



**Department of
South Carolina
The American Legion**

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SOUTH CAROLINA NEWS LINE

You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.

Patriots Point

AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall will be at Patriots Point from October 9-12th in the Grove, landside of the USS Yorktown. Opening ceremony in the evening of October 9th. An 80% replica Vietnam Wall will be coming to Patriots Point in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War and ongoing commemoration programs. For volunteer opportunities, please contact Bobby Kotlowski (843)881-5989 or bkotlowski@patriotspoint.org.

The largest traveling replica of the iconic Vietnam Memorial Wall will be on display at the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime museum Oct. 9-12. The 360-foot long, eight-foot tall American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) Wall is 80 percent scale of the memorial in Washington D.C. It contains the names of every one of the 58,272 men and women who died in the more than decade long war. "We are honored to offer our community a special chance to pay tribute to the fallen heroes of the Vietnam War," said Patriots Point Executive Director Mac Burdette. "This will be a very special event for countless people across our state. It creates an opportunity for those who cannot travel to our nation's capital to feel the emotions and connection with their lost friends and loved ones that is only attained through viewing the famous memorial."

A special opening ceremony is planned for the evening of Oct. 9. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will include Medal of Honor Recipient Maj. Gen. James E. Livingston, several state and local officials and a performance by the US Marine Corps Band at Parris Island.

The Traveling Wall will be free and available to visitors around the clock from 5:00 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 9 to 12:00 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 12 in the Grove at Patriots Point. Rubbing sheets and pencils will be provided. Normal admission rates will apply to those who also want to tour the museum. This event is part of the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum's ongoing efforts to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War over the next few years.

National Cmdr. Helm

Angered by a recent IG report on the Department of Veterans Affairs and the testimony of senior VA officials, American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm sent a pointed letter to President Obama reminding him that he promised to institute "a critical culture of accountability" within the troubled health care system. Helm said that the change in culture has still not been achieved.

“We were shocked when the VA Inspector General’s Report examined case after case of VA mismanagement, acknowledging that veterans died as they waited for health care but then stated ‘we are unable to conclusively assert that the absence of timely quality care caused the deaths of these veterans,’” Helm wrote yesterday. “Mr. President, I understand that you cannot be held responsible for every act of malfeasance that occurs in the federal government. But let me assure you that if someone on my staff were found to be cooking the books, committing fraud or putting career ambitions ahead of veterans’ lives, they wouldn’t be transferred or suspended with pay. They would be fired immediately. Our VA employees should be held to the same standard,” Helm said. He vowed that The American Legion will continue to keep the issue alive until VA makes the needed reforms. “A perception exists that scandals in Washington are resolved by ignoring the problem and counting on the American people to forget. Mr. President, some Americans may forget what happened at VA, but I can assure you that The American Legion never will,” Helm said.

ALRSC NEWS

It was truly an honor to be able to speak to the American Legion Department of South Carolina at our fall conference. The reception I received during and after my talk on the ALRSC was certainly more than I expected. To give you an update to some numbers I gave you at the Conference. At the ALRSC Conference we were able to receive a complete accounting of the number of miles and the number of hours Your American Legion Riders of South Carolina have completed since January 1st. The updated numbers are: 260,598 miles and 31, 588 hours that the ALRSC have completed since January 1st, 2014 in support of Veterans, their families and the American Legion.

If your chapter is thinking about forming an American Legion Riders Chapter or if you have Legionnaires in your Post who ride and would like to be a part of the ALRSC please contact me at grady@sc.rr.com or 843-933-1461.

Federal Employment

On September 17, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved legislation that would give disabled veterans hired as federal employees access to their full year’s sick leave immediately upon starting their jobs. [Full-time federal workers in their first year on the job have no sick leave when they start, and accrue four hours of sick leave per pay period. That amounts to a balance of 104 hours at the end of their first year.] But disabled veterans, who must attend regular medical appointments to take care of their health, and also to continue receiving their veterans’ benefits, quickly use up their sick leave. Many veterans also have to travel to reach the nearest VA facility to receive treatment, which can eat up leave time. The **2014 Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act** would apply to first-year federal employees with a service-connected disability rating of at least 30 percent. During their first year on the job, the veterans would still accumulate their normal sick leave. The employees would only be able to use their extra sick leave for treatments directly related to their service and would not be able to carry over the one-time “wounded warrior leave” after the first 12 months on the job. Representative Stephen Lynch (MA) sponsored the bill, with Representatives G.K. Butterfield (NC); Elijah Cummings (MD); Blake Farenthold (TX); Walter Jones (NC); and Delegate-at-Large Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC).

Consolidated Post Reports

A recent article in the August, 2014 DISPATCH read, in part, as follows. Each year, American Legion posts around the world donate millions of volunteer hours, raise millions of dollars for the benefit of their community and Legion programs, and positively influence millions of lives. This information is captured on the Legion's Consolidated Post Report (CPR) that posts have been submitting for the past 40 years to assist departments in the documentation of activities that a specific post completed during the **12-month (June 1 through May 31)** reporting period. This year, **12** departments reported 100 percent reporting and they are: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Virginia and Wisconsin. These departments Commanders were recognized with a plaque from National Commander Dellinger at the National Convention in Charlotte. There were also **seven** departments who were recognized with a certificate for achieving 75 percent or higher reporting: Alaska, California, Kentucky, Ohio, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Only **57 percent** of all posts during **the 2012-2013** membership year submitted Consolidated Post Reports. All American Legion national commanders testify before a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs following their election to report on American Legion hours donated, monies raised and expended to serve our veterans and our programs. Unfortunately, the numbers never depict the true picture of who The American Legion is.

However, **the 2013-2014** reporting increased to **67 percent** with nearly 9,000 posts submitting a CPR – an increase of 800 posts reporting from last year. For the 2014-2015 membership year, show the many ways Legionnaires in your post are making difference in their communities and beyond by completing the CPR. When reports are due, the form can be filled out online: www.mylegion.org located under "Post and Department" options. Or submitted by mail by downloading it online, located under Membership Services: www.legion.org/publications.

LIT Information

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust is pleased to announce that online enrollment is now available for the LegionCare No Cost Accidental Death benefit. Please be sure to let your Department know about this one-of-a-kind benefit offered exclusively to Legionnaires.

LegionCare provides all Legionnaires with:

- \$5,000 in Accidental Death Coverage for covered accidents that occur if you are traveling on official Legion business.
- \$1,000 for all other covered accidents.
- 24/7 protection that covers Legionnaires at home, at work and while they are travelling away from home available for all Legionnaires in your Department.

To learn more or to sign up, please visit <http://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>.

Thank You

At the Fall Conference, Ms. Mary Hazelton was given a Certificate of Appreciation for her continued support and faithful playing of music for the Department of South Carolina at the morning worship services as well as any other time when asked. She has done this for many years and we all hope that she will continue in the future. A big **THANK YOU** goes to Mary. She also sent the following: “A very sincere “Thank You” for the certificate of Appreciation given to me at Fall Conference. A wonderful surprise and special memory and I love it! My thanks to each of you. God Bless. /s/ Mary Hazelton.

Gamecock Football

There is a new program called “**SEATS FOR SOLDIERS**” by the Gamecock Group Sales Office. The purpose is to purchase tickets that will be donated on the donors behalf to bring deserving military families to the gamecock football game vs. Furman on October 18. The ticket cost is \$25.00 per ticket. For more information contact the group sales office at 803-777-8850.

Pro Bono Info

Lawyers4Vets - Monthly Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic

Introduction: As a service to area Veterans, the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center has partnered with the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and members of the private bar to establish Lawyers 4 Vets, a Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic.

Purpose:

Lawyers 4 Vets connects low income and homeless Veterans with attorneys who provide legal advice and representation on certain issues.

Legal Issues and Services: The clinic will ONLY address the following topics:

- Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina State ID, birth certificates)
- Child support and visitation issues (in South Carolina)
- Expungements and pardons (for convictions from South Carolina courts)
- Consumer protection
- Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney

Eligibility:

Veterans will be screened for eligibility, and if eligible will be given an appointment at the clinic. Lawyers 4 Vets will assist eligible Veterans regardless of military discharge status.

Appointments: Veterans who would like to be screened for eligibility should call the number listed below and leave a message including their name, phone number, and legal issue. The Veteran will be contacted within 2 business days by an intake volunteer who will ask the veteran a number of questions to determine if they are eligible. If the Veteran is eligible and has a qualifying legal issue, they will be given the next available appointment at the legal clinic. Appointments are required for a Veteran to receive a face-to-face meeting with a lawyer. Walk-ins will not be seen and will be directed to contact the telephone intake.

Number to call: Toll Free 1-877-289-6000

Clinic Dates: The Clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The 2014 Clinic dates are:

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| * May 15, 2014 | *June 19, 2014 |
| * July 17, 2014 | *August 21, 2014 |
| * September 18, 2014 | *October 16, 2014 |
| * November 20, 2014 | *December 18, 2014 |

Where: (BY APPROVED APPOINTMENT ONLY AND SPECIFIC LOCATION PROVIDED UPON CONFIRMATION): Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia SC 29209.

What's Happening

September 25, Thursday – VAMC Charleston, Main Auditorium, 1st floor, 109 Bee St., seeking input on Veterans health care plans for the future.

September 27, Saturday – District #19 Post #84 Hemingway, 2333 Hemingway Hwy, 10 a.m.

September 28, Sunday – Gold Star Family Day. Light a luminary at dusk. See luminaryinitiative.com website to honor, support and remember the families of our fallen heroes.

September 28, Sunday – Task Force Marshall Graduation 1 p.m. (See article following)

Task Force Marshall

The next graduation for Task Force Marshall is September 28, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. It is recommended that all be in place by 12:45 p.m. There are 146 Sailors graduating in this class. The graduation is being held in Building 3800, the large red brick building on the right upon entering the guard gate. The training center is located at 5395 Leesburg Road, Eastover, SC. Please have identification upon entering the gate. The gate on Leesburg Road is the **only** access into McCrady. FMI Carol Davis (803) 739-2774/(803) 467-4482.

On a separate note, Ms. Davis advises that planning for the 7th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for our deploying Sailors will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2014 at the National Guard Armory on Bluff Road. There are a number of food and non-food items that will be needed for the dinner. A listing of those items is separate from this article. More information will be forthcoming for interested to sign up to volunteer to help with the set-up and decorating of the Armory as well as helping serve and other areas where help will be needed the day of the dinner.

Post Officer Listings

District and Post Commanders Please Note: Even though you may have the same officers in the same positions for the 2014-2015 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.

**Fisher House
Charleston**

A long-term stay in a military hospital, sometimes hundreds of miles from home, can easily mean expensive lodging and food costs. Fisher House Foundation ensures that the families are never burdened with a lodging fee, allowing the patient to focus on getting well with the comfort of knowing their family members are able to be with them through each step of their treatment. The proposed Fisher House Charleston will be part of a network of comfort homes through Fisher House Foundation, a private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. If you want to be part of this movement to locate a Fisher House in Charleston, contact Harbour House, Inc./Fisher House Charleston LLC, P O Box 829, Johns Island, SC 29457 or go to www.FisherHouseCharleston.org for more information.

Proud To Serve

Lloyd H. Woods
Department Adjutant