



## American Legion Post 13 December 2017 Newsletter

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**2017-2018**

### **Officers**

Commander:	Richard Brown	Sr Vice:	Rod Pedersen	Adjutant:	Phil Youngblood
Jr Vice:	Stephen Blanton	Jr Vice:	Don Van Pelt	Fin. Off.:	
Judge Adv:	Phil Youngblood	Serv. Off:	Ed Kent	Historian:	Clayton Roberts
Sgt @ Arms:	Tommy Hightower	Members @ Large:	Jimmy Traynor; Raymond Meeks & Whit Chappell		

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### **COMMANDER'S CORNER:**

First of all I would like to thank everyone who attended the Veterans Day Ceremony. I would like to also thank all those who helped in the preparations for Veterans Day. The organizers done a wonderful job and the entire crew who helped in the kitchen from preparing the meal to setting up tables to the clean-up afterwards performed their services to the utmost. I as commander of this post cannot thank each of you enough for your services.

To each member, we hope to have a wonderful time at our Christmas dinner and I hope to see each of you at our regular membership meeting on January 9,2018. I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. due to the holidays there won't be a January News letter so mark your calendar for January 9,2018.

WE, AS THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, HOPE WE CAN MAKE THIS POST WORK FOR THE MEMBERSHIP. IF ANYONE HAS AN IDEA, DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT ONE OF US.

Anyone wishing to assist in any activities the post is having can contact any Executive Committee member and they will be glad to add your name to the volunteer list.

*Remember, this organization is only as strong as its weakest member!*

RICHARD BROWN

COMMANDER

[conductorbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:conductorbrown@hotmail.com)

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## Senior Vice

2018 Memberships have been available to us since the June Department Convention. On November 21, our Post 13 Membership Goal was at 59%. It's time to remind each other that our 2017 dues expire December 31, 2017.

When you are around your Post 13 friends, ask them if they have renewed? It may take just a friendly reminder. If you know a qualifying Veteran or Active Duty, invite them to attend and see what we are about.

As the Holidays are upon us as well as the end of this year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and all for your friendship and camaraderie. Most of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for serving our beloved Country with your military service.

Follow the Airborne !!!!

Rod Pedersen  
Sr. Vice Commander  
Post 13 Valdosta  
[rod.pedersen.1956@gmail.com](mailto:rod.pedersen.1956@gmail.com)

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### Jr. Vice

Stephen Blanton     [sabusn6976@gmail.com](mailto:sabusn6976@gmail.com)

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Don Van Pelt     [vanpeltdon@yahoo.com](mailto:vanpeltdon@yahoo.com)

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### Historian

Clayton Roberts     [croberts22@hotmail.com](mailto:croberts22@hotmail.com)

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### Service Officer

Ed Kent     kentj2@bellsouth.net

VA Agent Orange Benefits Update : No Decision on Expansion

After 18 months of review by his department, VA Secretary David J. Shulkin awkwardly announced 1 NOV that he plans to "further explore" adding ailments to the list of compensable conditions VA presumes were caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War. The decision to punt long-anticipated decisions on

Agent Orange-related ailments will disappointment thousands of aging veterans with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension (high blood pressure). Veterans and survivors were hopeful some or all of those conditions would be added to VA's presumptive list of ailments linked to wartime herbicides, based on the latest and final review of medical and scientific literature on Agent Orange from the National Academy of Medicine (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine). Instead, on the 1 NOV deadline date that VA itself had set for this packet of decisions, Shulkin issued a brief statement at 6 p.m. promising only more delay.

“After thoroughly reviewing the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)'s latest report regarding veterans and Agent Orange, and associated data and recommendations from [VA's] NAM Task Force, I have made a decision to further explore new presumptive conditions for service connection that may ultimately qualify for disability compensation. I appreciate NAM's work and the commitment and expertise of [my] Task Force, and look forward to working with the [Trump] administration on the next steps in the process.”

A last sentence, not attributed to Shulkin, explained that the VA “will begin work with the administration to concurrently conduct a legal and regulatory review of these potential presumptive conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.” In the past, VA began a regulatory review only after the secretary approved new ailments for the list. Shulkin hasn't named any new illnesses. In conceding that VA experts already had “thoroughly” reviewed the latest science, however, Shulkin seemed to signal that parties elsewhere in the Trump administration didn't want a VA announcement at this time rejecting or embracing new conditions. “We thought we were going to get a decision sometime today,” said Rick Weidman, executive director for policy and government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America. “Obviously we were mistaken. What they issued, to quote Sarah Huckabee Sanders [White House press secretary], is a Nothing Burger.” “I am shocked and dismayed if this is the VA Secretary's decision, to continue to delay,” emailed Carla Dean, who lost her husband, a Vietnam veteran, to bladder cancer last year. Now president of the Bladder Cancer Foundation of Florida, Dean said she remained hopeful that Shulkin will do the “right thing soon.”

Weidman said members of Vietnam Veterans of America “are going to be really angry” with more delay because “there is probably enough evidence now for the Secretary to declare other ailments” as tied to Agent Orange exposure, “glioblastoma first among them.” And sailors and Marines who served aboard ship off Vietnam, the Blue Water Veterans, should have been deemed eligible like ground forces for compensation for presumptive ailments long ago, Weidman said. “The ball is now in Trump's court,” he added. “It's not something now that Obama did or did not do.” [Source: MOAA Leg Up | Tom Philpott | November 3, 2017 ++]

Researchers say they have found the “first direct biological evidence” of damage in Veterans with Gulf War illness to DNA within cellular structures that produce energy in the body. The findings appeared in the journal PLOS One in SEP 2017. A study that focused on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) included 21 Veterans with Gulf War illness (GWI) and seven controls. In blood tests, researchers observed more lesions and more mitochondrial DNA—that is, extra copies of genes—in Veterans with Gulf War illness, relative to controls without the illness, suggesting excess DNA damage. Lesion frequency gives a direct measure of DNA damage, while the increased number of mtDNA copies reflects a response to the damage. Both lesion frequency and the number of mtDNA copies vary in response to environmental toxins and together provide a reading of overall mitochondrial health, according to lead researcher Dr. Mike Falvo, a health

sciences specialist at the VA New Jersey Health Care System. He notes that everyone experiences some level of mtDNA damage, perhaps due to aging and environmental exposures, such as air pollution. In the study, the mtDNA damage was 20 percent greater in the Veteran group, compared with a control group that included three Veterans without GWI and four non-Veterans. “Greater mtDNA damage is consistent with mitochondrial dysfunction, which may contribute to symptoms of GWI, as well as persistence of this illness over time,” the researchers write. “We interpret these findings as evidence that mitochondrial dysfunction is involved in the pathobiology of GWI.” Falvo explains that the researchers used a new technique developed in the lab of his team’s collaborator that allowed them to evaluate the quality of the mitochondrial DNA directly from total DNA without having to isolate the mitochondria. This approach is simpler to execute and does not require analysis through a biopsy of a piece of tissue, such as skeletal muscle, he says. Although Falvo and his team were interested mainly in mtDNA, they also looked at nuclear DNA, which is vital, too, to overall mitochondrial health. The levels of nuclear DNA damage were also elevated in the Veterans with GWI, but did not reach “statistical significance,” the researchers say. Nuclear DNA damage is a major cause of cancer, neurodegeneration, mitochondrial dysfunction, and many age-related diseases. Environmental exposures may lead to DNA damage. Mitochondria are organs that act as spark plugs within cells. They are like a digestive system that takes in nutrients, breaks them down, and creates energy-rich molecules for the cell. They are very sensitive to potential damage caused by toxins. Falvo, for his part, is expanding his team’s efforts to study mitochondrial DNA damage in Veterans with Gulf War illness. He’s part of a new DoD-supported study led by Dr. Joel Meyer, an associate professor at Duke University in Durham who studies environmental toxicology. The researchers are seeking to recruit about 150 Veterans with and without GWI in hopes of confirming the findings in Falvo’s 2017 study. “More importantly, we want to gain new knowledge of the damage of mtDNA on mitochondrial function and the recovery process,” he says. “We need to be sure that our findings are robust,” Falvo says. “For us, that means confirming the present results but also investigating what might be contributing to mitochondrial DNA damage or its lack of repair.” [Source: VVA Press Release | Mike Richman | November 3, 2017 ++]

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## Ladies Auxiliary

I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving with family and/or friends. We had our grandson and family for dinner this year. Good to know I haven’t forgotten how to cook the bird.

I am proud to report that the unit was able to mail 230 Christmas cards to deployed troops. I want to thank those that were able to help with this project. Will plan on getting an earlier start next year so more members can participate. If you have any unused cards please consider donating them to the unit. At this time of year, more than any other, that we remember the auxiliary's mission is to help veterans and active men and women and their families.

The unit will be decorating the post on Sat. Dec. 2nd at 10:00 am and setting up the tables on Fri. Dec. 8th at 10:00 am. Please come out and help if you are able.

The Post Christmas party on Sat. Dec. 9th. Fellowship starts at 6:00 pm with dinner to follow at 7:00. Please call and leave your name and the number of persons attending with you so we have a head count for the caterer.

The unit has been asked to help with the SAL Children's Breakfast with Santa and Christmas party on Sat. Dec 16th starting at 9:00 am. There will be crafts, gifts and a photo with Santa.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to all those celebrating this month.

"But the angel said to them,"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

For God & Country

Henrietta

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## **SAL**

Squadron 13 will conduct another "First Monday" meeting in the Post Home on December 4th, 2017, this time at 7:00 PM.

Last month we had a surprisingly large turnout of people and managed to conduct a lot of SAL business. Once again, gentlemen, I encourage one and all to attend this next meeting as we must finish plans for our upcoming Sons of The American Legion Children's Christmas Party which is scheduled for this December 16th at the Post 13 Home from 9:00 to 12:00 AM, and a Ladies Auxiliary-assisted Pancake Breakfast. We are also being co-assisted by Moody AFB's FAST, Toy-for-Tots, and crafts from Lowes or Home Depot. I have also made contact with Mrs. Santa Claus who has informed me that Santa will be there to see the children. For the rest of us, Santa already had had his eyes on us and already knows who has been naughty or nice, but anything is worth a last minute try so come help us at the Party.

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Rod Pedersen      rod.pedersen.1956@gmail.com Squadron Commander, Post 13 Valdosta

## **Legion Riders**

November 18th saw our Tenth Annual "Books for Vets" run and over 20 bikes and many with riders were present to escort our donations to the Lake City Medical Center. It was an awesome day for the ride and we delivered over \$1500.00 worth of donated items!

December 2d many of us will be attending the Tifton Toy Run

December 16 the ALR will proudly once again be assisting the Outback Riders with their annual Toy Run

The next ALR meeting will be January 18, 2018 with meet and greet at 6pm and General Membership Mtg at 7 pm.

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Menu for January meeting:

Marinated grilled chicken

Mixed Vegetables

\*\* Ladies don't forget to bring deserts\*\*

Next UEC meeting is on Thurs. Dec.28th at 6:00 pm

Next membership meeting is on Tues. Jan. 9th at 7pm

**There will not be a December Membership or PEC Meeting**

# December-January 2017-2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December					1	2 Valdosta Christmas Parade
3	4 SAL Meeting 7:00 pm	5	6	7	8	9 Post Christmas Party RSVP!
10	11	12  <b>NO</b> General Meeting	13	14	15	16  Children's Christmas Party Aux & Sqdn 13 Hosting
17	18	19	20	21  No ALR Meeting	22	23
24	25 Merry Christmas!!	26	27	28	<b>29</b>	30
31	January 1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 SAL Meeting 6:30 pm	9 Membership Meeting 7pm; 6pm Dinner	10	11	12	13