



STETSER-LAMARTINE POST 281 CHEW'S LANDING, N.J.

POST 281
EST. 1939

MEMBER OF NALPA & THE AMERICAN LEGION PRESS CLUB OF N.J. www.njlegionpost281.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Adopt-a-Highway</i>	2
<i>St John of God</i>	2
<i>POW/MLA Candlelight</i>	3
<i>Stand Down</i>	4
<i>Service Officers Report</i>	5
<i>Schedule of Events</i>	6

Membership:

Most of you know that Post 281 has the largest American Legion membership in Camden County and we are the 10th largest in the State of New Jersey. Last year we had 659 paid members. Our goal this year is to increase that membership number by at least one.

As of January 2, 2008 we had 544 members who have paid their 2008 dues of \$25. We have nearly 200 members in our database who have failed to send in their dues. If you are one of them, please renew your dues now.

You are receiving this Newsletter because we have you in our computer database as an active member or a member who still hasn't paid his/her dues.

Al O'Neil

My God! How little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy!

Thomas Jefferson

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

First of all I would like to thank all of the Legion Family for their help in making our fall program successful. The main events were the Eagles Tailgate Party, Veterans Day, St John of God Christmas Party, Children's Christmas Party, Christmas Party at Vineland Veterans Home and the Legion Family Christmas Party.

The participation in the Tailgate party continues to grow every year. Veterans Day started with a great breakfast prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary followed by the traditional ceremony at 11AM. The attendance at the St. John of God Christmas Party surpassed that of the past, so we must be doing something right. At the Children's Christmas Party **Don Mitchell & Tim Stillman** (aka Santa Claus) and the elves brought smiles to the faces of a lot of children. The Christmas Party at the Vineland Veterans Home was huge, we had thirty volunteers which included the Legion Family and VFW 8714. The Barrington Band and Mr. & Mrs. Santa Clause (**Tim Stillman & Kim Donohue**) entertained 70 residents.

It is now time to focus on the challenges of the New Year. On January 12th we will close the canteen area for two weeks while we install a new ceiling and hopefully purchase three flat screen TV's.

We will relocate the bar to the backroom and **your favorite beverages will be available with the same operating hours; i.e., the bar opens at 10:00 AM Monday through Saturday and 1:00 PM on Sundays.**

We will need volunteers to assist in the tearing out of the old ceiling, especially on January 12th & 13th when we will be preparing the area for the new installation. No particular expertise is needed. Please report to **Chief Mayland** at 0800 on the 12th.

There are many more events scheduled for over the winter months so please consult the comprehensive schedule on the back of this newsletter.

Starting in March we will have nominations and election of officers for the upcoming Legion year (6/1/08 – 5/31/09). First nominations of officers will be at the general membership meeting in March and the second nominations will be at the meeting in April followed by the elections in May.



General membership meetings are always on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM unless prior notice is given. I have been at post 281 for seven years but I have not seen what I could define as an election. An election is a choice between two or more candidates. It is true that we usually have more candidates than jobs on the executive board but that is the only case where we have an election.

We need members to step forward and take an interest in the administrative jobs that keep this post running. We have over six hundred members but only thirty members take an active part in the Post. Without new faces we will definitely have a problem in the future. Please step forward. **We do have a job for you.**

*Continued
See Commander Page 2*

Commander—Continuing from Page 1

Our financial position with the on going renovations to the post remains the same. I do not see us incurring any debt until possibly the bar project in August. I am pleased to report at this time that the 500 Club and the Basket of Cheer receipts exceeded those from the past year.

Please support the canteen and our fund raisers. If you can, please send a donation to the Building Fund, **All Donations are Tax Deductible.**

Contact Info: post281commander@comcast.net
Post Phone: (856-228-9869)

For God and Country

Bill Holmes

Saint John of God

On Friday, December 7th, 2007, our Post hosted the 6th Annual Christmas Social for our Friends from Saint John of God Special Education School in Westville Grove. As in the past it was a Legion Family affair. For the most part those that help out have been doing so since our first social back in 2002. The hall was decorated in a very festive manner and the tree looked great. This event is our way of kicking off the Christmas holiday season. Our guests started to arrive shortly before 7 PM and after a short settling in time, the dinner serving line was formed. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the menu of roast beef, meatballs, and salads, along with a desert table filled with all kind of goodies.

The dance floor was packed shortly after dinner and remained that way for the next hour or so until the announcement was made that Santa had been spotted in the area. Sure enough he made his grand entrance, much to the delight of all. Santa spent time with everyone and presented each guest with two gifts. As per Santa's tradition, he then got out on the dance floor and laid down some fancy footwork. After many hugs and a few tears he finally had to say goodbye and it was back to dancing for the guests. As the evening was winding down an announcement was made that all of our friends from the center brought Christmas gifts with them for us. We sure were pleasantly surprised. It was a very touching gesture on their behalf. After a few more dances and a couple of karaoke numbers everyone joined hands in the singing of "God Bless America"; a long standing
Continued in next column

Adopt-A-Road

The Camden County Adopt-a-Road Program supports the Camden County Clean Communities and the New Jersey Adopt-a-Highway Programs ongoing effort to make our country roads more attractive and at the same time to control the growing cost of litter removal. While New Jersey is the third smallest state in area it is also the most densely populated one and has more vehicles per mile on it's roads than any other state.

Our Post has been participating in this program for seven years and yes, we can and do make a difference by helping to clean up our community. The biggest problem is getting people to participate. It has been primarily just a Legion function with a Son or two showing up to help out, and at the last outing, we had a member of the Auxiliary come out. So now we have opened it up to make the Adopt-a-Highway committee a LEGION FAMILY affair.

On Saturday morning, September 23rd, 2007 we held our fall cleanup and had ten legionnaires and one SAL in attendance. (Thanks goes out to Rip Cord, Jack Roehr, Tex Leyendecker, Jerry McDermott, Joe Turic, George Reilly, Bill Rothamel, Jim Barrett, Jerry Davis and Chief Mayland).

Unfortunately we had rain for the first time in all the years we have been doing this, but we did well and collected 25 bags of trash.

The next clean-up will be in May just before the Memorial Day weekend, and we spruce up around the Post. If anyone out there reading this article would like to donate two hours of your time to give us a hand, it would be greatly appreciated. The more volunteers we have the better and faster job we can do. We are — A Legion Family giving back to our community.

Jerry McAllister
Chairman

Saint John of God — continued

tradition among our Legion Family. For the record we had fifty people in attendance, an all time high. We also had a record number of helpers. Thank you friends from SJOG and thank you Legion Family. This is what we are all about; what a great evening!

Jerry McAllister
Chairman

Pictures from the St John of God Christmas Party are posted on our web site, <http://njlegionpost281.org/>

"Our citizenship in the United States is our national character. Our citizenship in any particular state is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home, by the former to the world. Our great title is AMERICANS..." **Thomas Paine**

POW/MIA CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On Friday evening, December 1st, 2007, Frank Carroll and I represented Post 281 at the 16th annual POW/MIA Candlelight Service. Having never attended the service, we were pleasantly surprised at the dignity with which the service was conducted.

Bob Jonas, the Chairman of the Gloucester County POW/MIA committee, and master of ceremonies, was the person most responsible for putting the program together and did he ever do a bang up job bringing together the South Jersey Veterans community. The intent of the program is to offer prayers for the safety of our troops and to say thanks to our currently deployed troops as well as to honor, bring attention and remembrance to POW/MIA's from all the past wars and conflicts.

The very first service was held outdoors in Gloucester City with an attendance of some 50 people. Now the program is being held indoors (thank God) at the Lindenwold Moose Lodge with over 300 in attendance. At the first service, and for many services following, there was a youth choir called the "Little Angels". They ranged in age from 4 to 12 and because of their early involvement a representative group of those "Little Angels" (not so little now) performed a few songs, including "The Ballad of the Green Berets", in honor of the 82nd Airborne Division, some of whom were in attendance.

The Honor Guard from the Army-Navy Garrison in National Park, posted colors and the Founder of the Military Support Group of NJ/PA, Karen Jennings, was the guest speaker and did a great job. Karen is a Maine Mom, her son Chris just completed this third tour in Iraq. Karen spoke about her group and how and why it was founded. She also told the story of her Grandfather who was a POW in WW-II and how he saved the life of a fellow POW. That story just came to light through information found on a monument and followed up by Internet research. Contact with the person he saved was made and the whole amazing story emerged. Karen was given the honor of lighting the candle honoring all those now serving.

The "Missing Man" ceremony was then performed, followed by a wreath ceremony for each service, the Merchant Marines and all POW/MIA's. Finally a roll call with bell toll was read for all the New Jersey POW/MIA's from the Vietnam conflict.

On a lighter moment, Santa Claus arrived to officially light the Christmas tree which was appropriately decorated in red, white and blue lights. A rifle salute by the Marine Corp League followed and Taps was played. Benediction was held by Col. Rev. Peter Molonar from the Camden County Veterans Affairs Office and the evening ended with Valerie Niessner signing "God Bless America". Refreshments followed served by the Ladies of the Lodge.

Frank and I agreed it was a well organized, though provoking evening. If you haven't attended one of these services, please try to attend next year. It is always around the same time and a great way to start the holiday season by reflecting on our deployed troops and fellow veterans.

Jerry McAllister
PPC & DNG

Continued from Page 5 *Disabled Veterans*

need of help with activities for daily living.

This increase also applies to survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected disability. Dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) survivors' benefit payments can range from \$1,091 to \$2,499 per month.

Survivors of wartime veterans receiving death pension are also entitled to an increase. The maximum annual payment rate for a surviving spouse can range from \$7,498 to \$11,985. Benefits under this program are intended to bring an eligible spouse's income to a level established by law.

Under each benefit program, additional allowances may be payable for helpless, minor or school age children.

Vineland Memorial Home Vets, Remembered at Christmas

The Post 281 American Legion Family, *The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion* in conjunction with Glendora VFW Post 8714, conducted a Christmas party in the Vineland Home's main auditorium.

The event was attended to by some 100 folks including 70 some residents and their relatives visiting. In addition our party staff included 30 workers.

Thirty poinsettias were placed on the tables throughout the auditorium as well as a large variety of Christmas decorations. The *Barrington Band*, made up of about 35 instruments, entertained the residents as the staff served pizza, soda and non alcoholic beer, during which Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and their elf made an appearance which thrilled the residents. Auxiliary President, Leslie O'Neill and auxiliary VA & R chairman, Marlene O'Neill handed out "Goody Bags" to the attending residents. A good time was had by all.

Prior to the party, Service Officer and VA & R chairman Cliff Griffiths, conducted a quick tour of the new Vineland facility for many of the staff.

A special "Thank You" is extended to SAL president Tim Stillman, Kim Donohue and Robert Hehl for portraying Mr. and Mrs. Claus and Santa's elf. "Thank You" also to Kent Hehl, who worked closely with me, as well as procuring the *Barrington Band* for this celebration.

STAND DOWN

In times of war, exhausted combat troops are removed from battle to a place of relative safety and security. The military term **Stand-Down** is used for these occasions. For homeless veterans, life can be a war zone. Faced with a lack of centralized services and bureaucratic red tape it can become very frustrating to try to deal with it on their own. The **Stand-Down** program brings eligible veterans and their families to one location for all of the needed agencies. It is an annual one day event and it was Friday, September 21st, at the Cherry Hill Armory. Some of the people are technically not homeless but are just veterans in need. Federal, State Public and Private support agencies offer a broad array of free services and assistance such as:

VA BENEFIT COUNCELING, WELFARE, SOCIAL SECURITY, FOOD STAMPS, PTSD COUNCEDLING, LEGAL & ADDICTION SERVICES, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, BLOOD AND DIABETES SCREENING, FOOT CARE, EYE GLASSES, HAIRCUTS AN CLOTHING PROVISIONS ALONG WITH A HOT MEAL.

Volunteers are always need in the specialized field as well as general help which takes in clothing distribution, food services and veteran's escort which is the field that I fall into. Roy Rever and I have been volunteering for the past four years in that capacity and we both participated once again this year. Our Auxiliary also put together 30 boxes of toiletries and assorted items to be handed out during the event. Roy and I arrived around 7:30 AM and the first veterans started to arrive shortly after 8:00 AM. There was a steady line moving from table to table until 1:00 PM when the last of them finished up their health screenings and then were treated to a hot meal consisting of chicken, ribs, hot dogs, hamburgers and salads.

There is always a need to help especially when it comes to escorts so if you would like to volunteer next year, just let me know and I will make sure you get an application. It is always held the 3rd Friday in September. Remember what we are all about—Veterans helping Veterans.

Jerry McAllister
Chairman
Shut-Down '07

Kenneth E. Bausinger

On January 3, 2008, Kenny "KB" Bausinger was called to "Life Everlasting". KB was an Army veteran who served and was wounded in the Vietnam War. He was a member and past Senior Vice Commander of Post 281. KB was voted "Legionnaire of the Year" in 2005", but more than the titles he had or the awards he so rightfully deserved, KB was our friend. We will miss him.

KB would often come to the Post in late afternoon, and if you didn't see him come in you might not know that he had been there for some time. When Ken spoke, he was witty and spoke with a keen knowledge on a variety of subjects. We'll miss seeing his black Corvette convertible parked in the lot, and miss him at his stool at the bar.

KB leaves behind, his wife Carolyn, who is the webmaster of our Legion site.

Let's Welcome Post 281's New Members

Paul C. Hecksher
Richard S. Kamman
Gary L. Rothman
Alfred Sulpizi
Robert Zamitis
Harry C. Buchheim
Joseph A. Dutch
Mathew T. Dutch
William R. Hunter
Edward S. Martka
Michael J. Powell
Chelsea Been
David Chowansky
Randall P. Damm
Frank J. DiFalco
William Dromgoole
Thomas Grapentine
Gerald Petaccio
Darrell Sampson
Ariel A. DeJesus, Jr.
Jerry L. Dixon
George L. Smith



Service Officer Report *by Cliff Griffiths*

New Leader Pledges to Look to the Future

December 20, 2007—In a ceremony today Dr. James B. Peake, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and former Army Surgeon General, was sworn in by President George W. Bush as the nation's sixth Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"Dr. Peake takes office at a critical moment in the history of this Department," said President Bush. "Our nation is at war – and many new veterans are leaving the battlefield and entering the VA system. This system provides our veterans with the finest care – but the bureaucracy can be difficult to navigate."

Secretary Peake stressed his commitment to easing the transition of our current generation of returning, combat experienced men and women and of "the opportunity to look to the future of this newest generation of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan – getting it right for them and for their families."

Peake, who retired in 2004 as a three-star general, is a board-certified thoracic surgeon. His commands included the U.S. Army Medical Command, headquartered at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas; Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash.; the 44th Medical

N.C.; and the 18th Medical Command in Seoul, South Korea.

Secretary Peake told those assembled, "You need to know that I believe deeply in the mission; and that I believe in you. I know quite a number of you already. I've seen the ethic, the caring, the compassion, and the technical skills."

A native of St. Louis and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Peake attended medical school after serving in Vietnam, where he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Peake assumes leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the second largest cabinet department, with about 250,000 employees and a budget last year exceeding \$82 billion.

More than 5.5 million veterans are expected to receive care this year in VA's 153 hospitals and 900 clinics. VA also provides disability compensation and pensions to 3.5 million veterans and family members, and operates 125 national cemeteries.

Disabled Veterans Receive Earned Increase

Millions of veterans and eligible family members will see their disability

compensation, pension, and survivors' benefits increased as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides an annual cost-of-living increase for key benefits.

"This increase ensures that those veterans who have earned this benefit for incurring a disability in defense of our country receive payments that keep pace with today's cost of living," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "VA is committed to the needs of our veterans and their families. We owe America's defenders no less."

A recent law signed by President Bush provides a 2.3 percent increase in disability compensation and survivors' benefits. Eligible veterans and family members will see this increase starting in their January 2008 checks.

Under the veterans' disability compensation program, tax-free payments will generally range from \$117 to \$2,527 per month depending on the degree of disability. Special payments up to \$7,232 per month apply to the most severely injured veterans.

Pension disability benefits will also be increased by the same percentage and effective on the same date. The maximum annual rate for permanently and totally disabled veterans or veterans over age 65 can range from \$11,181 to \$18,654, based on household income and whether veterans are in
Continued on Page 3

TAPS



Anthony M. Paulo
Mauro A. Cifone
James W. Garner
Charles N. Dirmeyer
John H. DeSipio
Kenneth E. Bausinger

UPCOMING POST 281 EVENTS

Feb 10th 1:00PM
Chili Bowl

Feb 16th 3 PM
(Tentative)
Auxiliary Spaghetti Dinner

Feb 24th 1:00 PM
Auxiliary Ham Shoot

March 1 & 2
Bar Room Olympics

(See calendar on page 6 for more events).

THE AMERICAN LEGION, EST. 1919
WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Stetser-Lamartine Post 281
PO Box 94
Glendora, NJ 08029

American Legion Established
1919.
Post 281 Established 1939

Post 281 Phone:
856-228-9869

Reach Editor Al O'Neil at:
aloneil@comcast.net or call
856-784-2061

**RENEW YOUR DUES
FOR 2008! SEND THEM
IN ASAP AND REMAIN A
MEMBER OF THE BEST
POST IN SOUTH JERSEY**

REMINDER:

*Articles and reports for
the SPRING Edition of
the newsletter must be
in by the deadline of
March 21.*

Visit our Post canteen:
(Remember from Jan
12th until Jan 27th,
we'll be serving out of
the back room); you can
still enjoy some drinks
and the camaraderie of
fellow Legionnaires.

US Flags are for sale at
the Post. Order some
new flags for the front
porch, after they have
taken a beating all Sum-
mer. Fly a new flag, not
an old one.

**Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Glendora, N.J. 08029
Permit No. 2**

POST 281 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All Functions Are at the Post Unless Otherwise Notated.

January 2	Regular American Legion Monthly Meeting 7:30 PM
January 9	Auxiliary Meeting 7:30 PM
January 16	Honor Guard Meeting 7:30 PM
January 26	Bingo Party at Vineland Veterans Home
January 30	Post 281 E-Board Meeting 7:30 PM
February 3	Post Oratorical Contest 10:00 AM
February 5	SAL Monthly Meeting
February 6	Regular American Legion Monthly Meeting 7:30 PM
February 10	Chili Bowl Contest 1:00 PM
February 13	Auxiliary Meeting 7:30 PM
February 16	Auxiliary Spaghetti Dinner 3:00 PM
February 20	Honor Guard Meeting 7:30 PM
February 23	Bowling Party at Vineland Veterans Home
February 24	Auxiliary Ham Shoot 1:00 PM
February 27	E-Board Meeting 7:30 PM
March 01/02	Bar Room Olympics
March 04	SAL Monthly Meeting
March 05	Regular American Legion Monthly Meeting & 1st Nomination of Officers 7:30 PM
March 12	Auxiliary Meeting 7:30 PM
March 15	St Patrick's Day Party 7:00 PM
March 19	Honor Guard Meeting 7:30 PM
March 26	Post 281 E-Board Meeting 7:30 PM
April 01	SAL Monthly Meeting
April 02	Regular American Legion Monthly Meeting & 2nd Nomination of Officers 7:30 PM
April 09	Auxiliary Meeting 7:30 PM
April 16	Honor Guard Meeting 7:30 PM
April 19	Junior Oratorical
April 25	Awards Night 7:00 PM
April 30	E-Board Meeting 7:30 PM
May 06	SAL Monthly Meeting
May 07	Regular American Legion Monthly Meeting & Election of Officers 7:30 PM
May 10	Installation of Post 281 Officers 4:00 PM
May 14	Auxiliary Meeting 7:30 PM
May 21	Honor Guard Meeting 7:30 PM
May 28	E-Board Meeting 7:30 PM