



CALIFORNIA CONNECTION

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION FOR THE GOLDEN STATE

Volume 8, Issue 1

FROM THE DETACHMENT COMMANDER:



**Allen
Henry**

Hope to see all of you in Riverside at the 71st annual Sons of the American Legion Detachment of California Convention.

June 18th—21st, 2009.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER



**Paul
Mesmer**

Desireé (Desi) A. Stoy, National Auxiliary President, visited Southern California in mid-April, concluding with a dinner reception at Newport Harbor Post 291. SAL Detachment of California Sr. Vice Commander Paul Mesmer attended the reception, representing Commander Henry and the Detachment membership. President Stoy is a 41-year and honorary life member of Irvin Hiskey Unit 535 in her hometown of Bellville, Ohio. She believes the organization has made promises for generations. That is



why her theme encourages members to approach each challenge with "HOPE: Honoring Our Promise Everyday." Sr. Vice Commander Mesmer presented her with welcoming gifts, including a custom made necklace with the letters H-O-P-E, and a "mint quality" set of our challenge coins.



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INVITATION	

The period leading up to Convention is always an exciting time. Year end reports are being submitted, and the hard work we all accomplished is right there in black & white:

- Membership at 100.99% and poised to exceed the 105% target before National Convention,
- Child Welfare contributions at an all time high 177% of target,
- and just wait until we add up the volunteer hours and fund raisings efforts of the consolidated reports!

This is the time of year when we can reflect back and recall the FUN we had and how REWARDING it is to see the hard work pay off... Veterans and their families receiving assistance, our local communities recognizing the value of the American Legion Family.

Our Convention in Riverside is a time when we can look into the rearview mirror and smile at what we have accomplished, and peer out the windshield to the challenges ahead. Come to Convention and be part of our drive down the road to 2010!

DETACHMENT ADJUTANT



**Robert
Bedell**

2009 SAL Membership Report as of: June 9, 2009

*All Time High		2009 Mbsp.		2009 Mem- bership		Pct of Goal
Rank	Detachment	Needed for Goal	7/20/2009 105% Target	Needed for 105% Target	6/9/2009 Total	
15	California SAL Members	8,770	9,208	586	8,622	98.312
	National SAL Members	327,598	343,956	27,872	318,084	97.096

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER



**Dan
Kessinger**

Last night I had the pleasure of attending the Installation of Squadron Officers for 2009-2010. They announced a major fundraiser for veterans that they have scheduled for July 18, 2009. It is called "Rendezvous Surffest 09." They already have a web site at <http://www.surffest09.com/>. This event will be a large undertaking similar to their "Blues on the Bay" from previous years.

Please post a link on our events page for this. All of the details are on the web site and tickets can be purchased on line. Thanks in advance.



AREA ONE VICE COMMANDER



**Mark
Smith**

Serving the 26 Counties of Northern California.

Gentlemen, It has been an truly an Honor to serve Northern California this year. I have made many new friends in the many miles we have logged so far. But- I was only able to start up only 3 new Squadrons this year- in spite of the direction our Country took last November. I expect that this next year will be even more of a success because I haven't even gotten to District 5 yet, and that's where our new Area Vice for the Legion is from. Also this year, 2 things have happened that I will Never Forget; My Fathers service with Honors at N.C.V.C. & being voted an H.L.M. by my Home Squadron and Post. Thank you, the members, for this privilege.

Phone: 530-275-8108
E-mail: marksmitty@hughes.net

AREA TWO VICE COMMANDER



**Roger
Sanford**

Serving Counties of San Francisco, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz .

Phone: 408-921-7149
E-mail: rogerwsanford@comcast.net

AREA THREE VICE COMMANDER

**Photo
Coming
Soon!**

Serving Counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Fresno, King, Kern, Tulare, Inyo, Mono.

**Bob
Ortega**

Phone: 209-481-2761
E-mail: bortege@dirktrans.com

AREA FOUR VICE COMMANDER



Serving County of Los Angeles.

**Brian
Story**

Phone: 323-304-3252
E-mail: bstory65@yahoo.com

AREA FIVE VICE COMMANDER



Serving Counties of Imperial, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego.

**Mike
Jonucz**

Phone: 619-934-5405
E-mail: mjonucz@cox.net

AREA SIX VICE COMMANDER



Serving Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura.

**Robert
Kelly Jr.**

Phone: 805-352-9243
E-mail: deepseekelly@msn.com





WWII Army Nurse Ruth Adams
Mike Jonucz 5th Area Vice Commander

LUNCH WITH SENIOR HERO'S

On April 15 many of us are scampering about to finish and file our taxes with Uncle Sam. Not so for nineteen residence from the California Veterans Home, Chula Vista. It was lunch at "Hooters Restaurant "Mission Valley California. Ruth Adams a "WWII" Army Nurse that served in Europe showed she was a spry 86 as she sat at the table as if holding court. She was one of two female war veterans that accompanied the 17 male senior heroes'.

The Detachment of California, Sons of The American Legion and the Administrators of the Chula Vista Veterans Home had planned the event for several months. Individual SAL members provided funding. The veterans all smiled when told that the "Day" was theirs and that they could order whatever their hearts desired. Robert Sherwood a WWII Merchant Marine enjoyed a portion of the 100 wings that

had been brought to the table and a full meal of his choice, followed by purposing marriage to three of the "Hooter" girls. He stated that if he asked enough, one might say yes. Several of the Chula Vista residence praised the food at the veterans home while advising that they did not have "Wings" or table service that could match "Hooters". As the afternoon progressed the youthful, joyful and grateful demeanor our guest exhibited amazed us all. Each had a story to tell of their service to their country and how they were proud of their service to our nation. As SAL members we listened intently and admired their spunk and youthful exuberance. As the afternoon came to a close each resident of the veteran's home was presented a "Hooters" T-Shirt by the staff of the restaurant.

Several of the grateful residence stated this was the best day they have had in years. When told that the SAL would throw them an ice cream party in July, several of the residence wanted to know if "Hooter Girls" could do the serving.

Mike Jonucz

5th Area Vice-Commander
Detachment of California





It's Official! This is an important tool for membership!

Necessary DD-214's are NOW Online.

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following Web site for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online Web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new Web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.



Special Forces monument installed at Northern California Veterans Cemetery

IGO, CA - A memorial honoring those who have served - or who are serving - in the U.S. Army's Special Forces was installed in April at the Northern California Veterans Cemetery.

The granite and concrete monument, set in a flower bed, was formally dedicated during a 2 p.m. ceremony on April 25.

The monument's placement comes after an approximately four-year campaign by the Special Forces Association Chapter 89 to place one in Shasta County.

It is the first Special Forces monument to be installed in California and is the only one in the nation that's not on property that's on or near a military base, said John Cleckner, the chapter's president.

"This is hallowed ground," said Cleckner, a 70-year-old Redding resident and retired U.S. Army Special Forces major.

The Special Forces chapter, which takes in the north state and stretches to southern Oregon and north-west Nevada, has about 35 members who internally raised about \$4,000 for the monument.

"We paid for it ourselves," Cleckner said, adding that the chapter also designed the new monument, and was assisted in its eventual creation and installation by the Anderson-based Outdoor Creations.

Ron McCan, national commander of the Fayetteville, N.C.-based Special Forces Association, as well as Tom Johnson, secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, will be guest speakers, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has been invited to attend. McCan will help unveil the new monument, which won approval of both the state Department of Veterans Affairs and the national Special Forces Association.

The American Legion response to the DHS

Secretary Janet Napolitano
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



April 13, 2009

Dear Secretary Napolitano,
On behalf of the 2.6 million-member American Legion, I am stating my concern about your April 7 report, "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence and Recruitment."

First, I want to assure you that The American Legion has long shared your concern about white supremacist and anti-government groups. In 1923, when the Ku Klux Klan still yielded unspeakable influence in this country, The American Legion passed Resolution 407. It resolved, in part, "...we consider any individual, group of individuals or organizations, which creates, or fosters racial, religious or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law..."

The best that I can say about your recent report is that it is incomplete. The report states, without any statistical evidence, "The possible passage of new restrictions on firearms and the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks."

The American Legion is well aware and horrified at the pain inflicted during the Oklahoma City bombing, but Timothy McVeigh was only one of more than 42 million veterans who have worn this nation's uniform during wartime. To continue to use McVeigh as an example of the stereotypical "disgruntled military veteran" is as unfair as using Osama bin Laden as the sole example of Islam.

Your report states that "Rightwing extremists were concerned during the 1990s with the perception that illegal immigrants were taking away American jobs through their willingness to work at significantly lower wages." Secretary Napolitano, this is more than a perception to those who have lost their job. Would you categorize union members as "Right Wing extremists"?

In spite of this incomplete, and, I fear, politically-biased report, The American Legion and the Department of Homeland Security share many common and crucial interests, such as the Citizen Corps and disaster preparedness. Since you are a graduate of New Mexico Girls State, I trust that you are very familiar with The American Legion.

I would be happy to meet with you at a time of mutual convenience to discuss issues such as border security and the war on terrorism. I think it is important for all of us to remember that Americans are not the enemy. The terrorists are.

Sincerely,

David K. Rehbein
National Commander
The American Legion

SICK CALL

Team,

April 28th, 2009

I received a telephone call today and recognized the telephone number as Don Ramirez's cellphone that Adele has been using to call and keep me updated on Don's condition. I almost did not want to answer as the possibility of bad news always exists. When I answered the telephone call I recognized a familiar voice on the other end asking me what was happening and almost cried after hearing Don's voice. Up until today I wondered if I would ever hear his voice again. It was emotional at the very least.

Don is in the Cottage Medical Rehab unit in Santa Barbara and is walking & talking, but still has a headache he says that there is no paralysis. He is also sporting a new hairless do. I conferenced in Mark Severance and we had a great talk with Don. He advised that none of us are off the hook yet and he believes that we will see him in Riverside.

Don sounded lucid and alert with full memory. He is not happy about the headache but it will hopefully pass with time. He sounded like the Don that we all know and love. He said they still have not given him a definite diagnosis but did mention that the fluid on his brain was spinal fluid.

Don is at the point that he can and would like to hear from us by telephone.

Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital
2415 De la Vina
Santa Barbara, CA 93105-3819
(805) 687-7444

What a great day as good news is always welcome...

For the Team,

Bob Bedell, Adjutant

Jr. PAST DETACHMENT COMMANDER

**Rod
Perkins**

Sons of the American Legion
Helping Disabled Legion Family Members
Squadron 328
Norco California

Phone: 951-689-9664
E-mail: teampizza@aol.com

Have you ever been on a single minded journey, only to find your self on a much larger mission. Such was the case recently when Squadron 328 Norco, California decided to assist one of our SAL members. This particular member has MS has had it for the last nine years. His motorized wheel chair is his life. His name is Larry and his motorized wheel chair is his only transportation. Larry is limited to a five mile radius from his facility. Whether he is debating with car salesmen over which vehicles are worthy of his comments or discussing the best flavors of "Jamba Juice" with their employees Larry's social interaction with others relies on his motorized wheel chair. The problem is Larry's chair is in the shop on average of four months a year and always seem to break down around October, leaving him bed ridden through the holiday season. MED-ICAL moves at a snail's pace. Squadron 328 decided that Larry's plight needed to be corrected in order that his quality of life be improved. Our initial idea was to have a series of fund raisers so the more than five thousand dollars needed for a new chair could be obtained. At one of our area meetings, while addressing legion family members on our funding raising efforts, a member of the Palm Springs Post stated that they had two motorized chairs that were collecting dust. A member from the Redlands Post then spoke up about having the same problem. Over the next ten days I collected six motorized wheel chairs from American Legion Posts and individual legion members. We now have a list of other chairs that are being donated to the squadron. In all, Squadron 328 Norco, California has approximately Thirty Thousand dollars worth of chairs and forty two hundred dollars in our wheel chair maintenance fund. We have established a committee which has made written policies and procedures on the loaning of the chairs. Any disabled legion member in the fifth area (Southern California) can take advantage of this program. Though this project is a Squadron effort it has the endorsement of Detachment Commander Allen Henry. This program is not only for the disabled. We, the SAL members, go to bed each night feeling a little bit better about ourselves. So what started as a singled focused effort to get a motorized wheel chair for one SAL member has become much more and is growing. The purpose of the article is not to tout our efforts, but to inspire others to do the same.

GARY NANCE DETACHMENT P. R. COMMITTEEMAN & HISTORIAN



Gary Nance



Front

COIN NUMBER #2

THE SECOND COIN IN THE SERIES

Get Your Challenge Coins



Back

Gary Nance P. R. Committee

Every now and then it is such a great pleasure to report good news that is important to the detachment and the well being of our fine organization. We all work very hard with tireless hours of effort to support the outstanding programs of the Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

As many of you are aware, this year we designed our second challenge coin of fine quality representing all of The American Legion family. On one side are the logos of all four family members, The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, The Auxiliary and the Legion Riders. On the other side is the POW/MIA statue that is the centerpiece at the Riverside National Cemetery.

The Detachment of California was given special permission to use this on our second coin by the artist Lewis Lee Millett, Jr. (Son of Medal of Honor recipient Lewis Millett) who lives in Riverside.

Enough on the background! This is to let everyone know that the new coin is available. It is time for all of The American Legion family to order their coins. We have sold the first batch of one thousand coins and have ordered the second run of a thousand coins. Do not wait. These make great gifts and a collector's item. Also we are going to reorder the First coin, which will be available sometime in May.

Remember that the sales of these coins fund the Youth Training School that the Sons of The American Legion put on every year. So please help us out – just use the order form to buy your coins to raise money for your Post, Unit and/or Squadron.

Order Form for Coins # 2

Post or Squadron Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Coin #1 In Bags of 10: _____ @ \$80.00 **Each Bag of 10 \$** _____

Coin #2 In Bags of 10: _____ @ \$80.00 **Each Bag of 10 \$** _____

Less than 10 Coins #1: _____ @ \$10.00 **Each coin \$** _____

Less than 10 Coins #2: _____ @ \$10.00 **Each coin \$** _____

Postage \$5.00



You are cordially invited to attend the annual
Installation of Officers
American Legion & American Legion Auxiliary
District 29

On Sunday, July 12, 2009
At Albert E. Schwab Post 555
14582 Beach Blvd., Midway City

No host bar at 4:00 p.m.
Auxiliary installation 5:00 p.m.

Legion Installation to follow
Dinner / dancing following installations

Attendance is free

Dinner Cost: \$35.00/couple or \$18.00/person

Please pay with RSVP

Hawaiian Luau Theme

*Buffet menu: Fresh Green Salad w/Dressing, Kahula Pork, Teriyaki Chicken,
Polynesian Rice, Fresh Fire Roasted Vegetables, Hawaiian Rolls & Dessert.*

*RSVP w/Check made out to District 29 by July 5, 2009 to
Jerry Hoosier
10301 Randall, Orange Park Acres, CA 92869*

*Dress: Legion Officers- white dinner jackets
Auxiliary Hostesses-Dressy Tropical/Polynesian*

*Pat Alvarez, President 2008-2009
Blita Johnson, President-elect 2009-2010*

*John Chizmar, Commander 2008-2009
Bob Dillard, Commander-elect 2009-2010*

THE AMERICAN LEGION



**DISTRICT 19 -AREA 4
INVITES THE AUXILIARY and SONS
to Attend
OUR RIVERSIDE CONVENTION**

**FAMOUS PARKING LOT
BARBECUE
SAUSAGE or BRATWURST**



**IN HONOR OF OUR DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
ALAN LENNOX AND
HIS TEAM OF HARD WORKING OFFICER'S**



**JUNE 19, 2009
FRIDAY EVENING 6:30 PM**

**SITE: COURTYARD MARRIOTT PARKING LOT
1510 UNIVERSITY AVENUE • RIVERSIDE, CA 92507**
(Exit onto University, turn right Approx 1.5 mi to
Courtyard by Marriott on the right side)

District 19 Hospitality Room Available

SANDWICH
Served with Salad, Beans & Corn on the Cob
\$7.00 PER SERVING



This is at the hotel next to the Comfort Inn that is HQ for the SAL at Convention 2009