA,” Morin said. “Our goal is to streamline the process to reduce or eliminate the need for housing recovering service members in facilities not intended for long term accommodation.”

The agreement was signed on stage today during the organization’s legislative rally at the Renaissance Washington Hotel before an audience of over a thousand veterans and their families.

“We as a nation have an obligation to not only give our wounded warriors the finest health care, but to ensure their recovery takes place in the best accommodations we can give them.” Morin added. “Since 1919 The American Legion has battled to secure and protect the earned benefits of America’s veterans and today’s action strengthens that steadfast commitment.”

SAVE OUR HOMES UPDATE!

You might have read in the newspapers that Speaker Marco Rubio has advanced a series of tax reform proposals which would afford significant tax relief from the heavy burden now borne by property owners.

If this package passes the legislature, and receives the necessary citizens approval the need for portability will no longer exist.

If this happens it is your persistent advocacy of portability that sparked the debate resulting in these reforms. While, last year, we were disappointed that portability did not pass, part of the compromise was to form committees to study it more closely. This became the final hurdle acknowledging the financial pain suffered by property owners.

Without your numerous letters and e-mails of support for portability, the depth of the problem would not have come to light.

If property taxes are not eliminated, portability will still be required, so the fight might not be over. However, the ball has been advanced considerably up the field.

Rep. Carl J. Domino

District 83

IMPORTANT PROPERTY TAX NEWS

The State has clarified its property tax savings for disabled vets. If you entered the service from Florida, have a service connected disability, served during a conflict, have a letter from the V.A. and your DD214, the county property tax office should grant you a savings equal to the percent of your disability.

Voiture 890 of the 40 & 8 Report

Fun Social every 3rd Sunday of the Month
Join us for Eats & Drinks!

April 15th

May 20th

June 17th

July 15th

Amerigan Legion Post 170 of Coconut Creek will participate in the 40th Anniversary PARADE of The City of COCONUT CREEK. Also The Commander of The 9th District Will be Present with Spouse.

Post Commander 170 Henry Messana

Miami VA Recipient of Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award - Best in VHA!

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Miami, Florida was the recent recipient of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award. The award ceremony was held in Washington, D.C. on November 16, 2006. This is the second year for the Miami VA to receive this prestigious award for providing the highest quality care by an organization in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The criteria used for this prestigious award are based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria that are used by thousands of organizations around the world to continuously assess and improve their organizational performance in order to be among the best in their field.

The award process consisted of a 50-page application covering all 7 Baldrige Categories. The application was sufficient to warrant a site visit by a team of examiners representing the major administrations within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This was followed by further review by a panel of examiners in Washington, D.C. The Miami VA was then selected as winner of the VHA Performance Excellence Award within the program.

The application was the result of an extensive organizational assessment that focused on the noteworthy levels of performance excellence in seven areas: leadership; strategic; planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management and results.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) oversees the operation of 152 VA medical centers nationwide and the Miami VA Healthcare System was selected for the second year and continues to be "Best in VHA".

This award is in recognition of the performance excellence in the work that we do for our veterans in the South Florida area.

DVD's for our Troops!

I would like to thank the following Posts for allowing the Amvets to place boxes in the social quarters in support of We have committed to sending 1 million DVD's to our troops in Iraq and Afganistan to enjoy worry free entertainment. It is no longer safe for our troops to even have a baseball game for fear of land mines and snipers. All gently used or new DVD's are sent to a sorting center in Columbus Oh. where they are sorted with the children's titles going to the posts and bases in the U.S. We are receiving hundreds of letters asking for and thanking us for the DVD's. You can check the web site above for pictures and thank you's. Kudos and a big salute to Posts 157,222,142 and 162 If any of the other Posts would like to participate in this project We will deliver the boxes.

Call Doris Stanczyk 954-979-3750

Many uniforms, One Goal FREEDOM!!!!!!



Post 385 honored Sgt Adam Cann (USMC) of Davie and Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Bruckenthal (USCG) who were killed in Iraq by renaming their Post the Bruckenthal-Cann Weston Post 385. Past District Commander Loretta Young and Vice Commander Bill Gemayel presented the new charter to Post Commander Roy Schofield. Opening ceremonies were held by Everglades High School JROTC.



Commander Roy Schofield and Adjutant Joe Motes presented the Bronze Americanism Award to Weston Civil Air Patrol C/SmSgt Arron Lynch during their February Awards Dinner.

Post 304 Initiation on March 11, 2007



Post 304 Auxiliary Initiation on March 11, 2007



District 9 Upcoming Activities

Spring Picnic tickets are now on sale, prices are \$8.00 for adults, \$5.00 for minors and children under 3 are free. The picnic will be held at the Elks Lodge on April 29 starting at 11:30am. Please contact Vice Commander Joe Motes for tickets.

What's happening at your Post...

Post 308 meeting on Third Wed. of each month contact Bob Young 954-296-1242 or Eamil members wellcome and all other as well.

Post 157 held the 2nd annual BBQ fund raiser for Southern Area Boys and Girls State Transportation on March 10th. It was well attended and the Post would like to thank all who participated and contributed to this event. We raised \$2200.00. I know I was one in not recognizing the Southern Area Commander as well as those District Commanders in attendance but you know who you are and I appreciate their taking the time to attend the event. Thanks to those Post's that sent a contribution as we all know these programs are important to the Legion family.

Commander
Peter O. Nepa

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY 2006-2007 OFFICERS

President

Elaine Kledzik (162) 954-574-9595

Secretary / Treasurer

Barbara Delalla (157) barbfl@bellsouth.net

Chaplain

Bonnie Hatt (142) 954-943-6863

Sgt. at Arms

Judy Sessums (321) 954-983-6478

Advisor

Maureen Costello (162) 954-429-9226

Advisor

Pearl McIntyre (162) 954-421-2584

Historian

Lorrie Hess (36) 954-452-5062

Parliamentarian

Gail Dupuis (36) 954-522-3264

American Legion Auxiliary 9th District Chaplain's Report

This Chaplain has been honored to have served the 9th District for 2006-2007.

It's hard to believe, but we are three Quarters into this year already. Time to start compiling your records for your year end reports due by April 15th. If anyone has any favorite prayers they would like to submit, we will be happy to include them in our Chaplain's Prayer Book. You can E-mail them to me at Gailbonniehat@aol.com or mail them to me at 350 S Cypress Rd #527 Pompano Beach, Fl 33060-7158.

The Four Chaplain's Service was awesome and we would like to thank all those who participated from the 9th District for this great tribute. Great job!

Thirty Get Well and Sympathy and Birthday cards have been sent. Three Post Everlasting Ceremonies and one Memorial Service were attended for Legion Members. They will be truly missed especially our very special member David Petits. His Memorial Tribute was awesome.

There have been fourteen Auxiliary deaths to date this year.

Unit 142: Sarah Jane Bricko 12/07/07

Unit 142: Anna Cave

Unit 142: Hazel Christiansen 1/13/07

Unit 157: Ruth Paulson, Past 9th District President 9/06

Unit 180: Ethel Fielding 1/07

Unit 180: Marie J. Kaplan 1/01/07

Unit 180: Savilla O'Hara 7/15/06

Unit 209: Lillian Young 8/04/06

Unit 209: Melvise Taylor 11/29/06

Unit 222: Doris Barretta 10/08/06

Unit 222: Mary Berning 12/28/06

Unit 222: Mary Bridges 11/03/06

Unit 304: Margaret Gray 9/20/06

Unit 310: Eleanor Schichtl

Our sincere condolences go out to all these Units and their family members on the loss of our Auxiliary sisters. They will be remembered and missed for their services rendered.

We have enjoyed installing our Unit Officers this year and thank all Posts and Units for their wonderful hospitality and comradeship.

Now, we are making our Unit Visitations and Initiations of new members and looking forward to seeing you all again.

The 9th District Picnic will be held on Sunday April 29th, 2007 at the Pompano Beach Elks Picnic Grounds on 10th Street from 12 noon until 6pm. We always have a great time, so plan on attending.

Unfortunately, I had to withdraw my endorsement of nomination for the Office of 9th District President for 2007-2008, due to Family health issues, which would prevent me from adequately performing the duties of this Office.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Chaplain.

Yours in Loyal Service of God and Country,

Bonnie G Hatt

9th District Auxiliary Chaplain

Play Ball? Or Play Computer?

PAUL RENNEISEN

9th District Commander and Legion Baseball Coach

A Southern Area Legion Baseball Coach told me that he spent hours one night on a computer trying to get his players registered on a Legion Baseball Website. I asked why he was doing it. Players work to play, not coaches.

When I coach baseball I have a ball under the palm of my hand, not a computer keyboard. The game of baseball teaches preparation as well as many of life's lessons. Any player in the United States that wants to play Legion Baseball should be able to register himself on a computer. Even if he can't do it, these dashing young athletes are bound to have a girlfriend who would gladly take care of the task. Lastly, parents, as we all know too well, are generally deeply involved in their son's advancement to Major League Baseball (MLB) or a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarship. Computer registration of Legion Baseball players should be as easy as buying "on-line" from your favorite store and no different.

Just as when you buy a product on-line using a computer, if a Legion Baseball Player does not complete the registration properly, he is reminded to type in the necessary data that he missed. This saves the coach of the team from trying to correct errors on his Legion roster that will be used during the many distinguished tournaments that occur in playoffs to the American Legion World Series.

The current Department Website does not offer this sign up opportunity. Even the proposed site will cost the player, team or Post money for sign ups for a DOB card. A proposed Department dues increase makes it necessary to get as much as we can from our programs for free.

South Florida Legionnaires donated and Posts contributed to create a website that makes players comply with American Legion Baseball rules during the sign up phase. Coaches only need to examine the sign-ups for a try out day. Last year Legion players attached their favorite baseball picture of themselves for Legion officials and MLB scouts to see (a tournament requirement). Imagine the pride parents had as the team advanced and the local news media had easy access to their son's picture via the web.

Today, this site is free for all teams nationwide to use. Players register, coaches coach, and with a keystroke of the print button, the Coach has a roster. So does the State and National Director if they want one. It can't get any easier than that. It is free thanks to the vision of Legionnaires past. Practice signing up as a player or as a coach by clicking the appropriate square. Check out all the provisions for transfers. Have some fun signing up.

Too old to play, you say? The American Legion Coach that gets your application will figure that out. Print your application and imagine the "crack of the bat". See you at www.9inningbaseball.org.

Boy State's Report

Conrad Rell New District Boys State Chair

Colonel John Smiley, USAF Retired, led the 9th District Boys State candidates until March 17, 2007, when Department of Florida Boys State Director Gene Smith agreed to the promotion of Conrad Rell to the District Chair of Boys State. The opportunity to spend an entire week with Boys State in Tallahassee, Florida will be the high and prestigious honor for this year's Boys State District Chairman. Past District Vice-Commander John Smiley completed the lion's share of preparation for this year's Boys State program. Join the District 9 Legionnaires in congratulating John and Ginger Smiley for making the 9th District the model for success. John is a prestigious member of Coral Springs Post 178.

Vice Commander's Membership Report

Vice Commander Bill Gemayel Report MembershipThe District has consistently met all membership goals to date, thanks especially to the efforts of Post 385 and 223. While we expect to exceed the 80% goal on January 6th for most of our Posts, meeting subsequent goals will become increasingly difficult without a special effort from all. The following standings are as of April 4, 2007.

Current Totals

Post 385	375.7%
Post 223	106.4%
Post 162	103.4%
Post 308	103.0%
Post 36	101.2%
Post 304	100.5%
Post 310	99.2%
Post 157	97.7%
Post 287	96.8%
Post 180	96.2%
Post 142	94.5%
Post 170	94.3%
Post 222	91.2%
Post 365	90.2%
Post 92	89.0%
Post 209	88.8%
Post 321	85.5%
Post 178	82.3%
Post 265	81.4%
Post 220	72.2%
Post 261	50.0%

Future Goals and Dates

May 2	100%
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Bill Gemayel, District 9 Vice Commander

9th District President's Message

The Mighty 9th District Auxiliary was the first District in the Department of Florida to reach 100% in membership. We were in first place. However, as of 3/15/07, the 10th District was ahead of us by .03%. I am so proud of the job the 9th District Auxiliary members are doing on membership. Let's keep it up!

The 9th District staff has started our visitations to the Units and the Initiation of New Members. It is great to see all the new members we have. Now we need to start educating them on our programs and getting them involved.

Year End Reports are due to the District Chairmen by April 15th. If you do not have a list of the chairmen, please contact me and I will get one to you. Remember to BRAG about all your accomplishments.

Please keep me posted on what your Unit is doing on our various programs so I can include your hard work in my year end Department Report. You can e-mail me at elainekledzik@bellsouth.net, call me at 954-574-9595 or send a note to 5102 NE 2 Way, Pompano Beach, FL 33064.

All of you are welcome at our District Staff Meetings. We have two left for this year - 4/15/07 at Post 310 in Hallandale at 2:00 PM and 5/20/07 at Post 321 in Cooper City at 2:00 PM.

Also, don't forget our District Picnic on April 29th at the Elks in Pompano Beach. I hope to see you all there.

The District Constitutional Conference is set for June 10th at Post 180 at 9:00 am. Please be sure your Unit is represented.

I thank you all for all the hard work you have put into Membership and all our programs. I want you and all the Unit members to know how much I appreciate all of you.

Respectfully,
Elaine Kledzik

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 142 Annual Spring Fashion Show & Tea

Saturday, April 7, 2007 at 1pm

Fashions by "ADDICTIONS"

Tickets \$7.00

Chairperson: Elaine Rafajko

H: 954-661-1153 C: 954-782-6208

2007 Fund Raiser Drawing & Party

Sunday, April 22, 2007 * 2 PM - 6 PM

\$25 per Ticket or 5 Tickets for \$100

Win a 2007 Harley Davidson, a
2007 Dodge Ram Truck, or a 2007 Pontiac G5

\$18,000 Cash!

Total of 10 great Prizes

Each Ticket Can Win Up to 10 Times!

Steling McClellan American Legion Post 142

171 American Legion Blvd.

Pompano Beach FL 954-942-2448



The Easter Bunny pays a visit during the March 18th 9th District meeting which was held at Post 92.

Joseph Motes - Newsletter Editor
American Legion District 9 Broward
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Pembroke Pines FL 33029-2320

FIRST CLASS MAIL

2006 - 2007 District 9 Officers

COMMANDER - Paul Renneisen

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VICE COMMANDER - Joseph Motes

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SERVICE OFFICER - Vito Rao

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 954-831-0421

JUDGE ADVOCATE - David Scott

2006-2007 Boosters

Paul Renneisen	Bill Gemayel
Joe Motes	Bonnie G. Hatt
Elaine Kledzik	Lorrie Hess
Mike McGeachy	Nancy & Hal Fox
Jay & Judy Walrond	Joan Duva
Jackie Martin	Judy Sessums
Roy Gladde	Chuck & Gayle Moreland
Wayne Powell	Gene Campbell
Ginny Hagemann	Conrad & Shirley Rell
Scott Frieders	Jim & Judi Farney
Ron Wires	Ray Blanchette
V. Matthew Rao	Joe Kledzik
Leo Scherone	Michael Bombaro
John & Kathy Holmes	Russ & Robin Dobbyn
Jim Davidson	Maureen Litsch
Carol Kifner	Pattie & Carl Dupper
Kevin Buchholz	Elizabeth Woods
William Fokken	James & Irene O'Connell
Joseph Gallagher	T.J. Jones
Roy Schofield	Reggie Hammes
John Smiley, Jr	Herbert W. Hayes, Jr
Lester Barr	Mattie Mason
Ron LaDuke	

Booster moneys are used to help promote, publish and mail the District 9 newsletters. Wouldn't you like to be a District 9 Booster member? Send your \$3.00 Booster donation for the remaining two issues, payable to: **American Legion District 9** to Joe Motes at: 2133 NW 208 Terrace, Pembroke Pines FL 33029-2320.