

Harding-Blaine Post 321

"Flagship of the Fourth District"

Member of TEXALPA and NALPA

President, Congress MUST Work Together: **Charlie's Chatter** **We are a Nation at War**



The national commander of The American Legion once again pleaded with members of Congress and also urged President Bush to finish the FY 2008 VA budget this week.

"As a continuing cost of war, funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs must simply and accurately be factored in the budget," National Commander Marty Conatser reminded elected officials.

After intense negotiations between the White House and congressional leadership, this week Congress is taking up the final Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 2008.

Earlier this session, both the House and Senate overwhelming passed HR 2642, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of FY 2008 that called for increased funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs by \$3.7 billion more than the president's budget request. This met the funding recommendations of The American Legion and every other major veterans' service organization.

The president told Congress he would not veto HR 2642 even though it exceeded his budget recommendations. However, Congress chose to package the Mil-

Con/VA Appropriations bill with other appropriations measures. The president then informed Congress he would veto any funding recommendations that exceeded his overall budget request of \$933 billion. Therefore, the \$3.7 billion increase in VA funding would require offsets from other discretionary funding in other federal accounts. Not having enough votes to override a veto, a new omnibus funding measure was created by congressional leadership. To preserve the funding increase for VA, this new omnibus bill contains an 'emergency provision' that would require the president to declare an emergency in order to receive the additional \$3.7 billion. The declaration has to be made no later than January 18, 2008. "It's essential this bill be passed and signed for the well-being of our troops, veterans and their families," Conatser said. "Then the president needs to release the \$3.7 billion. We are a nation at war and this funding it critically needed. Many veterans returning from war continue to fight up-front and personal battles with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other physical and psychological challenges," Conatser explained. "They're attempting to

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I hope that everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year's!

While visiting the Christmas Gift Shops and parties at the VA Hospital's across Texas, I had the opportunity to meet many veterans this last month. There is one that comes to mind that I want to mention. We were in Kerrville at the Veteran's Christmas Party, and had left the party to distribute gifts and cookies to those veterans that were not able to attend the party. We started on the higher floors and worked our way down. We had walked a hall and given gifts to those that were in their rooms, and reached the end of the hall. There was a fellow sitting on the side of his bed. Detachment Commander Joe and I spoke to him and presented him with his gift and cookies, then I started talking to him. I told him who I was and that I was there to visit with him. He then said, "I am a member of the American Legion, and I have been reading my magazine." I said, "You are?" and he said yes. I then asked him where he was a member and he pulled out his newsletter. It was from Harding – Blaine 321! It was worn from handling, and I told him that I was her, as I pointed to my article. We had the best visit. I wanted to stay and visit with him longer, but we had

several floors to go to finish our rounds. I would like to take this opportunity to say "hello" to this member of our American Legion Family! I would also like to thank him for his service!

This is the first time that I have made more than our own Bonham VA Christmas Gift Shop and party. What a feeling when you can see the veteran's eyes light up and those big smiles when you take the time to deliver gifts, and goodies to them! It is something that I will always remember. We sometimes forget how lucky we are to have our families and friends surrounding us during the holiday season. I know that from now on, I will make more of an effort to visit those that are less fortunate than me.

The New Year is here and if you have not renewed your Membership then you are delinquent. You will lose all privileges or membership in this great organization. As you have heard before, "even if you cannot be an active member, your dues help our family work the many programs. Numbers talk on Capitol Hill, every member counts!" So, please drop by the Post home or mail your check for your dues. It is so very important. The American Legion Auxiliary's Cancer Research Benefit is scheduled in February so, watch this newsletter for more information.

There will be a lot of things going on at the Post Home so please come by to give your support. Without you, the member the American Legion Family cannot be successful.

*For God, Country and Veterans,
Charlie Dew*



Commander's Corner

Happy 2008, everybody! I hope everyone survived the holidays. Tired of ham and turkey? Ready for Valentine's candy and Easter eggs? They will be here before we know it...not to mention the little St. Pats' party!

A big thanks goes out to all the members who helped make our many Christmas events a success. It made me very proud to see the Angel Tree empty and the toy donation boxes full! ALA, SAL, AL, ALR...you are the best.

Make sure to check out our website. Lots of new things to see! The newsletter is on there, as well as the calendar and the minutes from the meetings. We also have pictures from our many events! Check it out...chances are good you are on there too!

Ok, enough from me! Enjoy the rest of the newsletter and make sure you check the calendar...some fun things are happening this month! Stay well,

*For God and Country,
Steve Cockerham*

HONOR GUARD

Next honor guard meeting will be held on January 6th at 12 noon

*Ernie Rivard
Honor Guard Commander*

Elected Officers 2006-2007

American Legion

Commander	Steve Cockerham
1st Vice	Reagan Heine
2nd Vice	Vern McVay
Adjutant	Terry Cloninger
Asst. Adjutant	Jim Williamson
Finance Officer	Dearl Gunter
Chaplain	Miguel Romeu
Judge Advocate	Fletcher Sharp
Historian	John Bozick
Service Officer	Chuck Scholander
Sgt-at-Arms	William Bray
Exec. Committeeman	Mark Gojer
Exec. Committeeman	Bob Allison
Past Commander	Ernie Rivard

American Legion Auxiliary

President	Judy Reyna
1st Vice	Renee May
2nd Vice	LynnMarie Johnson
Recording Sec.	Charlie Dew
Treasurer	Lavada Newell
Chaplain	Bernadine Smith
Correspond. Sec	Reagan Heine
Historian	Sue Mains
Sgt-at-Arms	Phyllis Price
Asst. Sgt-at-Arms	Cindy Bray
Executive Comm.	Cindy Oldroyd Jean Kelly

Sons Of The American Legion

Commander	Ray Hartline
1st Vice	Bryan Vinson
2nd Vice	Eddie Olivera Jr.
Finance Officer	Jay Terwart
Adjutant	Abel Silva, Jr.
Judge Advocate	David Dew
Chaplain	Jeff Saul
Historian	Danny Johnson
Sgt-at-Arms	Jimmy Jackson
Liaison	John Maguire
Past Commander	BR Evans

American Legion Riders

Director	Larry Lawson
Assistant Director	Terry Cloninger
Secretary	Sue Lawson
Treasurer	Kimberly Potter
Chaplain	Micheal Horak
Historian	Wendy Rouse
Sgt-At-Arms/Run Coord.	Randy Rouse
Membership	Nestor Rivera

Membership

<u>Org.</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>%</u>
AL			
ALA			
SAL			

Nation at War...

regain their health and well-being though the VA. Our troops and families are bearing the personal burden of this war and deserve the best health care possible," he said. The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of strong national defense, veterans affairs, Americanism and patriotic youth programs. The Legion's 2.7 million wartime veterans work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation. www.legion.org



UNIT 321

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a good New Year. Our social was very informative. We had snacks and watched a film on J Pac and the Legacy scholarship. For those of you who do not know what J Pac is, it is the part of the government that finds and identifies missing MIAs and POWs through D NA. The Legacy scholarship is a fund for the children of men and women killed in service so they may go to college. I want to thank Vern McVay and Sue Mains for going to Bonham Hospital for the Christmas Gift shop wrapping. For those of you who are interested in going to Mid Winter Conference, it is January 25th -26th. We are starting another new year and hoping more of our ladies will be

Ashworth-Dew National Candidates Fundraiser

On January 12, 2007 American Legion Family 321 will host the first event in the Fourth District Ashworth-Dew National Candidate fundraiser. Carlene Ashworth is a member of Unit 521 in Pasadena, and is candidate for National American Legion Auxiliary President in the year 2010. David Dew is a member of Squadron 321 in Plano and is candidate for National Sons of The American Legion Commander in the year 2010. We will be having a "Pool Tournament" starting at 3:00pm \$5.00 entry, serving "Meat Ball Po Boy" \$5.00 each, A "Cake Walk" starting at 4:00 pm and drawings will be held all afternoon. For your entertainment there will be an "Elvis Impersonator" starting at 8:30 pm. Come out and help us support these candidates and have some fun with your friends.

Lavada Newell, Chairman

attending meetings and getting more involved. I started coming into the Legion in 1967 and for many years all I did was come in for a few drinks and have a good time. I never knew what the auxiliary did and really did not care, then a few of my friends started talking to me and telling me about all of the programs they worked and about the people they help, then I started going to meetings and learning. I never dreamed that one day I would be President, so come and get to know us.

*For God and Country
Judy Reyna, Auxiliary President 321*

Mark Your Calendars for Cancer Research

The Cancer Research Committee has been really busy. We have a lot of activities scheduled for Jan and Feb 2008 and we want to make sure that you have them on your calendars. All proceeds go to a good cause to help find a cure for the illness that has touched so many lives.

Each Wednesday Night we will have food and fun. We will have

a Spin the Wheel game to be played each Wednesday Night along with some raffles. In addition to that, we will have some really good food to be served.

- Jan 2 - Chicken and Dumplings
- Jan 9 - Taquitos, Guacamole, and Queso
- Jan 16 - Frito Pie w/ all the trimmings
- Jan 23 - Homemade Stew w/ Cornbread
- Jan 30 - Homemade Chili w/ Cornbread

February 9, 2008, 6:30 pm. will be the Cancer Research Benefit. The theme this year is 'Denim and Diamonds'. We will have live and silent auctions, music and some really good BBQ. Please plan to come.

If you would like to make monetary donations, please make your checks payable to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 321, P O Box 940242, Plano Texas 75094. Please note your check ' for Cancer Research '.

*Renee May
Cancer Research Committee*

Support Our Troops



Squadron 321

Happy New Year to the legion family, the SAL 2008 membership cards are now required. If you have not renewed, please do so. If you are a member of the legion you may qualify for a dual membership. You may also have sons or grandsons that could be members of the SAL. Membership is very important in helping us serve the legion family programs. We would also like to see you in our meetings and welcome your participation and time in helping us with the legion programs we work throughout the year. You will need a 2008 card to obtain a key card. We hope to see more of you this year.

Bryan Vinson
SAL, 1st Vice Commander



WE



ARE



FAMILY



American Legion Riders

Today across America thousands of American Legion Riders get on their bikes to ride for Americanism and Children and Youth programs in virtually every state in the nation, and more are organizing each month. One of the fastest-growing programs offered by The American Legion, The American Legion Riders are a very diverse group, and so are the programs that they support. What do American Legion Riders do? The activities are far too many to mention in this space, but here are a few examples: *American Legion Riders* have become some of the most generous donors for **The American Legion Legacy Fund**, commonly raising as much as \$10,000 or more in a single event. *American Legion Riders* participate in the annual POW/MIA Rally held each Memorial weekend in Washington D.C. known as "Rolling Thunder". *American Legion Riders* participate in local and national charity events representing the sponsoring American Legion posts. *American Legion Riders* ride to raise money for local VA hospitals, battered women and children's centers, varied veterans relief organizations, Heroes to Hometowns, needy families and

children during the holidays and many, many others. *American Legion Riders* of Mulvane, Kansas founded a national movement called "Patriot Guard" (www.kspatriotguard.org) that honors and protects the sanctity of military funerals and memorial services. *American Legion Riders* in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas have formed an annual veterans tribute run called Operation Wounded Warrior to raise money for much-needed supplies, clothing, and comfort items for critically wounded servicemen and women in military hospitals across the United States. *American Legion Riders* have formed special motorcycle honor guards and ceremonial teams highlighting the special bonds formed in military service and the motorcycling community. *American Legion Riders* also teach motorcycle and driver safety in communities and schools in cooperation with ABATE and other national motorcycling organizations. **Remember:** *American Legion Riders* are a very dedicated group of Legion Family members. When your post or district sponsors a new Riders organization, you create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and growth for your post, district, and department! www.legion.org

American Legion

Paid Up For Life

**1/2 price drinks every
Saturday 10am till
6pm**

Pop's Points to Ponder

The New Year is a time to ponder and make resolutions for the upcoming new year. I've been thinking about the resolutions that have been good over the years and maybe one or two may be a resolution for you. Resolve to make your family very happy. Resolve to spend less money and drive carefully. Another resolution might be to have the family eat healthy. Resolve to be a better parent to your children by watching who their friends are and where they go on the Internet. Resolve to communicate better with your children, speak to your children about the perils of drugs and the importance of doing well in school. As I thought about it over the years these resolutions are not that much different from when I was a kid (except in my day Internet was where a fisherman put the fish he caught) and part of that was, we were in a depression where simple goals were the norm. People tended to think more long term because it took a long time for change to happen. After the war, change happened faster and as a result resolutions were shorter term and people were quicker to give up because the result was not there immediately. I see a swing back to the longer-term goals as the blistering pace of the world economy starts to swing away from the U.S. and towards China. Maybe this brings up another resolution we as Americans could resolve to do, urge Congress to address the many problems here in America, health care, taxes, mortgage's and so on. I also urge all of you to communicate to the

government the need to maintain good Legion and Veterans services things that help family relations and the good of the world. Not the few, lobbies and special interest groups. In conclusion whatever resolutions you make, make them ones you can succeed and attain and complete. Think about how you can measure short-term progress so you don't get frustrated. Whatever they are I wish you success and a Happy New Year.

God Bless You One and All
Gene "Pops" Fattig

Chaplain's Thoughts

It is important that as we go into a new year, we continue to realize that we alone cannot do much; we need to be in constant touch with the spirit so that He can guide our ship into safe harbors. I am going to share with you a prayer that I came across and that I believe should be a guide for all of us: "Steer the ship of my life good Lord, to your quiet harbor, where I can be safe from the storms of sin and conflict. Show me the course I should take. Renew in me the gift of discernment, so that I can always see the right direction in which I should go and give me the strength and the courage to choose the right course even when the sea is rough and the waves are high, knowing that through enduring hardship and danger in your name we shall find comfort and peace." Should you have any spiritual needs, I can always be reached at pathoflightministry@yahoo.com. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May His face always shine upon you and may He hold you in the palm of his hands into eternity. God bless you and your family.

Miguel Romeu, Chaplain

Members Birthday's January 2008

1. Amanda McKee, Joseph D Shea, Joseph Williams
2. Roy Petrich, Rudy Reyna
3. James Anderson, Lynn High
4. Walter Gottschalk, Liam Kelly, Jan Marshall, Thomas Newcomb, Kathryn Rodriguez
5. Myrl Ball
6. John Kusior
7. Debbie Morrison, Brant Spinn, Maddelynn Troxclair
8. Kenneth Hiltz Jr, Fred Nolte, Kimberly Russell, Humphrey Tudor III, Henry Venell
9. Richard Cahill, Bill Early, Daniel Flanigan, A Mitchell
10. Roy Cross, Edwin Huffman
11. Aaron Marks
12. Thomas Astle, Gerald Bolton, David Collins, Harrison Williams
13. Cory Hooten, Thomas Kelly
14. Derek Lowe, Colleen Maguire, Robert Nowak
16. Robert Judikinas, Francis Leonard, Rick Ruston, Calvin Vestal Jr, Paul Wellborn
17. John Davidson, Thomas Milam
18. Phillip Nest, Joseph patterson, Clifton Pratt II, Kathie Prudhomme
19. Paul Kelley, Robert Silva
20. Phillip Estes, Michael Hall, robert Junes, Elizabeth Wirt
21. Esther Reed
22. Norman Ayotte, Louise Costa, Randy Nagy
23. Gerald Buchta, Charles Gue, James White
24. Sheri Armour, Cathy Estes
25. Barbara Brandow, Jimmy King
26. Chris Baylor, Eric Roberson, Stephen Sappelt, Heather Tackett
27. Gerald Gooding, Robert Hughart
28. Michael Barnes, Charles Keszler, James Parmer, Stephen Tomac
29. Conley Hartline, Nocholes Jones, Antonio Silva
30. Phillip Hildebrandt, Densmore Ken, Betty Pruitt, Robert Spottswood
31. Debbie Bruno, A Gordon Fuller Sr, Gerry Garner Jr, John Pitts

If you see any error on this list, contact : Adjutant at 972-423-5423

Something For Us To Remember

Every year, something miraculous happens the first Saturday in December - the Army-Navy game. It is one of the most fabled and long-standing rivalries in American athletics. Navy Midshipmen and Army Cadets spend their entire four years of college saying "Beat Army" or "Beat Navy" dozens of times a day. In the weeks leading up to the contest both Academies wage mock war against each other with pranks, commando raids and high jinx. This year a squad of Army Cadets-turned-Special-Forces sneaked from West Point to Annapolis to kidnap the Navy's mascot, Bill the Goat, then made a hostage video and sent it around the world on YouTube. The day before the game, each Academy sends a game ball hundreds of miles, tucked under the arms of Cadet and Midshipmen marathon runners. On game day the entire Army Corps of Cadets and Navy Brigade of Midshipmen traveled to a neutral city for the battle. Not only is the Army-Navy game one of the oldest college football competitions in the nation, in many ways it is one of the best. It's not that the football is great, because it's usually not. The top university teams didn't recruit the young men who play for Army or Navy, they're too small or too light. They aren't semi-professional football stars, living, eating and studying apart from their college classmates. The men who play at West Point or Annapolis major in physics or electrical engineering and spend more time doing

homework and marching in drills than at football practice. When they graduate the NFL won't draft them. It is the last organized football game most of them will ever play. In a few months time, they will be Ensigns standing watch on ships in the Persian Gulf, Marine Lieutenants flying helicopter reconnaissance missions in Afghanistan and army Lieutenants walking the streets of Baghdad. So why is the Army-Navy game one of the best in college football? Because it is a metaphor for what is best about America. It shows us that we are at our best when we fight ferociously in the game but afterwards, no matter who wins or who loses, we come together as brothers. The finest moment of the Army-Navy game comes after the whistle blows. Last Saturday (a few weeks ago), Navy won 38-3, in a game that was closer than the final score suggests. At the end, no fans rushed onto the field. Nor did they head for their cars to get ahead of the traffic. They stood at their seats, took off their hats and put their hands on their hearts. The entire stadium was silent, respectful and alert. The players don't do war dances or whoops of victory, either. Both teams walked solemnly across the field and met at the 50-yard line. They shook hands and patted the backs of their opponents. They took off their helmets, tucked them under their arms and walked together to Army's side and shoulder to shoulder sang the Army alma mater to the entire 4000 member Corps of Cadets. Both teams then turned and walked to the Navy

stands and sang the Navy Blue and Gold anthem to the 4000 Brigade of Midshipmen. If you looked up at the stadium screens you could see that many of the players had tears in their eyes. If you looked at your neighbors in the stands, they did too, because what everyone in that stadium witnessed was the miracle that is America that after the fiercest of contests we can rise above the victory or the defeat and come together as one nation. Regardless of our religion, family heritage or political affiliation, we are first and foremost, Americans. As much as our differences matter to us, our shared patrimony matters more. Within a few weeks Americans will begin our presidential campaign ritual. The contests will be fiercely fought, sometimes honorably, sometimes not. But politics is not for the faint of heart. There will no doubt be plenty of times the ref should throw a flag on the play, but in politics the only referees are the voters. When this campaign season is over, the ballots cast and counted and the victor declared, we should all remember the sight of the Army and Navy football players standing shoulder to shoulder on their field of battle, paying homage to their opponents in the shared belief that what matters more than our partisanship is our brotherhood. Wouldn't it be a miracle if we could follow their example and, after this next election, lay down our rivalries, animosities and suspicions, and realize that we're in this together and what is more important than being a Republican or a Democrat is being an American.