“Change of Command”
Larry Leonardo turns over command to Edward Grimsley

By Marilyn Rideaux, Editor; Photo by Fred Shacklett

The 101st Department of California convention was held at the Ontario Convention Center from June 27 – 30, 2019.

On Sunday, June 30, 2019, Larry Leonardo, having completed a very successful year as Department Commander turned over leadership to the new incumbent, Edward Grimsley.

Commander Leonardo’s proudest achievements of the 2018-2019 year was successful Department’s membership, and outstanding website improvements by the web team which led to better communication throughout.

On behalf of the Department of California-The American Legion, thank you Commander Leonardo for your vision and dedication – “Continuing the Legacy.”

By the Numbers: 100 years…
Four Pillars…One American Legion Family

Meet Edward “Ed” Grimsley
Department Commander 2019-2020

By Marilyn Rideaux, Editor; Photo by Fred Shacklett

Department Commander Grimsley’s priorities for the year are to support veterans in need, “a hand up and not a hand out,” to strengthen our Children and Youth programs, and continue successful Membership in the Department of California.

His objectives are to inspire someone through kind words and deeds, motivate someone through encouragement and appreciation, and lead. True leaders don’t create followers. They create more leaders.

Michael Fox for Commander of the Sons of The American Legion - 2020

By Marilyn Rideaux, Editor; Photo by Fred Shacklett

“Positive change, a younger direction, and branding our organization as a must join.”

Having the privilege of being a member of the Sons of The American Legion since birth. Growing up in a Legion family as well as the Legion family. I’ve had many teachers, many mentors, and many inspirations all from The American Legion family. All have made a strong influence on my outlook on life, philosophy on our organization, and inspiration to work hard. Moments after being born in April of 1980 I became a member of Haggin Grant Squadron 521. I qualify for membership through the service of my grandfather Ed, a World War II veteran. I began learning about the Sons and our rich traditions around the time that I was able to walk. My family and Legion family taught me a deep love of Country and the SAL was a large part of my childhood and upbringing.

I was elected as Sgt At Arms for my Squadron at age 6 and at age 8 I held my first Detachment office. I cannot express the wonderful feeling I had standing on stage in front of The American Legion at the state convention as an officer of the Detachment.

Along with being a member of the Sons of The American Legion, I am also a member of the Elks. As a member of the Elks, I work closely with the veterans committee to reach out and support veterans all over. This allows me to reach more veterans and their families. Visiting several veterans’ homes per year. The Yountville veterans home has a special place in my heart, going there for the last 38 years helping with the American Legion State Baseball Tournament and Annual Veterans Picnic.

This campaign for National Commander will be long and costly, in short, I need your help and support. I am asking for the Legion Family to step up for me as I will step up for all of you during my year as National Commander. I am asking the Legion, Auxiliary, Riders, and Sons to hold fundraisers for me. The possibilities are endless and all are very helpful and appreciated by the campaign. Please let any member of my campaign team know –FOX, see page 15

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Ed Grimsley
Commander

The American Legion is a TEAM that I am proud to be a part of. Our TEAM is made up of members from all walks of life, creed, age, color and religious beliefs, who have served this great country with distinction. What set us apart are our diverse differences. This is what makes us unique! However, there is only one goal in mind. We aim to support veterans for God and Country and not self. It’s what we are and what we do.

As I travel throughout this great state of California to the various posts, districts and area events, I am inspired by our TEAM’s devotion and commitment in supporting veterans and military family programs. I am also passionate about the vision and mission of our Legion family.

This is what motivates me to strive just a little bit harder because at the end of the day, my reward comes in knowing that someone has been given a hand up and not a handout.

My fellow Legionnaires, I pledge to you, I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Department Commander, representing TEAM California.

Membership has always been a goal setter throughout legion history and I am committed to ensuring that our focus is to continue our efforts to retain our members as well as recruit more members to join our team. There is much more work to be done concerning our homeless veterans and I pledge to do all I can to help cure this epidemic through our Veterans and Rehabilitation programs.

Our Children and Youth programs have been in the forefront of the American Legion since 1919, and I pledge to continue to support these programs because children are our future and they depend on the support of the American Legion.

I will be your voice at the table when it concerns Team California and will do everything in my power to fight for our issues. I have many more goals that I want to accomplish for this department, but none are as relevant without achieving my three primary objectives:

- **Inspire** someone through kind words and deeds.
- **Motivate** someone through encouragement and appreciation.
- **Lead**, true leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders.

If you cannot remember anything else, please remember my MOTTO:

**INSPIRE – MOTIVATE – LEAD**

God bless the American Legion and God Bless America.

FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER’S DESK

**Fellow Legionnaires,** thank you for your encouragement and support over the past four years. Countless days, nights, and hours were spent trying to create an eye-catching newspaper for the Department of California; I have no regrets. This will be my last year as Editor and I look forward to working with the next incumbent to make it a smooth transition.

I wish to thank Department Commander, Ed Grimsley, as I enter my fifth year as Editor of the California Legionnaire and all the Past Department Commanders who entrusted me with this responsibility.

We are fortunate to have several “tech savvy” young Legionnaires in the Department of California who are working to move our level of communication into the 21st Century and beyond. There is a lot to be learned. I am very excited and look forward to participating in the upcoming improvements.

You are probably aware by now that limited hard copies of the California Legionnaire will be distributed via US Postal mail. Due to the rising cost of mailing, this was a necessary option in order to maintain the Department’s allocated budget for the California Legionnaire. Many departments, districts, and posts have moved to online distribution which is cost effective and saves much needed $$ to support the veteran population.

You may access the California Legionnaire on the Department website, www.calegion.org. Remember to check for it in early February, April, June, August, October, and December.

Deadline for future issues are:
- **September 6, 2019** (October 2019 issue)
- **November 1, 2019** (December 2019 issue)
- **January 6, 2020** (February 2020 issue)
- **March 6, 2020** (April 2020 issue)
- **May 6, 2020** (June 2020, pre-Convention issue)

Due to increased risk of being “hacked” and contracting a “computer virus,” I have discontinued opening questionable and suspicious emails. Please send your articles for the California Legionnaire to aide_deptcmdr@att.net ONLY. The subject line should read: California Legionnaire, otherwise it will most likely end up in my “SPAM” folder.

Let’s have a good year and please continue to send articles, stories, and special event announcements (time sensitive) for inclusion in the California Legionnaire.

Marilyn Rideaux
Editor

**PUBLICATION POLICY**

California Legionnaire is the official publication of The American Legion Department of California. California Legionnaire (PP 167) is published 6 times a year in February, April, June, August, October, and December by Mid Valley Publishing Inc., 740 N St., Sanger, CA 93657-3114. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to California Legionnaire, 1601 7th Street, Sanger, CA 93657-2801. 

NOTICE:

- Submissions to the California Legionnaire must be submitted by the due date published in the California Legionnaire and on the Department website www.calegion.org.
- Photos should be no less than 580KB. If emailing from your smart phone, send at the highest resolution. Do not embed photos into your Word.doc nor an email. Send photos as separate images, use a numbering system to match photos with their appropriate photo caption which should be typed in a Word.doc. Images that are pulled off of web sites will not reproduce well, if at all. PDFs must be saved as high resolution from their original document. Email articles to aide_deptcmdr@att.net with the words Califonia Legionnaire in the subject line of your email so that it will not be overlooked.
- All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework and omission. We are not responsible for lost items or misplaced material.
- Please send “Change of Address” and “Deceased Notifications” to alhqdoc@gmail.com or mail to: The American Legion, Department of California, 1601 7th Street, Sanger, CA 93657-2801. Do not direct them to the Editor of the California Legionnaire.
- All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework and omission. We are not responsible for lost items or misplaced material.
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**Membership Director**

Paula Bibby  
*Membership Director*

I’m fired up. I’m always fired up at the start of a new membership year. This year is even more monumental for obvious reasons. First, I must extend a well-deserved thank you to Harry Woods and his membership team for giving me a great 100% starting point for the new membership year. His performance will be tough to follow, but I plan on giving it me all and, with the help of my team, expand on what he started.

I’m fired up with new ideas about membership. The Department of California Membership Team goal for the 2019-2020 membership year will be to continue building upon that 100% membership with augmentation by focusing on the values of American Legion membership and utilizing its ideals to recruit new members; engage all members, old and new; continue to transfer DMS and Post 1000 members into local posts; and, train all members to ensure better retention.

To implement this plan, the following needs to occur:

- District commanders will be called upon by their respective area membership chairman to identify all posts in need of closure, revitalization, or merging before the DEC in August. Membership Team personnel will help them complete this process.
- *District commanders will be further required to notify the membership team of posts or districts that need training (especially using mylegion.org). The membership team, along with the new training committee, will schedule and facilitate that training as soon as possible.*
- *District recruiting events. Each district commander will schedule one, preferably two, district recruiting events during the upcoming year, i.e., county fairs, city festivals, some large gathering that has vendors. The event will be manned by a member of the Department membership team and district personnel. The training department along with the media and communications department will help with training, particularly with “why you belong” and how to express that to prospective members. The department will furnish all the visuals and supplies for the event and pay any entrance fee, if required.*
- *Of course, it goes without saying that we need to engage all members of TAL, but yet, we seem to be very bad at it. With the combined expertise of the training committee, the media and communications committee and the membership team, we will endeavor to give you the tools you need to communicate with your members on an ongoing basis.*
- Finally, the department will continue to transfer DMS and Post 1000 members into local posts. But that’s just a start, training will also be given on how to find and recruit members in your areas that are expired either from a local post or from the DMS or Post 1000. We need to re-engage those members. If the various departments within the Department of California work together, the department staff, the membership team, the training team, the media and communications personnel, and the District Commanders, it will demonstrate to all legion members that this Department is committed to its members and the vision of the American Legion. In turn, members will want to assume a leadership position knowing procedures are in place to help them succeed.

It is vitally important for the various departments within the Department of California to work together, in unity, for the “Good of the Legion” to mitigate the occurrence of members not renewing each year and to actively recruit new members.

I look forward to working with and for each of you. I am requesting any input you may have on the 2019-2020 membership plan. I can be reached at paulabibby218@yahoo.com, or at 209-296-4154, 209-304-7107. Get fired up! I’ll see you at the DEC.

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**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER REPRESENTING AREA 5**

**Michael L. Weir**

Hello to my Legion Sisters and Brothers, I would first like to thank my wife Mary for her support and all of you for your support at the 101st Convention. I will do my best to make this a great year for the 5th area. I plan to visit as many posts and look forward to attending as many events as possible. So, please keep me posted.

Congratulations to the following: Department Commander Ed Grimsley (Area 5, District 22), and all the new District Commanders. I would like to thank everyone who stepped up to serve as officers in the 5th Area and also extend my great appreciation to Past Commander, Tracy Rascoe and his team for getting us to 100% in membership this past year. He had a lot of hard working 1st Vice Commanders at the District and Post levels. I am hoping we can have a repeat this year. My goals are membership, programs, community and helping our veterans. We have some good, hard-working leaders in Area 5. I believe as a team we can be number one in the state.

Our first Area 5 meeting will be held on September 14th and 15th 2019, at Post149 in Escondido.

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**BASIC TRAINING**

**AMERICAN LEGION STYLE**

Join Olivia Headley and Tim Mosman for the two-hour seminar (200 slides and 10 videos) at 10 a.m., Saturday, September 14, 2019 at Hollywood Post 43, 2035 North Highland Avenue, 323 851 3030; free parking. Information: 213 388 2655 olivia@att.net

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**Deadline for the next issue of the California Legionnaire is September 5, 2019**
Ask the Veteran Service Officer
Marc Jenkins
Department Service Officer

This is a new section of the California Legionnaire where any veteran of family member can submit a question to the DSO / VSO. We will attempt to answer questions in each Department of California newspaper. Please submit questions to your Post VSO or your Regional VSO office in Los Angeles, San Diego, or Oakland. Feel free to provide your name and affiliation to the American Legion or any veteran organization in the community. You may also remain anonymous if you desire. Please direct your questions to The American Legion, Department of California Service Officers (below) and not to the California Legionnaire:

Q. If I need to call 911 to go to a non-VA facility, how long do I have to notify the VA so my bills are covered by the VA?
A. The answer is within 72 hours. But first you must be enrolled in VA Healthcare. You should always get the Name, Date and Time of who called the VA and who from the VA received the call. If you are unconscious or unable to communicate, this period is extended until you are coherent, plus 72 hours. Please discuss this with your family so they know what to do in an emergency.

Q. How long do we have to submit the ambulance and hospital bills for the above event?
A. This should always be done as soon as possible. But, if you are 50% disabled or higher, you have two years. All others must contact their “Fee-Basis” office for your area to receive this information.

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Deadline for the next issue of the California Legionnaire is September 5, 2019
By Jared Morgan  
Vice-Chairman, Media & Communications Commission, Area 6  

The American Legion just can’t seem to shake the old trope of an aging, smoke-filled bar sparsely attended by salty seniors telling war stories and sloshing cocktails in toast to empty bar stools still bearing the indentations of lost comrades. The American Legion certainly has some of that but is it really who we are?

Our WWII and Korean War veterans are passing away in frightful numbers, but they’re also passing the torch to the younger generations, so why isn’t this the theme being portrayed in every news article and TV segment? The answer: we’re not doing a good enough job of managing our image through public relations. This organization doesn’t have a membership problem, it has an image problem, as is often put by Michael Hjelmstad, Area 6 Vice Commander.

We shouldn’t discount those posts whose livelihoods depend on bar income, nor should we balk at the valuable oral history we have access to in our aging veterans. We also can’t deny this part of the old timers’ culture and our recent history. My grandfather’s time after the Korean War was much different than mine today, Post-Iraq. The family unit is not organized the same as it once was. No longer is it common for one’s father to frequent the bar for a daily drink with the boys after a long day of work, leaving mother at home with the children. It’s one of many possible reasons why every civil society organization — veteran-focused or not — from The American Legion to the Elks to the Masons are finding difficulty in recruiting new people and retaining their members. Meanwhile, newer organizations like Team RWB, Team Rubicon, and The Mission Continues are pulling in service-oriented veterans in droves. Luckily for the Legion, these veterans are also open to maintaining memberships in multiple VSOs. The trick for us is to capture more of their attention than the other groups are. Sure, we’ve all got to work together to serve, but there is still a competition for the volunteer time each veteran allot for themselves in a given day. And for those younger Post-9/11 veterans, image is everything.

Social media, for example, looks at many of the principles of human behavior rooted in traditional psychology to understand what motivates people as individuals and as collectives. Skilled social media marketers know that when a person shares content they didn’t personally create, they’re essentially saying they endorse that content. It’s an extension of that person’s identity. It’s no different than wearing a t-shirt of your favorite musicians, or even a band you only occasionally enjoy listening to. More often than not, you’d never be caught dead in a t-shirt with a band you didn’t like or otherwise wouldn’t want associated with your personal identity (I’m talking about you, Nickelback).

By further analogy, if you want new members to wear the Legion emblem, we’ve got to make damn sure that we properly communicate what that symbol means and ensure The American Legion is a (dare I say “cool”) brand that veterans are proud to include in the closet next to their Gruntstyle and Nine Line shirts.

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”
—President John F. Kennedy.

We’ve got to come up with a better, more forward-thinking systems approach to communications in order to more effectively persuade the newest generation of veterans to carry our banner and ensure our culture, our brand, our image, persists. The Department realized this when it sanctioned the launch of California American Legion College last year, managed by immediate past Department Judge Advocate Autrey James, and we’re fortunate to have Department Adjutant Paul Brown’s experience as the former head of National American Legion College.

Systems theory states that an organization itself is a system with subsystems, but generally is more than just the sum of its parts. As such, the Media & Communications Commission’s priority this year will be to work more closely with Department and its web team, the California Legionnaire, the California Legion Press Association (CALPA) and California American Legion College (CALC) to ensure an integrated approach to marketing and communications is formalized and executed on.

The American Legion has an image problem. At the Department level, many specific solutions to this issue can be prescribed but it will take much work and coordination to see them realized. The onus of public relations outreach has been placed on individual posts, but the Department can and should take the lead on becoming the voice of all veterans in California when the news of the day requires it. We need to cultivate thought leaders to act as media-trained spokespersons who can clearly articulate the functions of our programs.

So, what can the Media & Communications Commission do to help with polishing The American Legion’s image? Per our bylaws, the Commission is charged with just that:

The Media & Communications Commission exists to continually monitor the state of internal and external communications within the Department of California and make recommendations for improvement to the Department Convention and the Executive Committee to align the organization, where possible, with all professional standards of contemporary information dissemination. This commission will also develop press release templates, lists of media outlets, and other tools needed by Posts, Districts, and the Department, for disseminating information to the media.

The first thing the Commission should do when new appointments are made is conduct an audit of the Department’s communications. Many changes are in the works, but we’re going to focus more on the external communications. To define these, internal communications would be things like membership emails, the California Legionnaire newsletter and any member-facing website like the National membership database MyLegion.org and most of the information that is posted on CalLegion.org, the Department of California’s official website. With all of these elements, we’re especially talking to ourselves and it’s something we’ve become relatively good at over the past century.

As of now, we don’t really have any external communications to speak of. This is how we manage our image and our reputation as it is perceived by prospective members, the media and the community. The media help to shape the public’s perception of our organization, which then has an effect on our ability to raise funds. This perception also largely controls our ability to build goodwill, a currency needed when crises strike and negative news looms. Some posts across the state do a good job of informing their communities and the media of the great things they’re doing and many are exceptional at getting outside of their four walls and talking about our programs, but the Department doesn’t have a good mechanism for disseminating information and making The American Legion relevant to those we want to communicate with.

The Media & Communications Commission came about in recent years when the Public Relations and Publishing commissions were merged to mirror the national organization’s commission structure. National also has a separate department of paid staff members whose job it is to carry out its public relations needs. A proposal is in development to cover similar operating costs in California and will seek to raise money through advertising and corporate partnerships.

What can we do now to get the ball rolling? It all starts with a good website. And because we’re discussing image, the website is going to project just that. It’s our digital face.

The Department’s web consultant, legionnaire Rick Pushies, has done a great job organizing the current website’s information and has even simplified the process of submitting required forms by enabling post leaders to do so online. Web designer and legionnaire John Durkin, owner of Connectavet.com, a low-cost web design solution for veterans, is currently developing a new WordPress website for the Department. This will allow for easy customization of future website iterations and make it easier to allow people with minimal technical skills to add content, something that will be critical to increasing web traffic and our website’s value to potential advertisers.

The website will have a news section that will feature curated press releases, articles and photos that will work to tell our story, optimize for internet browser searches and offer material to the media to help us better control our image and align it with the actual good we do every single day.

Feel free to email me with any questions or input: JaredMorgan.Legion@gmail.com
By Ken Newman, Chair
The Leadership Standing Committee met during the Department Convention in Ontario for the purpose of discussing leadership topics, reviewing resolutions, and judging nominations for the Legionnaire of the Year and the Lifetime Achievement awards.

Resolution 201904, titled “Encourage All Elected and Appointed Department, District, and Post Officers to Complete American Legion Basic Training”, was submitted by the California American Legion College. The Standing Committee approved the resolution and it was subsequently adopted by a vote of the Convention body.

The Leadership Commission award nominations are judged at the Convention Standing Committee meeting. The nominations are submitted from all 6 Areas and are reviewed by the District representatives attending the meeting. Participation in the Legionnaire of the Year program fell short this year, and no nomination was accepted. A Lifetime Achievement Award recipient was selected.

**Lifetime Achievement Award**
The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Ralph Jacob of Santa Clara Post 419, District 13. Ralph retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Master Sargent having served 21 years and has been a member of the American Legion for 35 years.

His Legion career began in 1984 and the accomplishments are many. Having worked through all the chairs at the Post and District level, Ralph continued to advance and was elected Department Vice Commander Representing Area 2 in 2004. He remains an active participant at his Post and District 13 and is always willing to lend a helping hand or offer guidance. He has chaired two Department Conventions in Santa Clara, served as the Department Membership Chairman for Northern California and at the National level serves on the Children and Youth Commission.

Ralph has run the Trees for Troops program for several years at a local Christmas tree farm, raising funds to purchase Christmas trees sent to active duty troops. Ralph and his wife, Past Auxiliary Department President Sandy Jacob, are on the final approach to their 50th wedding anniversary. The Legion Family couple has camped out for years at the Yountville Veterans Home prior to the golf tournament preparing for the tournament and purchasing items for residents of the Home. Ralph is a dedicated Legionnaire and truly has a lifetime of achievements serving the Community, State, and Nation as a proud member of the American Legion.

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By Tommy Anderson
**Hollywood Post 43 CALPANALPA**

On Saturday, May 11th, 2019 the Norco American Legion Post 328 held a 100th Anniversary Party for the American Legion. This event was organized and hosted by past member “Blake” Frances Blakesey a USMC Veteran. Numerous local officials and celebrities attended this event including one from Hollywood who is the focus of my article. Simone Lara a film and TV actress along with being a model was there representing and promoting the organization she is a member of “Pin up for Vets.” “Pin-up for Vet’s” is a 501c3 nonprofit which was founded and is run by Gina Elise from Los Angeles, California. “Pin-Ups For Vets” raises funds to improve Veterans’ healthcare donates funds to VA hospitals for medical equipment and program expansion improves the quality of life for ill Veterans across the United States through personal bedside visits to deliver gifts and show appreciation promotes volunteerism at Veterans Hospitals, conducts morale-boosting events for military spouses, and boosts morale for deployed troops through the delivery of care packages.

Simone besides being a pinup is also a current member of the California Army National Guard where she serves as a Specialist 4 in public affairs. Simone is also a fellow member with me at Hollywood Post 43 and Veterans in Media and Entertainment. Simone had spent a good portion of her time at this event meeting, greeting, and posing for pictures with patients from the Loma Linda Veterans Hospital who were honored at this celebration. Simone also spent a lot of additional time with each veteran both male and female and then brought many smiles and even some tears to these veterans faces. These smiles were priceless and the tears some shed were heart moving because they had met someone who took the time to care about them. That is what this wonderful organization is all about. Nearly every patient had their picture taken with Simone and one even told me before we had left the hall “Thank you for doing this for us”.

After spending her time with these veterans Simone went on to staff her “Pin up for Vets” booth informing the community and other veterans of the organization’s mission along with selling their fundraising pinup calendars and swag. The pin-ups in the calendar are all military veterans.

For more information on the “Pin-up for Vets” and booking contact Gina Elise at gina@pinupsforvets.com or visit their website at http://www.pinupsforvets.com.

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**Leadership Commission**

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**You are not forgotten – Brightening veterans lives**

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**LA FLEET WEEK**

Mark Your Calendars: LA Fleet Week® at the LA Waterfront Returns Labor Day Weekend Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 2019

New Highlights Include Live U.S. Navy Parachute Demos, Obstacle Course Competitions and More!
National Veterans Employment & Education Awards

By Eric W. Measles, Chairman, National Veterans Education, Other Benefits, and Homelessness Committee

Greetings to all my comrades, throughout the “Golden State”. As we set upon a new California American Legion year, we have a wonderful opportunity to assist our new Department Commander, Ed Grimsley, in bringing positive ‘lil’ light’ to our Department.

This new “Legion Year” also gives me an opportunity to remind all of us that we have an obligation to recognize those companies and individuals that go above and beyond in helping Veterans seeking meaningful employment.

Our National Organization continues to award and recognize outstanding contributions by Small, Medium, and Large Businesses.

Other individuals are also honored for their dedication and demonstrated the desire to do all they can, in fulfilling career choices and dreams of those seeking employment following separation from active duty. It is important to also point out that special recognition is also given to those Specialists that assist disabled Veterans with their particular needs as they set out on their career decisions.

I would very much appreciate California Legionnaires submitting the names and information of those California businesses or individuals that qualify for consideration. I am certain there are many, within our state that deserves to be recognized for their efforts.

Submittals for consideration must be into the Department Adjutants office no later than December 15, 2019.

Please see the following information taken directly from our National web site.

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission annually presents several awards at The American Legion’s national convention to honor employers who hire veterans, disabled veterans and older workers. Those who help veterans find employment are also recognized.

The awards include:
- Employer of the Year - Small Business, Mid-Sized Business, and Large Business
- Employer of the Disabled Award
- Employer of Older Workers Award
- Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year
- Outstanding Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist of the Year
- Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year

Nomination forms for each award are available through American Legion Department headquarters. All entries must be accompanied by an official nomination form with no more than two pages of narrative, along with supporting documents. Departments will send reminders to all posts about nominations.

For more information, please contact Eric Measles, Email: haydenfalls@aol.com or Department Adjutant, Paul Brown, Email: Adjutant@calegion.org

Brea Community News Update

Brea American Legion Post 181 donates $10,000 for Historical Society roof repair

Contacts:
Steven Vargas, Adjutant
Brea American Legion Post 181
vivavargas@aol.com 714-306-4523

Linda Shay, Executive Director
info@breamuseum.org
714-256-2283

Brea - The Brea Museum & Historical Society, located at 495 S. Brea Blvd, has a roof leak. The building which was built in 1929 was the home of the Brea American Legion Post 181 for the first half of the 20th century. Years later the Brea Fire Department and Police Department, complete with a four-bunk jail cell, moved in. Over the past few years, the Spanish tile roof has developed numerous leaks that will require a re-roof. Due to the historic architecture, the cost is estimated at $30,000. A cost, the Historical Society can’t afford.

The Brea American Legion established January 5th, 1920 is celebrating its 100-year centennial this fiscal year and needs a new home for monthly meetings. The historic timing of the two non-profit organizations mutual need will be celebrated at the Brea Country Fair, 9:00 am at City Hall Park when the Brea American Legion will help kick off the roof repair fundraising effort with a $10,000 donation, one-third of the amount needed. For their generous participation, Brea American Legion Post 181 will begin monthly meetings at the Museum every 3rd Thursday of the month for the next 20-years.

Post Commander, Rick Rios had this to say; “As we celebrate our Centennial Year, I can’t think of a greater partnership and am proud to be welcomed back to our original building to hold our monthly meetings.” Post Adjutant, Steve Vargas added; “100 years ago, the American Legion helped build this newly minted town of Brea, we are pleased to be able to help rebuild one of our most iconic structures, a win-win for Brea.” To contribute, contact Museum Executive Director, Linda Shay at 714-256-2283.
By Seth Reeb-Legislative Advocate, 
Reeb Government Relations

Convention

While attending the American Legion 101st State Convention I was able to reconnect with many Legionnaires from around the state. I met with the Legislative Commission to update them on the current status of legislation that the Department of California has taken positions on. It was wonderful to see so many young Legionnaires getting involved. I was impressed with 17-year-old Oratorical contest winner Daniella Wilson. Her message was captivating and she is, in my opinion, going to be someone to watch out for. I wish Daniella the best and hope to see her in public office one day.

House of Origin Deadline

We are past the midway point of the first year of a two-year legislative cycle. May 31st was the deadline for Assembly or Senate bills to be passed out of their house of origin. On June 3, Assembly bills moved over to the Senate and vice versa.

Legislative Calendar

July 12 — Last day for policy committees to meet and report bills. Summer Recess begins upon adjournment.

Aug. 12 — Legislature reconvenes from Summer Recess

Sep. 13 — Last day for any bill to be passed

Oct. 13 — Last day for Governor to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature on or before Sept.

Key Legislation the CA Legion has taken positions on which are still moving through the process (AS OF 7-08-19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB 169</td>
<td>Lackey R</td>
<td>Guide, signal, and service dogs: injury or death.</td>
<td>6/24/2019—In committee: Referred to APPR. suspense file.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 290</td>
<td>Wood D</td>
<td>Health care service plans and health insurance: third-party payments</td>
<td>7/3/2019—Re-refer to the Committee on [Appropriations] (PASS)</td>
<td>OPPOSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 408</td>
<td>Frazier D</td>
<td>Vehicles: disabled veterans.</td>
<td>Two-year bill</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 550</td>
<td>Flora R</td>
<td>Veterans: Medical Foster Home Pilot Program.</td>
<td>6/26/2019—Referred to Com. on APPR.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 581</td>
<td>Levine D</td>
<td>Sentencing: members of military: trauma.</td>
<td>6/26/2019—From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. with recommendation: To Consent Calendar.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 1257</td>
<td>Salas D</td>
<td>Sales and use taxes: exemption: adaptive automotive equipment: disabled veteran or member of the Armed Forces.</td>
<td>6/26/2019—Referred to Com. on APPR.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 1376</td>
<td>Ramos D</td>
<td>Veterans: security clearances.</td>
<td>6/28/2019—Referred to Com. on APPR.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACR 57</td>
<td>Brough R</td>
<td>American Legion 100 years of service</td>
<td>7/3/2019—Ordered to special consent calendar.</td>
<td>Support/Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB 222</td>
<td>Hill D</td>
<td>Discrimination: veteran or military status.</td>
<td>7/2/2019—From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR.</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sponsored Bill-SB 663 (Jones); Property taxation: exemptions: veterans’ organizations.

Senator Brian Jones (R-Santee) authored SB 663, which is sponsored by the American Legion. SB 663 seeks to secure a tax exemption for veterans halls. A similar bill in 2017 (AB 1249-Gray) passed all the way through the Legislature unanimously, however it was vetoed by Governor Brown. Senator Jones picked up the torch this year and the bill is currently awaiting a vote in the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee. So far, the bill has received unanimous support.

If the bill receives the votes needed to pass out of the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee, it will go to the Assembly Appropriations committee.

—REPORT, see page 11
Memorial Plaque Dedication for Service Officer

By: B.J. Coleman, Editor/Staff Reporter, 22nd District Legionnaire

The Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial is notable for several distinctions. One of these distinctions is that the monument honors both living and deceased veterans of military service. The memorial site currently has over 5,400 plaques installed -- about 70 percent for living veterans, 30 percent for the honored dead.

Friends and colleagues of Richard “Sunny” Farrand gathered around him at the memorial on Saturday, June 8. The occasion was for the dedication of a memorial plaque placed on the honor walls to recognize Farrand’s service in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam years, as well as his continuing service as a volunteer assisting comrades in need.

Farrand works at the La Jolla VA hospital in the Veterans Service Office, serves as Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) Chairman for The American Legion’s Department of California, OCW Chairman for San Diego’s American Legion District 22, and also as Service Officer with San Diego’s American Legion District 22. He further works with USA Cares of California and with Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 472. Farrand is a Legionnaire at Chula Vista Post 434 in the South County San Diego area.

Leading candidate for Department of California Commander, Ed Grimsley, was on hand to acknowledge Farrand’s devotion to fellow military veterans and their family members.

“We appreciate all you have done for the Legion here in District 22,” Grimsley said. “You help more than veterans only, and you have only a concern if fellow veterans need something, you help. It has been my pleasure to know you and my privilege to come up here to recognize you.”

Farrand arrived in San Diego in 1995 from Daytona Beach. He was himself homeless for several months at that time, and Farrand is well-known throughout San Diego County as an effective advocate on behalf of homeless veterans.

Farrand received other recognitions and honors before the official plaque unveiling, including a specially handcrafted Quilt of Valor, given to him with the “gratitude of a grateful nation.”

Farrand recently said that he had been surprised and humbled by the gesture after he was informed of the memorial plaque. “I have been honored for my work with our Veterans and Wounded Warriors with a plaque on Mount Soledad…. I had no say-so in the design, and I was a little upset because The American Legion was not included in any of it. But to my surprise, the designers were otherwise perfect and doing what all they did to keep it a secret. …I just want everyone to know that if it wasn’t for my church and the connection made to The American Legion, I would never have been able to do what I’m being honored for these days. Thanks to them, I’ve had something to live for and ways to give back to the community and make something of myself. It’s an honor to work for an organization that cares this much for those that fight our battles and suffer the wounds of war.”

---

SB 245 (Chang R) Public animal shelters: adoption fees: veterans.
Status: 7/5/2019-Read second time. Ordered to consent calendar.
Position: Support

SB 364 (Stone R) Property taxation: senior and disabled veterans.
Status: 6/18/2019-Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on REV. & TAX.
Position: Support

Status: 6/19/2019-Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on REV. & TAX.
Position: Support

DON HARPER
CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
govia@comcast.net

SB 588 (Archuleta D) Public contracts: Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program.
Position: Support

SB 663 (Jones R) Property taxation: exemptions: veterans’ organizations.
Status: 6/25/2019-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on V.A.
Position: Support/Sponsor

TO ACCESS THE LEGISLATURE’S WEBSITE WHICH HAS THE LANGUAGE, STATUS, VOTES, AND ANALYSES OF ALL LEGISLATION FROM 1999 TO THE PRESENT, GO TO: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml

TO ACCESS THE LEGISLATURE’S LIVE HEARINGS, VIDEO AND AUDIO AS WELL AS ON-DEMAND GO TO: http://www.calchannel.com/
The American Legion
JUL 23, 2019

The U.S. House passed the bipartisan LEGION Act on Tuesday, extending the recognized wartime era back to Dec. 7, 1941.

The LEGION Act --- Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act — fills in the gaps of war eras and redefines The American Legion’s membership eligibility dates, beginning with a bombing of Pearl Harbor and continuing until it is determined the United States is no longer in a state of war.

President Trump is expected to sign Senate bill S.504 into law later this week. When it becomes law, the legislation opens the door for hundreds of thousands of veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

“Today’s passage of the LEGION Act is a victory for veterans who until now have not had their service to our nation fully recognized,” American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad said. “These veterans and their family members can now enjoy all the benefits of their service which they so richly deserve.”

The gaps in the war era were largely during the Cold War, a time when threats to U.S. national security was real, especially to the men and women serving in uniform. Overall, estimates show that about 1,600 U.S. servicemembers were killed or wounded in hostile operations during periods that were not previously recognized as times of war by the federal government.

Reistad credited members of Congress and American Legion Family members with the successful legislation. Their efforts fulfill Resolution No. 1, passed unanimously by the Legion’s National Executive Committee last October in Indianapolis.


The SJR#7 urges all of California’s two Senators and 53 Representatives in the Congress of the United States to immediately cosponsor S.743 sponsored by Sen. Johnny Isakson [R-GA] and H.R.906 sponsored by Rep. Peter T. King [R-NY-2]. In order for the CGM bills to become Public Law, at least 67% of the House of Representatives (290 of 435) and the Senate (67 of 100) must cosponsor the bills during the 116th Congress and Ben Cline, R-Va., introduced a similar measure in the House.

Act, along with Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. Reps. Lou Correa, D-Calif., and Ben Cline, R-Va., introduced a similar measure in the House.

“The American Legion appreciates the support our representatives have shown the veterans who were previously caught in the gaps,” Reistad said. “This also underscores the passion American Legion Family members have for our nation’s veterans. Their grass-roots advocacy for this bill has been inspiring.”

Reistad evoked the memories of The American Legion’s founders who launched the organization 100 years ago this year.

“As we celebrate our centennial anniversary, we hold to the same truths that our founders appropriately crafted a century ago,” Reistad said. “Among those: a veteran is a veteran. It does not matter whether a veteran fought enemies on foreign soil, protected our interests in an ocean far away or secured our national defense here at home. Their service is what matters most. Now, thanks to this legislation, all veterans will be properly remembered for their service.”

Proposed Title: Merrill’s Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act

By Nestor Aliga Post 603 Historian

Members of the Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 were all smiles on June 28, 2019 as the California State Legislature unanimously passed/chaptered Senate Joint Resolution No. 7 - to award the Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) to the Merrill’s Marauders.

Post 603 submitted the draft resolution on March 4, and State Senator Steve Glazer (D-Contra Costa) introduced it on March 20, 2019 during The American Legion Day at the State Capitol.

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State Senator Bill Dodd Working to Install “VA Clinic” or “VA Vet Center” highway signs

By Nestor Aliga, Post 603

During the American Legion Day at the State Capitol on March 20, 2019, members of the Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 visited State Senator Bill Dodd to discuss how to somehow mitigate the high deaths-by-suicide rate among Service members and Veterans. One of the simpler ideas proposed is for the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) to install “VA CLINIC” and “VETCENTER” EXIT signs at ALL roads and highways controlled by CalTrans. The signs will hopefully remind Veterans that help is available for mental and physical treatments, and to decrease the terrible 20.6 deaths—by-suicide per day (only 6 or 29% had gotten VA help). Senator Dodd, who was the 2017 American Legion, Department of California, Legislator of the Year, has directed his staff to find or make a way to implement this proposal via existing directives and/or by introducing a State Senate Concurrent Resolution.

From left, Post 603 Sr. Vice Commander Manny Concepcion, State Senator Bill Dodd, and Post 603 Historian Nestor Aliga.
The American Legion Mare Island Navy Yard Post 550 celebrated Flag Day

By Nestor Aliga Post 603 Historian

The American Legion Mare Island Navy Yard Post 550 and The Veterans of Foreign Wars Carl H. Kreh Post 1123 with assistance from Boy Scout Troop 7012 and other volunteers commemorated Flag Day on Saturday, June 15 as several old, worn, or torn flags were also properly retired.

The Vallejo City Unified School District also adopted a Flag Day resolution submitted by The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603, which reads:

WHEREAS, for more than 200 years, the American flag has been a proud symbol of the people of our beloved Nation and the values for which we stand, and in hues of red, white, and blue, it reflects centuries of struggle and sacrifice, triumph over adversities, and a constant reminder of our journey from thirteen colonies to a Nation united in freedom and liberty, and of the patriots and pioneers who fought for these ideals at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, the broad stripes and bright stars of our flag connects Americans across our great country, around the globe, and down through the chapters of our history, and it stands as a beacon of promise and possibility; and in the dawn’s early light, it offered a glimmer of hope as the fate of our young Nation was decided, and after the Civil War that divided our Union, the Star Spangled Banner once again united our people; and

WHEREAS, from storefront, homes, atop monuments, over the institutions, on military bases and ships at sea that sustain our Nation at home and abroad, the American flag stands watch as we strive to perfect our Union, and when we place our hand over our heart or as we salute this symbol of the country we love, let us pause to reflect on the legacy of our Nation and embrace the common threads that bind us together as Americans; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the adoption of our flag, Congress designated June 14th of each year as “Flag Day,” and Congress also requested, by joint resolution, that the President annually issue a proclamation designating the week in which June 14th occurs as “National Flag Week” and call upon all the citizens of the United States of America to display the flag during that week; and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2019, 9AM at the Vallejo Veterans Memorial Building, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Carl H. Kreh Post 1123 and the American Legion Mare Island Navy Yard Post 550 will pay tribute to this banner of hope and opportunity and celebrate the historic story of progress it represents, and all citizens of Vallejo are cordially invited to our commemoration.

Mare Island Naval Cemetery May Get NDAA funding

By Nestor Aliga Post 603 Historian

The dilapidated Mare Island Naval Cemetery (MINC) will likely get much-needed funding as the House of Representative recently passed H.R. 2500 – the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). After it clears the Senate and becomes Public Law, a nonprofit historical preservation organization will get $250,000 per year to aid in the operation, maintenance, and preservation of MINC.

Although this is good news, those fighting to restore the oldest naval cemetery on the west coast - including members of The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 - are still hoping that MINC will ultimately become a Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery so it is brought up to and then maintained to national shrine standards, and perhaps it will also be expanded. If it is opened to new burials / inurnments, then veterans and their eligible family members would have another option besides the Sacramento VA National Cemetery in Dixon. While Dixon is within the VA’s “75-mile” rule from the north bay area, a common complaint is that 75 miles usually take much more than 75 minutes for visitors, especially elderly loved ones, to travel.

The other courses of action to save and transform the MINC include:

1) The Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training project. This is a short-term remedy which will make initial fixes, including repairing or replacing the fencing, flagpole, and the damaged drainage system. This was supposed to start in 2019 but it has been postponed to 2020 due to a historic consultation preservation analysis and the operational tempo of an Army Reserve engineer unit.

2) The City of Vallejo to transfer MINC and adjacent land back to the Navy; get NDAA funding for the Navy to fix MINC – similar to the Mare Island Rifle Range remediation, and then, for the Navy to administratively transfer MINC back to the VA in accordance with the original intent of Public Law No: 93-43 (06/18/1973) National Cemeteries Act. If this law was followed in the first place, the jurisdiction for MINC would have transferred from the Navy to the VA either in 1973 or during the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process in 1993.

3) The VA to give the California Veterans Affairs (CalVet) additional funding for a local national shrine subcontract for repairing and maintaining MINC - similar to some funding the VA provides to CalVet cemeteries.

4) The President of the United States to issue an Executive Order – similar to #12115, Permanent American Cemetery in the Republic of Panama – to transfer MINC to the VA as soon as practical.

5) The ultimate passage of H.R.578 and S.127 introduced by Representative Mike Thompson and Senator Dianne Feinstein, respectively, which “direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with the city of Vallejo, California, for the transfer of Mare Island Naval Cemetery in Vallejo, California, and for other purposes.”

On June 13, 2018, the Honorable Denise Rohan, The American Legion National Commander for 2017-18, stated, “Showing respect to the dead that served our country is one of the most important things we can do, and the Mare Island Naval Cemetery holds the graves of many veterans to include three Medal of Honor recipients, and the two million members of The American Legion wholeheartedly support moving this facility to the care of the National Cemetery Administration and thank Rep. Thompson for his leadership.”

If small American cemeteries overseas, like Rhone in France and Flanders Field in Belgium, can be fully funded and immaculately maintained, then the oldest naval cemetery on the west coast should be a national shrine, too, so we beg to ask our U.S. Government, why don’t our U.S. veterans buried in our own homeland deserve as much respect as our U.S. veterans buried overseas?
To Department of California
TEAM 100

We have just entered a new Legion Year with a renewed vigor, energy and purpose. And we need to continue to move forward to make the Department of California the “Shining Star” of the American Legion and you all proved we can.

I want to thank all of my Officers for their devotion, inspiration and loyalty to this organization and to the Department membership that made it all happen, 100%+ in membership, needed Bylaw changes, and allowing our membership the opportunity to be part of the membership revitalization effort, increasing communications between all levels and all members and providing needed training to our officers and to our members as it was shown during convention.

We made some changes to our convention schedules to make a concerted effort for training and the numbers that attended these sessions prove we were on the correct path.

Let’s continue this training at this annual venue but let’s not forget to have training at Area, District and Post levels. It has been said that educated citizens make educated decisions, so it is, that educated Legionnaires make educated decisions and better leaders.

Members of the Department of California, thank you for allowing me the privilege and honor of being your Department Commander and allowing the Department Leadership the opportunity to move our Department forward. To my Legion Officers, thank you for your trust in me and your efforts to carry on the Vision I had for this great Department. And all those members that helped “make the beauty music” that made our membership numbers phenomenal, improved communication tools and those that were part of our training concept.

I hope we will continue the energy and effort during Commander Grimsley’s year and beyond. To my advisors, I appreciate your advice and your candor throughout the year. To my Adjutant, I couldn’t have moved that needle as far as it did without your “thinking outside the box”. Proving the phrase “But that’s the way we always did it” is not a phrase in our Bylaws as we bring new and fresh ideas to the party.

Thank you again California, it was an honor to be your Centennial Commander, your Team 100 and Team 100%+ Commander. California, carry on!

Larry Leonardo, Sr
Past Dept. Commander 2018-2019
Department of California

Introducing Department ALA President – 2019/2020

War veteran, and her brother, Edward A Vaughn, a Viet Nam Veteran. Kathie has 2 sons, 2 daughters, 2 grandsons, and 3 granddaughters all of whom are members of the American Legion family. Kathie is currently serving ALA Unit 46, Community Post 46 as Secretary/ Treasurer. Since transferring to this Unit, Kathie has served as President 3 times and has worked to revitalize the Unit over the past two years including reaching goal this past year by National Convention. Kathie has served District 23 on all levels and chairmanships and as District President in 1999-2000.

On the Department level she has served as Sergeant-at-Arms, Marshall, Junior Conference commit- tee member, Junior Conference Director, served 3 years through the chars of the Finance Committee, Leadership, Poppies, Children and Youth, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation currently serving as the membership chairman. Kathie has worked for the past 20 years as an Administrative Assistant for a national auto and heavy-duty truck distribution center and is currently the Regional Administrative As- sistant. Her responsibilities include but are not limited to Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, invoicing, auditing, and daily reconcili- ciation of cash sales for the West Coast operations. In her spare or leisure time she enjoys volunteer- ing at her church, reading, crochet- ing, sewing, fishing and spending as much time as she can with her family.

Here’s how your commissary plans to get back lost customers

Lower prices. Expanded hours. And ‘YES,’ a new marketing program. Also, beer.

By: Karen Jowers

Officials have been mapping out the areas, using VA statistics, where there may be more of an impact on the stores. The impact assessments generally show there will be a low to moderate impact on military stores overall, said Penrod. But she called on representatives of industry for their help to make sure the supply chain “remains responsive to the increased sales volume to ensure no out of stock situations occur” at stores in states with high populations of disabled veterans and in states with higher cost of living.

States with a higher population density of disabled veterans are Florida, Texas and California, said Barry Patrick, in the DoD office of resale policy. High cost areas were identified as Hawaii, Alaska, California; the Washington metro- politan area; New York; New Jersey and Washington state, he said.

These new shoppers generally don’t have access to military bases. Offi- cials have decided the best form of identification for these groups:

- Disabled and other eligible veterans: For access into the instal- lation, and for access to the stores, they’ll use the veteran’s health ID card, Patrick said. Officials are working to enable technology at the front gate to scan those veteran cards, and will start scanning the cards in October, he said. Commissary officials are working on ad- justing their technology to enable systems to read the veteran’s health ID card.
- Caregivers: The process will be different, initially, Patrick said, since they’re not directly affiliated with DoD or VA other than through their annual appoint- ment to be a caregiver. The benefit applies to the primary caregiver of wounded/injured veterans who are registered in the Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver pro- gram. Beginning in October, the VA will post a memo to VA.gov, for caregivers to be used for access at the front gate, along with driver’s license or other authorized form of ID. The VA process will later transition to a caregiver-type ID card, which will have scanning swipe

–CUSTOMERS, see page 15
Here’s how 3 million more people will get military shopping benefits

By: Karen Jowers

As about 3 million more people will soon be eligible to shop at military stores, officials are working to make sure these new customers will have access to bases, and that the shelves will be stocked. Starting Jan. 1, all service-connected disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war and primary veteran caregivers will be eligible to shop at commissaries and exchanges, and officials from three federal agencies are preparing the way. The newly eligible customers will also be able to use certain morale, welfare and recreation activities. It’s the largest patronage expansion in more than 60 years, said Virginia Penrod, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs, who spoke at a recent meeting of the American Logistics Association.

Here’s why more veterans, caregivers may get commissary, exchange privileges by 2020

The proposal, part of the annual defense authorization bill, is en route to the Senate. By: Karen Jowers

The departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security, have been planning for the expansion for more than six months, with four teams totaling about 70 people. Among other things, they’ve decided how the new customers will get access to military installations and to the stores; assessed the impact on the stores, and have been making plans to ensure enough products get to the shelves in the right assortment.

The fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act expanded the pool of eligible shoppers. Because the expansion also applies to Coast Guard facilities, the Department of Homeland Security has been involved. The law also included Medal of Honor recipients, but they already had shopping privileges. Previously, veterans with 100 percent service-connected disabilities were able to shop; now all with service-connected disabilities can shop. The benefit extends to MWR programs that are “revenue-generating facilities,” according to the law.

The expansion is about a 50 percent increase in customers. Currently, about 6 million total households are eligible for the benefit; this adds 3 million, said Justin Hall, director of the DoD office of MWR and Resale Policy. “That’s a huge lift across the entire system,” he said.

-CUSTOMERS, from page 14
capability, he said.

Currently there are about 30,000 VA caregivers who will qualify for this benefit, but over the next several years the number could potentially grow to about 250,000, Patrick noted.

-CREDIT CARD FEE

We have a strong partnership with The American Legion, we are their program and are here to carry their legacy forward. I bring a wealth of experience, a young minded passion, future-focused goals, and the ability to move our great organization forward in a positive direction.

I am humbled and profoundly thankful for this opportunity to serve and help make the lives of our Veterans, first responders, and their families better.

For God & Country in Support of The American Legion Family --- Sincerely,

Michael Fox
Candidate for National Commander Sons of The American Legion

Credit card fee:

These new customers will pay a fee for using a credit card at commissaries, except for the military resale system’s Military Star card. The amount of the fee has not yet been determined. By law, this expansion can’t include extra costs associated with using credit cards in commissaries; the cost must be passed on to the customer. Except for the Military Star card, credit card companies charge transaction fees to retailers when customers use their credit cards.

There will be a flag built into the system at commissaries so that when the card is swiped the fee will be charged.

-FOX, from page 1

about your fundraiser and we will come out and support it and I would love to address the attendees.

So, what do I stand for and what is my campaign hoping to accomplish? I stand for positive change, a younger direction, and branding the Sons (and Legion family) as a must love to address the attendees.

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The American Legion Membership Application

Sign-up on-line TODAY at: www.calegion.org – OR – Mail Membership application and $47 to:
TAL DoC Post 1000 Application
1601 7th Street,
Sanger, CA 93657
Please make your check payable to:
TAL DoC Post 1000
NOTE: $0.95 of annual dues goes to the California Legionnaire, the official publication of The American Legion-Department of California, to help offset the cost.

O Lord, You have shown us that death is but the gateway to a more glorious life and that we must not fear its coming, and we know, also, that neither life nor death can separate us from Your love. Assure us, yet again, that our departed comrades are not lost to us, but sharing new life with You in the kingdom of our Father, where we shall in your good time be reunited.

We know them to be with You forever ... Amen.

Post Everlasting data will be reported in the October 2019 issue of the California Legionnaire.

(Full report will be in the end of year Book of Reports)

Three generations of female veterans at The Department of California American Legion Convention in Ontario on Sunday, June 30. From left are shown Desirae Storey-Smidt, Anna Brown, and Robyn Bourland Nolin.

Photo by: B.J. Coleman

The American Legion 101st National Convention
CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL
INDIANPOLIS
INDEANA • AUGUST 23 - 29, 2019

Tickets $50

Deparment of California
2019 JIM HACKNEY NIGHT OUT
AUGUST 26TH 6:30-9:30PM
INDIANPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

3 Generations of Female Veterans

Vol. 106, No.23 Official Publication of The American Legion Department of California August 2019