



For God and Country

Seward Post 5 Newsletter

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American Legion Seward Post 5

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

By Clare Sullivan



Well this summer is one for the record books! Not sure that we want a repeat of the challenges that we have been presented with, but no less, I am still so impressed with all our outstanding volunteers that made things happen in our Post 5 family. We're still providing support and good nightly food for our membership and those in need during this pandemic; we couldn't do it without our reliable and amazingly dedicated volunteers. Whether they were running food for "curbside delivery" for folks in the community, serving dinner upstairs, helping out in the social area or cooking breakfasts - our volunteers are amazing!

I have to give a huge shout out to the folks at Alaska Extreme Micro-Clean who were amazing and incredibly prompt to provide help when we chose to close the post due to increased Covid infections in town. They came through and had us up and running in no time so we were assured of a clean slate for our membership visiting the post.

July normally is one of busier months but this year thanks to Covid we had a bit of hiatus with all our summer activities and visiting with out of town members, but the circumstances have given us a pause to focus on other things that needed to get done and just aren't as shiny as the 4th of July ribs, parade and other events. Sometimes, as the saying goes, when life sends you lemons you just got to make lemonade! And, we made some good lemonade!!!! 😊

This month has the Silver Salmon Derby going on in town and it will be busy with all those wanting to catch the big monied fish, which is good for our town and everyone who has a business. The long winter months with slower business traffic and higher operating costs put a burden on them as well as all of us who call Seward our home. With that in mind, think about buying locally at the shops and good restaurants that stay here and stay open for us even in the slower (and colder) times of year. But back to the Derby, good luck to all who participate, there are some good prizes to be won and not just good fish!

I'd like to thank all who have consistently supported our post and our American Legion Family by coming to the club, and those who take the time to help out during or official functions and come to monthly meetings. Simply put, we wouldn't be here without your support at whatever level you choose to do so. As you know, the American Legion is a

multifaceted organization with the mission of "mutual helpfulness," and that is what we strive to do in Seward. We try to help not only our membership where we can but the greater community. On a daily basis you can see the functioning of the post including our complementary meals six nights a week, the bar and other activities, all of which are designed to support and entertain our membership. Essentially, all you do from stopping by to socialize at the club, to participating in a fundraising auction (when we can again) or carrying a flag in one of our celebrations all helps in what we do and why we are here, and have been doing since the chartering of Post 5 in December 1919.

I also want to thank all of our volunteer cooks and bartenders; with only one paid employee who essentially works seven days a week, your help has most definitely lightened the Club Manager's load. 😊 And, for that I am very thankful for thinking of Mike's workload and our organization by taking time out of your lives to help and support your post.



Some folks have said, *I really don't do much, I only come during this event or that, or wash dishes, etc.* - believe me, anything you do even with a small contribution of support goes a long way. You know the saying - "Many hands make light work"; and for any participation I am extremely grateful. Your efforts assist us in service to our veterans and our community. **THANK YOU!!!!**

We are one of the few American Legions in Alaska that has the privilege of having their own cemetery and we are also fortunate we have had over the years (and still do) some really dedicated people keeping things organized for all of us. Back in 2006 as the I inherited the schematics on our cemetery and it became quickly



apparent that very little information had been updated and maintained for well over 10 years at that point. Fortunately, Heather Stone (past President Unit #5) had quite a bit of background information on the cemetery. I used this along with contacting the city for their information to start to get a handle on what we had. Fortunately, along came John Christensen who had recently joined the post and stepped up to the challenge of continuing to not only figure out who was where in the cemetery but undertook the project of restoration and repair of many of our headstones and markers; he continued this project until he moved to the Lower 48. Now David (Ozzie) Osborn has in recent years taken on a large part of the maintenance of the cemetery grounds and the construction and repair of the headstones.

Ozzie further spearheaded the project last summer to expand our useable grounds for the final resting place of veterans and members of our American Legion Family. Ozzie, along with the many volunteers, spent their time and talent to move this project forward. We're awaiting the grounds to "settle" now that the major excavations of vegetation has been accomplished and look forward to next year to level and hauling in good topsoil and seeding for the cleared areas.

It goes without saying but worthy of it. We appreciate all that our membership is doing to support our post during this time. We are so grateful for the help our members have provided with the changing operations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Whether it's helping out in the kitchen for free community meals or monthly breakfasts (whether we were allowed to be open or not), helping at the cemetery with the weekly mowing and weeding, the Riders who perform escorts to "Post Everlasting," or the donations to the post to help us keep going, all are so gratefully acknowledged, appreciated, necessary and speaks volumes to the character and commitment of our American Legion Family!



We also have folks who quietly contribute with no expectation for reward or recognition, but their service and friendship would be so sorely missed if they were not here. We also would be, to coin the phrase, "in a hurt" if they weren't dutifully doing their thing in support of our American Legion Family.

In closing, I know I can't say *thank you!* it enough but thanks to all members of this American Legion Family and their support of this organization in its mission of "mutual helpfulness" in service to others.

House and Vice Report.....

By Mike Calhoon



Hello from the Second Vice!

We are into late summer and it continues to be a strange one for sure. We continue to monitor the health situation in town and are complying with the mandates from the City of Seward.

This month we will have our community breakfast on the 16th. Additionally, we continue to provide nightly meals which can be taken to go. At this time, we are limited to 50% capacity and we will let you know when that changes.

I want to thank our great volunteers who continue to work hard to help the Post provide good food each day and a safe and healthy environment for our membership when they come visit the Post. Special thanks to Debbie Van Tassel and Al Dykstra for their help in maintaining the cemetery.



The 2021 membership year has begun so you can renew online at mylegion.org, by mail, or in person at the post. Membership is the backbone of our organization and we need to keep that backbone strong to continue to carry the load we do for our veterans and the community of Seward. Thanks to all of you who continue to support your Post and all the activities designed to support our membership, our veterans, and the community. We look forward to seeing you all and please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sounding Off from the Sons....

By Mike Calhoon



Greetings from the SAL First Vice Commander.

The Post continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will keep everyone informed. Squadron members are supporting all Post activities and functions.

This month we will support the community breakfast on August 16th, and any other activities that come about. We also continue to assist with maintenance at the cemetery and around the Post. A big "Thank You" to Al Dykstra for his help.



Moving forward things should continue to improve but there are still tough times to come. If you know of those in need be sure to let us know and we will try to assist as we can.

Remember that membership is the key to all the success of Squadron 5 and its support of the Post 5 family and the veterans and community of Seward. The 2021 membership year begins now and dues for this year will be \$35.00. Membership is the cornerstone of our organization and we need to continue to strive to be a strong and active part of the Post 5 family.



Thank you again for all your hard work and support of the Post 5 Family mission of service to the veterans and other community members in Seward. Please be safe, monitor the covid-19 situation in Seward and act accordingly.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 224-5440. Thanks again for all your support of the Post 5 family and I look forward to seeing you all around the Post when possible.



From the President's Desk

By Debbie VanTassel, Unit 5

As we move into August, I hope everyone has been able to enjoy some of this great summer we have been having.

Another big thank you to everyone who volunteers every week to help with Bingo. This is one of the best fund raisers that the Auxiliary has so it is very important to keep it going on a weekly basis. They can always use help so if you have some free time on Monday nights come on down to the Post.

July marks the beginning of the new membership year so you will be getting those renewal messages in the mail. Please remember to renew your membership. The membership dues support the mission of the ALA at the local, state and national levels. With the passage of the recent legislation to extend the years of eligibility for membership to the Post it will also increase the opportunity to increase the Auxiliary membership. If you know people who had relatives that served in the military during years that were not previously eligible please let them know to check again as they may now be eligible to join. Also we just received notice from Department that the new cards are "in the mail", so as soon as we get your membership renewal we should be able to issue the new cards.

August 4th is National Coast Guard Day. U.S. Coast Guard Day honors the military branch that protects our waters and shorelines. This day is largely an internal celebration for all Coast Guard personnel and their families. But, I'd like to encourage everyone to honor these service members of this branch of the military. The USCG Mustang is stationed in Seward and the crew of the Mustang have always been great supporters of the Post 5 family. We would like to thank them and their families for their service and recognize the sacrifices they have made to serve. Also thank you for your support to the American Legion Post and the community.



Celebrate U.S. Coast Guard Day by learning more about the responsibilities and duties of the U.S. Coast Guard.

August 7, 2020 - Purple Heart Day

National Purple Heart Day honors the men and women who have been wounded or killed in military service. Again an important day for us to all remember those who have served to keep us free and the many who have made the ultimate sacrifice.



Also, another important day in the history of the U.S is **VJ Day**. Exactly what day it is celebrated is a little confusing:

August 14th- Japan surrendered
 August 15th- the Surrender is announced to the world.
 The day that is most commonly recognized and celebrated in modern days.
 September 2- the formal surrender Ceremony was held in Tokyo Bay aboard the USS Missouri and formal signing of the surrender occurred. At that time President Truman declared September 2nd to be VJ Day.

VJ Day marks the end of WWII and the end of fighting against Japan. It is called Victory in Japan Day or Victory over Japan Day. Regardless of what day it is celebrated it marked the end of WWII and the fighting between the US and Japan. It is important to remember these days in history and remember the men and women who served during this time. Many of them making the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I hope everyone has a great August- enjoy the Salmon Derby and the last full month of summer!

Director's Notes

By Bobby Dunno



WOW, what a great July 2020! I know that while most everyone has been focused on just getting through the summer with COVID, it seems the ALR has found much to be excited about here in the Seward and the American Legion Department of Alaska. When I reviewed the article I wrote for the newsletter in early July the ALR had a lot of plans but there seemed to be a lack of excitement, but for me the 4th of July changed all that.

As I am sure many of us regret the 4th of July Parade in Seward has been canceled but the Rides of American Legion Post 5 had determined among ourselves to mount up The Flag on as many Bikes as possible and spend an hour or so displaying those Flags riding around town. As it happened many ALR members from Jack Henry Post 1 (Anchorage), Post 16 (Homer) and Susitna Valley Post 35 (Wasilla) had begun planning and were making a trip for weekend camping and assembling in Hope. I met with Mike and Don from 16 in Copper Landing and we rode to meet the rest of the bikes as they arrived in Hope.



There I was able to discuss our plans to show Our Flag and invite them to come down and participate if they choose. I cannot tell you how proud I was of the ALRA as the 9 Bikes of Chapter 5 gathered (Which was ALR members Bobby D., Debbie D., Mike M., Larry G., Dave S., Terry M., Bill P. and non ALR members Chris, Sean and Eli) to see 11 more bikes from the other Chapters ride in from Hope to take part. I found it especially humbling that Mike showed up to take part despite the family tragedy he was experiencing. The response given to us by those in Seward who saw our display was uplifting to say the least. People were parking their cars getting out and taking pictures, clapping and cheering us on. To say we were invigorated and excited at the end of our slow spin of a couple circuits around Seward would be an understatement! After the ride we all rode to visit Don and Marilyn, I think that chance of seeing Don was a motivating factor in having so many riders showing up. We rode up to Don and Marilyn's to find Don in typical fashion sitting astride his bike ready to ride. So the ALR made another trip around town, with Don everyone grinning and amazed at Don still in the saddle at 83! The ALR also owes Mike Calhoun & Post 5 a big thank you for the impromptu supplying the means to feed all the Riders who showed up. Despite the shadow that hung over our 4th of July it was a sunny day and the ALR had a great time seeing the patriotic spirit that exists in Seward and celebrating our Country's birth.



Now you would think that it would be really hard to top a day like that but just a couple weeks later we had the ALR Alaska ROMP which kicked off really with several rides from areas around Alaska gathering at Jack Henry Post 1 on the 16th of July. The ROMP started out fairly routinely on the morning of the 17 July, but after we rode in a couple small groups to Sterling AK. Where we were to take part in the celebration and activities for the Salute to Veterans that is taking place at the South Peninsula ABATE Rally the following day. We were amazed at the location for the Rally as it was being held at the private estate of Don Johnson and his family of Sterling. After arriving in Sterling most of the ALR that rode down paid a visit to Post 20 where Alvin Diaz and his crew did a awesome job feeding us steaks, despite being more than a little overwhelmed by the number of Legion Riders that descended on them.

This was my first visit to the South Peninsula ABATE Rally and even with their limiting the participation with COVID there was better than 40 bikes in attendance. That Saturday morning, coffee & hot biscuits and gravy were ready early and the hospitality was on par and perhaps rivaled many of our own American Legion Post. Better yet for the ALRA we had found in the people of South Peninsula ABATE that they were not only a group comprised of many Veterans and family members but displayed the same reverence for Our Country's Flag that we did. The first official function of the South Peninsula ABATE Salute to Veterans was a changing of The Colors. It was explained that traditionally the Johnson family display an American Flag accompanied by the Alaska State Flag and the POW/MIA Flag and they are replaced once a year during the Salute to Vets Celebration. Many of us formed up to attend or take part in the ceremony and while it was appropriate many of the Legion Family discussed that we could probably improve on the Flag Replacement ceremony. We knew that later after the many other activities planned the South Peninsula ABATE would be holding a flag retirement ceremony which they also asked us to participate in. So we began planning to perform an American Legion Flag Retirement ceremony.



But before that happened we assembled as a group and rode to the location of the Alaska Roadhouse. 43 motorcycles, the 25 Bikes of the ALRA (yea we showed up in force!) followed the 18 riders with ABATE on a memorial ride in memory of Don Johnson's brother who was owner of the Alaska Roadhouse.

As we rolled out from we were onto the Sterling Hi-way, you could since that something interesting was happening. The group road mostly parade style to Soldotna where I was astounded to experience the whole group all 43 bikes rode through Soldotna with no one getting left due to changing stoplights we caught the lights as a group and stop at one light as a complete single group. For those who are wondering 43 bikes riding together we took up about enough road that we were nearly longer than a football field. Once again as we rode by cars and trucks pulled over to watch us go by, horns honking and people waving at the display. After the visit to the Roadhouse we rode back to Sterling but we only got back to the estate with the lead 24 bikes still in a single group, seems like the miracle that got us there did not repeat for the return trip! After the memorial ride the Bike Games were held and fun was had by those who participated and those of us who sat around and watched. Yea I was watching and enjoyed doing it. I should also need to mention/prag/boast that Carrie Hintz of ALR Chapter 35 in an awesome display of riding ability won the balance beam competition completing the ride over the entire 20 feet length of 4" wide wooden surface not just once but twice as she also had to win a ride off!



As the day wore on so approached the time set aside for the Flag Retirement Ceremony. Tim Campbell from Post 1 had brought the script for our standard American Legion Flag Retirement and when we gathered for the ceremony we asked and they allowed us to retire the flags. The ALRA gathered all the bikes at the end of the runway, (yea the entire even was centered on the Johnson Families Private runway) and rode in escort in group formation ending at the base of the hill where the ceremonies would take place. The wonderful ladies from Quilts of Valor had several presentations of beautifully made quilts to several Veterans including several ALR members. The officers of the ALRA (including me) performed the Flag Retirement Ceremony in a small amphitheater they had around a fire pit that was part of the entertainment area of the Johnsons backyard. It was a good and very dignified ceremony and many realized within that moment that all present truly felt strongly about respecting Our Country and Our Country's Flag.



the East Coast. An the idea began to circulate about having the members of South Peninsula ABATE join the American

Legion Riders and those of us not already members of ABATE signing up. I believe much of the credit for the enthusiasm for joining the ALR arises from Brad Phelps of Chapter 16. He spent the time developing a stronger relationship with the South Peninsula ABATE group after attending the Salute to Veterans activities during the 2019 ROMP.



So I am happy to report that I along with ALRA members representing Chapters 1, 5, 16 and 35, attended the Post meeting at Post 20 on the 27th and it seems that Chapter 20 will be revitalized, as after the presentation by Mark Berg and I, along with seeing the enthusiasm of the prospective Chapter 20 officers, the Post Committee at Post 20 approved the reforming of ALR Chapter 20.

You would think after all I have written about I would be out of news. But not quite yet☺. But it looks like a ALR Chapter is also starting up down in Ketchikan at Post 3.



I have talked to them and sent the paperwork and they have taken of and are planning on submitting their paperwork to the American Legion Department of Alaska soon. And if you are ready for this our current Department Commander is likely to be a Charter Member of Chapter 20, gotta love that. As well there is also an effort to start another Anchorage ALR Chapter likely to call Post 29 home. So it has been an exciting July not just for Chapter 5 but for the ALR Alaska as a whole. Who would have thought in the day and age where COVID is putting a dampener on everything we can still experience success, and remember, motorcycle riding is "social distancing" at its best! So when the sunshine's or you otherwise find yourself with a opportunity....Get On Your Bike and Ride!

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August 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
						
2	3	USCG Birthday 4	5	6	Steak Night 7	SSD  8
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO 6:30PM  Chili Dogs			ALR Meeting 5:30pm  B,B,M&C	Purple Heart Day 	Seward Silver Salmon Derby 
SSD  9	SSD  10	Mexican Martes 11	SSD  12	SSD  13	Steak Night 14	SSD  15
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs	Post Meeting 5:30pm 	Auxiliary Meeting 6pm 	SAL Meeting 7pm  B,B,M&C		
SSD  16	17	Mexican Martes 18	19	20	Steak Night 21	22
End of Silver Salmon Derby <u>Luscious Leftovers</u> 3rd Sunday of the Month Breakfast	Chili Dogs BINGO!!!! 6:30PM 			 B,B,M&C		
23	24	Mexican Martes 25	26	27	Steak Night 28	29
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs			 B,B,M&C		
30	31					
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs	Have Fun at the Silver Salmon Derby in Seward!! 8-16 August 2020 <u>Food Every Night at the Post!!!!</u>				