

## A Word from the Vice Commander

James A. Jackson



This past month I have traveled to a number of Posts in different parts of our state where I see that Membership is a major topic. I have been thinking about this year's emphasis on Membership and how we can become better, more effective voices for the Legion when we have the opportunity to talk about this organization that means so much to us all.

First, we need to have some knowledge of the background of the American Legion – how it came to be, what our mission is, and some of our major accomplishments. We should all know that the American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization. The first major accomplishment of the Legion was the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau. This was the forerunner of today's Veterans Administration. In 1925 the program known as American Legion Baseball was started. Today, more than 50% of professional baseball players are graduates of Legion Baseball, having had their start in Legion programs across the country. In 1935 Boys State was started to help our youth understand the structure and organization of the Federal Government. In 1936 the first Oratorical Contest was held. Its mission was and remains today to promote understanding of our nation's Constitution and its importance to our form of government. The first Boys Nation was

held in 1946, bringing together youth leaders from around the country for the first time. These are all important programs today.

In 1943 the Past National Commander of the American Legion, Harry Colmery, completed his first draft of the landmark legislation that would become known as the "G.I. Bill of Rights". This is considered the single most important piece of Legislation to come from the American Legion. It led to the passing of the "Serviceman's Readjustment Act" known as the "G.I. Bill". This bill, signed by President Roosevelt in 1944, led to large changes in United States society. Over 8 million returning servicemen would go to school, get better jobs, buy homes and raise families with help from the "G.I. Bill".

The American Legion was the major driving force behind the efforts to improve services necessary for veterans returning home from the Vietnam War. These efforts addressed everything from recognizing and providing help with the health issues of Agent Orange and other illnesses and conditions that appeared in Vets returning from Vietnam, leading the efforts to resolve the MIA/POW issue, to providing the initial push and monies to build the Vietnam Wall. The Legion provided and continues to provide the same major efforts to improve healthcare for today's veterans returning from the Middle East.

In the years following the attacks known as "9-11" and the deployment of American troops to Iraq and later, Afghanistan, the American Legion saw the shortcomings and problems existing within the old "G.I. Bill". The Legion led the effort and push for the development and implementation of a new bill better suited to the needs of today's service members. The Legion was a major voice in development and passage of the bill known as the "Post 9-11 Veterans Readjustment Act". This Bill changed and updated the old "G.I. Bill" to better serve today's veterans. President George Bush signed the Bill in 2008 and it took effect in 2009. The American Legion continues to be a major voice on Capitol Hill for the servicemen and women of today and their families as we have been since 1919. We work extensively with veterans and veterans'

groups on general healthcare issues for families or retirees, and provide a strong voice for the veteran returning with needs with physical and/or mental treatment, hospitalization and/or rehabilitation. We are also working to minimize the cuts to the VA that we see coming as Federal dollars shrink and the deficit grows.

The American Legion, additionally, has a long history of working within the civilian community, providing major funding for the American Heart Association and National Mental Health Association. We founded the Family Support Network, the National Emergency Fund. The Legion pushed for the VA to become a Cabinet level position. Today, we continue work to improve the timeline for claims to be addressed and work the "I Am Not A Number" campaign.

This is a short listing of accomplishments and work of our great organization. Familiarizing yourself with some of these accomplishments would give us greater understanding of our long and creative history and would allow us to be better recruiters for the American Legion. We should all know the Four Pillars and what they stand for. This is the Heartbeat of the Legion today. Without the knowledge of where we came from, what we stand for, and what we are doing today makes it more difficult to bring in new members, particularly younger ones. Young people want to know who we are and are interested in where we have been, but also where we are going today. They want to understand how they fit in. They need to see their relevance and how they can be of importance to us in the Legion today. We need to be aware of this and be prepared for questions and to speak about our mission today.

The American Legion represents 94 years of heritage and tradition. It must be preserved if we are to grow and prosper in the coming years. We are members of a great and proud organization. We need to remember to ask an eligible veteran to join us. Each and every one of us is a recruiter. If we each get 1 new member signed up, we will reach our goal and improve our future.

**FOR GOD AND COUNTRY**

## A Word from the Vice Commander

Ronnie Lyons



Fellow Legionnaires: The month of November is swiftly approaching and there are some very significant dates and reminders we need to keep in mind. **Veteran's Day:** Sunday, November 11, 2012

Please remember all Veterans and Military servicemen, especially the ones that served during war times. Also, "Adopt-a-Veteran" for that day and spend some quality time with him or her. This is a chance to visit our veterans who reside in the retirement or nursing homes. Let's keep our disabled and homeless veterans in our prayers. Remember, Veterans, this day is in honor of our dedication, loyalty and service to America. Check your local restaurants and retail stores for discounts and gifts given to veterans and service members on this day. If there is any District or local Post having special events (e.g.: parades, ceremonies, luncheons) and would like your fellow Legionnaires to attend, please forward the information to the Department. We are all HEROES! We fought, suffered and died for this great country. God Bless America!

**Membership:** Congratulations goes out to the following Districts for working energetically in reaching your membership goal: 1st District – 1st Place; 5th District - 2nd Place; and 8th District – 3rd Place. Thank you for your hard work and effort in this endeavor. Keep working - "you are almost there!" Also, I would like to commend all the Posts all over the state that have reached 100%. Any Districts that need our assistance in helping with a membership drive, please contact me.

**Reminders: LDVA:** Please contact the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs for a copy of the LDVA "Guide to Veterans' Benefit", 2011-2012. Every veteran needs this publication to update them of the benefits that are entitled to them. Go to [www.vetaffairs.la.gov](http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov) or call 1-877-432-8982. **Membership Renewal Notice:** Legionnaires please submit your renewals and pay dues at your local Post. Your local Post will forward the information to the Department.

**Great News:** The House of Representatives has passed the "Cost of Living Adjustment Act of 2012". It will be effective on December, 1, 2012. This is the time of the year for family and friends to come together. Let's remember the veterans who are less fortunate and reach out to them. Remember: "Veterans Helping Veterans". In high regards of our preamble, that states:

*"Of both the classes and the masses;  
To make right the master of might;  
To promote peace and good will on earth;  
To safeguard and transmit to Posterity  
The principles of Justice, Freedom and  
Democracy*

## Baseball Update

From A.J. Jones, Chairman  
Dept. of LA American Legion Baseball

The 14th National Baseball Chairman's Conference in Indianapolis, IN, has just completed and there was lots of information covered in a short time. Our World Series Championship Team was front and center with everyone I came in contact with. The World Series Staff were highly complimentary of the way these young men handled themselves with poise and character.

All Louisiana Legionnaires should be extremely proud of the way these young men represented the Department of Louisiana and also let Post 125 and the team all know how proud you are for their accomplishment. I, for one, have not been associated with a more deserving group and my CONGRATULATIONS go to Post 125, Retif Oil, their parents, Jesuit High, and Coach Joey Latino for developing the character displayed by these citizens of the future. Our future is in "Good Hands."

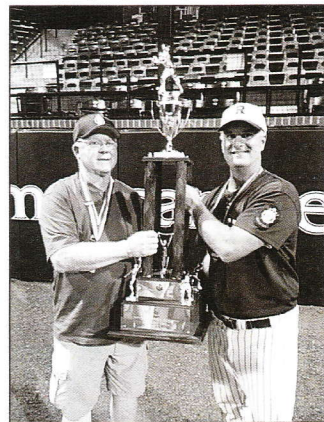
Our online electronic system has been revamped and now has its own server, so we don't have to share with all the other Legion Programs. The system will be much faster and user-friendly than before. All Coaches will have to input new passwords into the system when first registering a team. Registration for 2013 begins January 1, 2013. Posts who know that they will be fielding a team are encouraged to register them as soon as possible after January 1, 2013.

The Junior Regional was finalized and will consist of Department Champions from the states of Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama. The site of the Regional is tentatively set for Arkansas, with the city yet to be determined, and start date of July 27, 2013. This should help grow our Junior Program.

There will be several items that the NEC will be voting on in a couple of weeks which will affect all our teams and Coaches. One, if passed, will require all Coaches to have a background check before being able to coach. Also, there are several Rules changes that will be voted on, but mostly concerning the Junior Program. Items like Re-entry, DH, and Courtesy Runners. These items have a chance of passing, but none of the ones for Senior Programs, at least that is the way we voted to recommend.

We will be holding our Fall Baseball Commission meeting October 13, 2012 in New Orleans, LA and will be recognizing our Department World Series

Champions, Post 125 and Retif Oil sponsored team from Jesuit High School. Other dates to remember for 2013 season: May 15, 2013 is the National deadline date to purchase insurance and pay registration fees. Form 1s must be submitted and approved prior to playing of first League game. Department Champion must be declared by August 4, 2013. Regional dates for 2013 are August 8 to 12, 2013 and World Series in Shelby, N.C. will be August 16 to 20, 2013. Baseball Scholarship applications are due into Department by July 24, 2013. Any questions concerning the 2013 season, just give me a call: 337-581-3691.



## A Note from American Legion Gautreau-Williams Post 81

Stephen T. Henry, Commander

The remains of CPL Joseph W. FONTENOT, US Army, "L" Co, 38th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, POW/MIA Korean War, is being repatriated to his surviving family members within the latter part of October. Mr. Fontenot's brother Hubert, who passed last spring, was a long time member of Gautreau-Williams, Post 81, Gonzales, LA.



Louisiana Department of  
Veterans Affairs

Veterans Cemetery Program

## To Honor Those Who Served

Available to Veterans at No Charge  
(small fee for spouses and dependent children)

Central LA Veterans Cemetery in Leesville  
Across from Fort Polk

Northwest LA Veterans Cemetery in Keithville  
South of Shreveport

Coming Soon!  
Southeast LA Veterans Cemetery in Slidell

For more information, call toll free  
1-877-GEAUX-VA  
(1-877-432-8982) or visit  
[www.vetaffairs.la.gov](http://www.vetaffairs.la.gov)



THE AMERICAN LEGION



## BOYS STATE NOTES

Harold D. Burson  
American Legion Boys State  
Commission Chairman

We had one of the best Boys State Programs this year 2012. This was because the Procurement and Commission Chairmen are doing their job in selecting the cream of the crop. My thanks go to them for their hard work.

The American Legion staff, PDC Larry Abshire, and I have been working on Boys State issues. The staff continues to work on new issues to make the program better and informs me of what goes on. We will have to work hard to do that and the staff and all are working during the year to make 2013 better than 2012.

Larry Abshire (my assistant) and I went to the Boys State Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 28 through September 30th. It was a very interesting meeting and Larry and I picked up some new ideas the other states are doing. Many do not meet with the girls like we do. I also just had a meeting with Reatha Cox at Northwestern and it was a worthwhile meeting. I had asked Commander Herbie Petit, NEC Charlie Aucoin, PDC Larry Abshire, 2nd District Commission Chairman Bryan D'Oriocourt, and my Staff Coordinator Zac Lemoine to attend the meeting. Many questions were asked and Reatha answered all to our satisfaction. I will have some more updates at the Mid-Winter Conference.



From The American Legion,  
Department of Louisiana

## Department Sponsored Insurance Programs

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) has been the Department of Louisiana's sponsored member benefits program for 26 years and continues to fulfill our members needs while being the only such program to benefit our Department.

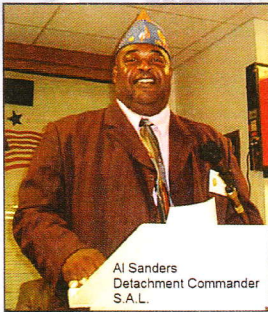
For more information on the products and services provided by the Legionnaire Insurance Trust,

Call: 1-855-297-2218  
Or visit us on the web at:  
[www.theLIT.com](http://www.theLIT.com)

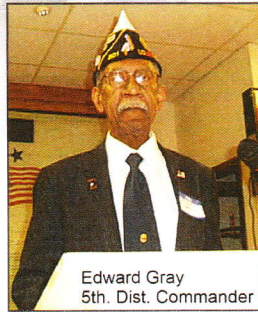


## 5<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT CONFERENCE

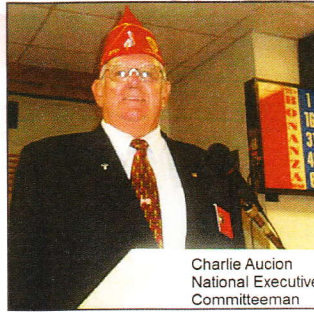
The 5th District Conference was held at Post 51, Bastrop on October 20, 2012, beginning at 9:00 AM. Some of the attendees to the Conference are shown in the photos.



Al Sanders  
Detachment Commander  
S.A.L.



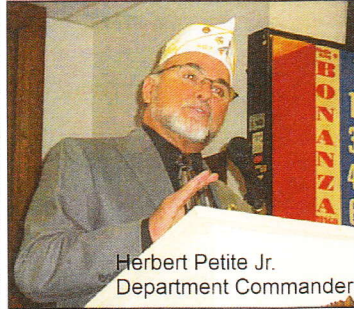
Edward Gray  
5th. Dist. Commander



Charlie Aucion  
National Executive  
Committeeman



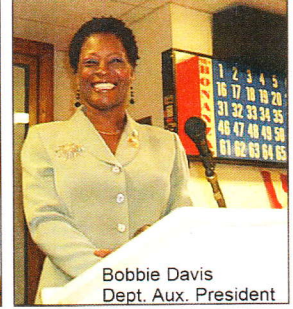
Jimmy French  
5th. District  
Vice Commander



Herbert Petite Jr.  
Department Commander



Monique Batiste  
N.E.C. Aux



Bobbie Davis  
Dept. Aux. President



Front row, from left: Sarah Anderson, Kadence McBride, Kenedy LaFleur, 2012 Poppy Queen Sarah Adams, Kallie McBride, and Riley Hargroader. Back row, from left: 2012 National Poppy Queen Cristina Mocsary and 2011 Unit 1 Poppy Queen Claire Adams.

## Poppy Day Program Provides Benefits To Disabled, Hospitalized Veterans

On October 20, 2012, W.B. Williamson American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1 and members of the W.B. Williamson American Legion Post 1 volunteers distributed bright red poppies in exchange for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans.

The program provides multiple benefits to the veterans and to the community. The hospitalized veterans who make the flowers are able to earn a

small wage, which helps them to supplement their incomes and makes them feel more self-sufficient. The physical and mental activity provides many therapeutic benefits, as well.

Donations are used exclusively to assist and support veterans and their families. The poppy also reminds the community of the past sacrifices and continuing needs of our veterans. The poppy has become nationally known as a symbol of all wars.

## POW/MIA Program Held in Hammond

American Legion Post #258 sponsored a POW/MIA program on Friday, September 21, 2012 in Hammond at Cate Square. A helicopter that used during the Vietnam War landed at the program. In attendance were members of the Homeless Veterans from Albany and veterans from the War Veterans Homes of Reserve, Jackson, and Jennings. During the program was a reading aloud of the people missing from State of Louisiana, along with the ringing of the bell, a bugle performance, and a 21-gun salute.

Veteran Sal Lamonte was presented with an award which recognized him for his service in the Korean War and his continued efforts to make sure veterans of all Wars are remembered and honored.



**From left to right, in front: Jim Douglas, Chairman, and member of Post #258; Veteran Sal Lamonte with his award; Cindy Newton, member of the Committee, and member of Post #259. In back: Members of the Committee Justin Caston and Tim Settoon.**



**Also attending the POW/MIA Ceremony in Hammond, LA on Sept. 21, 2012 from the Department of Louisiana were (from left to right) Department Commander Herbie Petit; Post #258 Commander and 6th District Commander Wayne Kreko; and National Executive Committeeman, Sons of the American Legion Camille LeJeune.**

## NEW WELCOME SIGNS FOR KINDER



A joint effort by local civic organizations and individuals has provided the Town of Kinder with new welcome signs on the east and west entrances to Kinder off Hwy 190. The Rotary Club of Kinder spearheaded the project along with the American Legion Post and the Town of Kinder. Organizations involved are the local Vietnam Veterans Chapter, the Garden Club of Kinder, Kinder High School Interact Club, the Knights of Columbus, the American Legion, the Rotary Club of Kinder and the Kinder Chamber of Commerce. Each of these groups have new club emblems attached to the sign itself. Restoration of the signs was done by Allen Correctional inmates under the supervision of Warden Terrell, Fred Ryder and Bobby Young. Chester Braxton and the Town of Kinder maintenance employees erected the signs. Pictured in front of the new sign on the west side of Kinder are, from left, Rotarians Paul Savoie, Dr. Michael Karam, President Nancy Burleigh and Lowell Keys.