




Department of



South Carolina
The American Legion
P.O. Box 3309, Irmo, SC 29063
Tel: (803) 612-1171
E-mail: dept.adjutant@sc.twcabc.com
Website: www.scarolinalegion.org



February 13, 2014

SOUTH CAROLINA NEWS LINE

Volunteers are not paid, not because they are worthless but because they are priceless!

System Worth Saving

The visit scheduled for March 14-15 & 16 at the Dorn Medical VA center has been postponed as well as the Town Hall meeting at Post 6 on March 14. The tentative date is now April 14 same time and same place, Post 6 at 7 p.m. Any further information will be relayed when received.

Legislation

On February 4 a press conference was held in Washington on a bill which could impact the state of South Carolina. That bill was S.1982. Contained in this bill is a provision for South Carolina to get a Primary Care and Dental Annex in Charleston and a CBOC consolidation in Myrtle Beach. It was reported that it would be very helpful if Senators Graham and Scott were cosponsors of this bill. This bill is one of the most comprehensive veterans' bill in decades. For more information go to the following site:

<http://www.veterans.senate.gov/newsroom/majority-news/watch-chairman-sanders-press-conference-on-s-1982->
Contacting the Senators would be helpful and asking them to cosponsor that bill.

On February 5 Representative Tim Griffin (AR) introduced legislation that would bar the Defense Department from closing or reducing the operations of commissary or exchange stores. The measure, **H.R. 3966**, would protect individual stores and block any comprehensive plan to close all commissaries in the U.S before January 1, 2017. The bill has 10 co-sponsors.

As part of a broader cost-cutting review, DOD officials reportedly are exploring ways to reduce the annual \$1.4 billion appropriation for the military commissary system. Sources said a proposal making its way to senior DOD leadership includes options for raising the 5 percent surcharge that customers pay at registers, increasing prices on individual goods in the stores, or both. Either action would require legislation. Rep. Griffin said he would not support either idea.

According to the most recent price comparison survey, which included prices at discount and big box stores, the average savings in commissaries is 30.5 percent. Some experts contend that commissaries are no longer needed in the U.S., but advocates say it is an essential benefit that returns far more to troops and families than the funds used to support the system.

H.R. 3966 defines closing stores as any action that would reduce the operating hours or size of a store below FY 2014 operating levels, or would change the location of a commissary or exchange. The bill would prohibit the closing of any individual commissary or exchange in the U.S. unless a change in location or size is needed for upgrading or modifying a store for health or safety reasons. It would also prohibit the development or implementation of any plan to close all U.S.-based commissaries as a cost-cutting move.

Veterans' organizations are ramping up efforts to oppose any reduction in the commissary benefit. Deputy Director Dean Stoline of the Legislative Division said, "The American Legion supports this bill, and we don't want the taxpayer subsidy taken away." [Resolution 150-2012]

Possible Scam

Harry Arnold, Post 572 OH called about an article in Cleveland Plaindealer—here's link. The article is the 8th one. http://www.cleveland.com/parma/index.ssf/2014/01/two_guns_video_games_stolen_du.html

Someone saying they are American Legion collecting money for the "American Legion Awards Center." He called the police and they said the phone number is overseas and untraceable—very similar to the Nigerian scam. Be aware of this apparent scam.

Law Cadet Academy

A reminder that this year's academy will be held June 21, 2014 to June 27, 2014. Information will be forthcoming on finding individuals to attend. It is hoped each district will have 4 individuals to attend.

2013 Enhancements

Just a note to remind all that the 2013 enhancements are due in department no later than April 30, 2014 in order for the post to be considered in good standing and to participate in the 2014 Department Convention and any of the programs of the Department of South Carolina. At this time there are only 14 posts that need to pay the 2012 enhancement. Please check to see if your post has paid on the 2013 amount due and encourage the responsible officers to do such. It will be greatly appreciated.

Kudos

On February the 3rd members of the Boiling Springs Fire Department, members of American Legion Boiling Springs Post 200, and family and friends gathered together at the fire department headquarters for one reason, to honor Stewart Taylor. For Stewart's 44 years of dedicated service to the Boiling Springs Fire Department, they dedicated their newly purchased fire engine to Stewart. A plaque was affixed to the side of the fire engine honoring Stewart and his number 29 was painted on both sides on the rear of the truck.

Stewart has been a member of Boiling Springs Post 200 since it was first chartered 11 years ago and has served as its Commander more than once. He is very active in the post and community and his knowledge and expertise is sought after by many of our new and seasoned legionaries. His wife Ernestine is also active in the American Legion family as a member of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Our congratulations go out to Stewart for this great achievement

What's Happening

February 14, Friday - Task Force Marshall ceremony 1 p.m. Building 3912 at McCrady Training Center. Gate guard will give directions. Will be 106 sailors present at the ceremony.

February 15, Saturday – All Quadrant Oratorical Contests be held in various locations. Contact the Vice Commanders and see the website <http://www.scarolinalegion.org/page/contest/programs/hw-dare-maness-high-school-oratorical-contest> for more information.

February 18, Tuesday – District 15 @ 7 p.m. Saluda Post #65, 108 S. Randolph St. meal at 6:30 p.m. meeting 7 p.m.

February 22, Saturday – District 5 @ 10 a.m. Spartanburg Post #28, 94 West Park Drive. Meeting will be followed by brunch.

Post Officer Lists

District Commanders Please Note: This means also that even though you may have the same officers in the same positions for the 2013-2014 year, you should also submit a listing to department. Also, for those that have email addresses, please indicate that on the listing. Your assistance and attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated. The following is a listing of the posts. If they are in your district, please contact them and request they submit the information as soon as possible. This information is as of today, 12/19/2013.

District #1 – Posts #79, #142, #174, #217

District #2 – Posts #136, #145,

District #3 – Post #231

District #6 – Post #126

District #8 – Posts #21, #105, #128

District #10 – Posts #24, #70

District #11 – Post #63

District #12 – Posts #60, #74, #80, #92, #213 (The blank form is on the website to be used if needed.)

District #13 – Posts #51, #67, #113

District #14 – Post #100

District #15 – Posts #77, #153, #154, #168, #169, #232

District #17 – Posts #35, #202

District #18 – Posts #47, #118, #266

District #19 – Posts #8, #114

District #20 – Posts #64, #78, #156

COLA INFORMATION

By a 94-0 vote, the U.S. Senate moved forward in passing legislation that would restore cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) benefits that were stripped from military retirees by a bill that Congress passed in December. The vote taken on S. 1963, introduced by Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., makes the measure eligible for a floor vote in the Senate and protects it against filibusters. The U.S. Senate took advantage of an excellent opportunity to show its support for America's military retirees, American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said. Lawmakers showed strong solidarity in moving forward on the bill, which would repeal military pension cuts set to be imposed over the next decade after a congressional budget compromise was struck just before the Christmas holidays. If enacted, S. 1963, would repeal Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. This section reduces COLA benefits for military retirees under age 62, at a rate of 1 percent annually over a decade. Dellinger said he understood why the Senate overwhelmingly approved Pryor's bill. "It's a very succinct piece of legislation that can eliminate these unfair and ill-conceived COLA cuts. Both parties created this problem, and both parties demonstrated today that they are capable of decisive, bipartisan action when it comes to honoring its promises to America's veterans."

The measure gives the Senate a chance to act separately on the military COLA cuts, rather than deal with them as one of many issues included in a more comprehensive bill (S.1982) introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. "While The American Legion is greatly pleased by the Senate's actions today, we are going to hold Congress to its word on this matter," Dellinger said. "Anything less than a full repeal is a breach of faith with our military service members, retirees and their families."

Feb. 12, 2014 -- American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger says he has mixed feelings about a vote by the U.S. House of Representatives that partially restores planned cuts in cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on pensions for military retirees. By a vote of 326-90 on Feb. 11, the House approved an amended measure that would restore full annual COLAs for most working age military retirees. However, it continues to apply a controversial COLA cut to future pensioners who first enter the military beginning this year.

"What the House did is commendable on one hand and rectifies an unfortunate earlier move to restore full COLAs only to veterans with disabilities," Dellinger said. "However, this action still falls short of reversing the COLA cut for all eligible military retirees, current and future. Again, as in targeting the Department of Defense for sequestration, this legislation places the responsibility for correcting a financial catastrophe – that is, the unruly national debt – almost solely on our servicemembers. While we applaud the House for taking another step forward, we will continue to push toward a full repeal of military pensioners' COLA cuts."

The bill in question, S. 25, is not law and may never be. The House and the Senate are expected to study the measure in conference when the House returns from a Presidents Week break on Feb. 25. In the meantime, the Senate is considering its own measures to repeal the COLA cuts contained in a budget and deficit reduction agreement reached by Congress last December. Since then, The American Legion has led the charge, joined by many other veteran and military service organizations, in opposing any benefit reductions for military retirees.

LIT AD&D FREE

Just a reminder of the free \$1,000 to the Legionnaire AD&D insurance available thru the LIT. Last year the program was expanded to cover up to \$5,000.00 free insurance IF you were travelling on official Legion business and was killed or had a dismemberment as a result of an accident. Official business would be travelling to or from a meeting either at the Post, District or Department (conference or convention). All the Legionnaire has to do is apply for it and is not automatic. I do not know of any family who could not use the additional funds

at a time of necessity due to the loss of a loved one. In reviewing just what members of posts that are participating in the program, it is very eye opening that many, many members have not enrolled in this program. To enroll all that is required is complete the application or call toll free 1-800-235-6943 with your membership number.

Post 65 Award

Ms. Elsia Chwialkowski was recently presented as American Legion Post 65 Teacher of The Year. Her commendation reads in part: "This Certificate of Appreciation is gratefully presented to Ms. Elisa Chwialkowski, Teacher of The Year, In recognition and sincere appreciation of outstanding service and assistance which contributed to the advancement of the American Legion Programs and Activities dedicated to God and Country. Ms. Chwialkowski will be competing for the South Carolina Department of American Legion Teacher of The Year Award. At a past educational event, Ms. Chwialkowski, quoted from Rae Ellen McKee, 1991 National Teacher of The Year from Slanesville, WV, "What other profession offers one the satisfaction of knowing you have lit a spark in the mind of the next generation and nurtured a fire that will burn long after you've gone?" Ms. Chwialkowski, teaches 8th grade math at Saluda Middle School. Pictured left to right: Al Butler, Commander Post 65, Vietnam Veteran; Ms. Chwialkowski, American Legion Post 65 Teacher of The Year; Frontis Hawkins, World War II veteran and Ms. Tena Buffington, veteran of the Cold War, Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan.



Proud To Serve,
Lloyd, Dept. Adjutant