



American Legion Post 13 February 2018 Newsletter

2017-2018 Officers

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|-------------|-----------------|------------------|---|------------|-----------------|
| 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: | Greg Rothfus | Members @ Large: | Jimmy Traynor; Raymond Meeks & Whit Chappell | | |

COMMANDER'S CORNER:

First of all I would like to thank everyone who attended the Christmas Dinner in December. everyone present had a wonderful time. A lot of door prizes were given out. I want to also wish everyone a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

We have quite a few events coming up in the near future so keep an eye on your calendars. This month we had our annual oratorical contest and at the time of this writing we don't have the results.

Our next scheduled membership meeting is on February 13, 2018 and i understand the menu for the meal is pretty good, that will be posted elsewhere in this letter.

Let's not forget the national commander and auxiliary President's visit in April.

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

Senior Vice

2018 Memberships have been available to us since the June Department Convention. Our membership Goal is currently at 65.3% with 382 members. It's time to remind each other that our 2017 dues expired 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.

Follow the Airborne !!!!

Rod Pedersen
Sr. Vice Commander
Post 13 Valdosta
rod.pedersen.1956@gmail.com

Jr. Vice

Stephen Blanton sabusn6976@gmail.com

Fellow Legionnaires Post 13, the Post Executive Committee needs your presence at Membership Meetings for you to have a vote on what the PEC presents for approval. The PEC needs your input for what you would like for the PEC to address. I am specifically requesting you email me your ideas for raising funds to support our Veterans Assistance and other programs or you may call the Post at 229 242-7616 and leave a brief message for fund raising ideas you would support. The Post can only keep \$5 of your dues and the rest goes to State and National. The meal before our meetings is primarily for social association and we typically break even with cost but it could raise an average of \$2.50 per plate if 60 plates are planned and 60 people participate. The \$5 for the meal is not a requirement; it is a donation. It is members that make our building into a Post Home, come to our next Membership Meeting and let us decide together what we can do to help our fellow veterans that are in need.

Jr. Vice

Don Van Pelt vanpeltdon@yahoo.com

Historian

Clayton Roberts croberts22@hotmail.com

Just a special note the American Legion Birthday will be observed at our March General Membership meeting and once again we will be serving Prime Rib and as always scrumptious side dishes. Due to costs associated we need a confirmed head count of how many that will be dining with us and that will need to be in **No Later Than** March 6, 2018. Either send an

e-mail to any of the officers or call into the Post Home during normal business hours. We look forward to seeing you around the tables.

Service Officer

Ed Kent

kentj2@bellsouth.net

VA Benefits Eligibility Update: A Few You May Have Overlooked

1. Any veteran who is service-connected for a disability for which he or she uses prosthetic or orthopedic appliances may receive an annual clothing allowance.
2. VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service.
3. A surviving spouse age 57 and older who remarries after December 15, 2003, is entitled to continue to receive benefits.
4. Passports are available to family members free of charge for the purpose of visiting their loved one's grave or memorialization site at the American military cemeteries on foreign soil.
5. A rating percentage is considered "protected" once it is in place for 20 years. There would be no danger of a decreased disability rating after the 20 year mark.
6. A new imaging study has found that Gulf War veterans have what appear to be unique structural changes in the wiring of their brains.
7. Disabled Veterans may be eligible to claim a federal tax refund based on: an increase in the Veteran's percentage of disability from the Veteran's Administration (which may include a retroactive determination) or the combat-disabled Veteran applying for, and being granted, Combat-Related Special Compensation, after an award for Concurrent Retirement and Disability.
8. Veterans who are 100% service-connected IU may be eligible for an additional monthly entitlement of \$62.50/mo for catastrophic injury.

VA Blue Water Claims Update: Taking The Fight to The Courts

The effort to get the VA to acknowledge those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam were also exposed to Agent Orange has been one of the longest battles in the history of veterans' benefits. Unfortunately, for every small win achieved by veterans, other roadblocks appeared. This week, several organizations challenged one of those roadblocks in court. An estimated 90,000 Vietnam veterans served off the coast of Vietnam. Though they never set foot on the landmass, they might have nonetheless been exposed to Agent Orange. It is unknown precisely how many of them were in the bays and harbors of Vietnam, such as Da Nang Harbor or Nha Trang Harbor, but based on ship logs, military weapons, and logistics technology at the time, a majority likely were in the harbors at some point to support the war effort.

The VA refuses to recognize service on ships in bays and harbors as service within the territory of Vietnam for the purposes of presuming exposure by Agent Orange, despite scientific evidence of aerial spraying and the presence of Agent Orange in the water. In 2015 the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, in a case named Gray v. McDonald, determined the VA's exclusion of the bays and harbors was an unsupported legal fiction, saying it was "devoid of any indication that VA made a fact-based assessment of the probability of exposure." It ordered the VA to go back and reevaluate their definition of inland waterways as it applied to bays and harbors. The VA did so and decided they still

would exclude bays and harbors. It revised its internal manual directing VA claims adjudicators to exclude service in bays and harbors from the Agent Orange presumption.

The case went back to court, this time with a challenge to the VA's internal manual instructions. The VA argued that because this was merely an internal manual provision the courts had no authority to review it. In 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit agreed with the VA and refused to review their internal manual provisions. This left 90,000 Vietnam veterans with little to no recourse to challenge the VA's determination, which was no less "devoid of indication that VA made a fact-based assessment of the probability of exposure" in 2017 than it was in 2015, just this time shielded from judicial review through the VA's own actions.

Earlier this week, veterans advocacy groups asked the court to reconsider that decision, pointing out the "VA, in adopting this new approach of ensconcing massive substantive policy changes in the manual, thereby steering the adjudication process into the shadows, for the sake of its own convenience, is both anti-veteran and menacing to the productivity of the system." Organizations asked for immediate action by the court because "a number of these veterans will die appealing the VA's flawed policy." The case is Gray v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, No. 16-1782, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. It's uncertain how long the court will take to decide whether a rehearing is warranted. More to follow.

Ladies Auxiliary

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY to you all!

This is the time of the year to be thinking about how you can serve the unit, our veterans and their families. Maybe you would like to serve on the Executive Committee or be on a committee. There are many chances for the unit to be of a greater service but it takes us ALL, not just a few, to accomplish them.

We welcome new member Sarah Roberts. It was nice to see members who have not been able to attend on a regular basis.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to all those celebrating this month.

Next UEC meeting is on Thurs. Feb. 22nd at 6:00 pm

Next membership meeting is on Tues. Mar. 13th at 7pm

For God and Country

Henrietta

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

For God & Country

Henrietta

SAL

At our December meeting, Squadron 13 had a First Reading of our updated Constitution & Bylaws.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and encourage to our members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion, for your assistance with the Children's Christmas Party. With your continuous support and participation, we helped about 80 Moody AFB and our Legion Family children and their parents enjoy a visit with Santa and Mrs Claus. I applaud the Squadron's participation in the We Honor Vets hospice program and with recently assisting in greeting about 200 returning Air Force personnel. [Our next Squadron 13 First Monday meeting will be conducted at the Post on February 5th at 6:30 PM.](#)

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

Legion Riders

Jan 19 - 4 ALR Riders attended the Homecoming at Moody AF Base for the 74th Fighter Squadron .

Jan 6 - 6 ALR Riders attended the Polar Bear Ride hosted by The Red Knights collecting warm clothing for the community

Dec. 16th, 2017 - ALR Riders volunteered to help parking for the Outback Riders Toy Ride.

Dec 3, 2017 - 4 ALR Riders attended the Tifton toy ride sponsored by the Freedom Seekers MC.

Dec 1, 2017 - 4 ALR Riders attended the ride in Hahira to Lake City VA Hospital and delivered items to the residents.

[Our next meeting is February 15th.](#)

Meet and Greet @ 1800 hours and meeting @ 1900 hours.

Thank you,
Tina Dooley

Menu for February meeting:

Honey Glazed Ham

Cabbage & Carrots with Bacon

Delmonico Potatoes

Rolls & Butter

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

February March 2018

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|----------|--------------------------------|---|-----|----------------------|-----|-----|
| February | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 SAL Meeting 7:00 pm | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 Membership Meeting 7pm; 6pm Dinner | 14 | 15 ALR Meeting | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 PEC 5:30pm | 27 | 28 | March 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 SAL Meeting 7:00 pm | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 Membership Meeting 7pm; 6pm Dinner | 14 | 15 ALR Meeting | 16 | 17 |

Remember; Legion Birthday and Prime Rib 13 March. Let us know if your coming!