



*Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
National Security
Americanism
Children and Youth*

Richard H. Stewart, Jr
American Legion Post 543
St. James, NC 28461

Minutes of the Meeting: September 28, 2016

The meeting was called to order by our Commander, Gary Crowden at 7:00PM. Posting of the Colors was performed by the Post Color Guard, opening prayer was given by the Post Chaplin, Jimmy Perryman, and placement of the POW/MIA flag was done by the 2nd Vice Commander Mike Fegan, and the Pledge of Allegiance as well as the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution was led by the Post Commander.

A Roll Call of Officers was conducted. All officers were present with the exception of Doug Pratt who was on an excused absence. There were a sufficient number of members to establish a quorum and conduct business.

Commander Crowden Introduced guests and visitors. Mr. Mike Braswell Candidate for Department Commander was introduced and presented his plan for leading the department his and qualifications. Ms. Cheryl McGuire, Treasurer for Operation At Ease, was introduced and gratefully received a donation of \$500.00 from our post. Harry Martin, USN, Tom Campbell, USA, and Floyd "Bill" Young, USA introduced themselves as first time visitors.

Commander Crowden presented Joe Kennedy with the American Legion Challenge Coin, thanking him for his outstanding service to our Military Appreciation Day effort.

Commander Crowden presented an informative list of Veteran's Benefits:

- Walgreens is providing free flu shots for all members with VA Health Benefits, gratis. If a veteran brings his or her DD214, the flu shot will be given for \$10.00.
- Retired military ID cards can be secured at Sunny Point. Contact is Cheryl Jones.
- Please provide the post with your DD214, as it may be an invaluable assist to surviving family members in the event of the death of a veteran. The DD 214s are maintained in a totally confidential safe.
- Fort Bragg is hosting a veteran's convention from 21-23 October.
- Applications were distributed for American Legion Accidental Death benefits of \$5,000.00 if on Legion business and \$1,000.00 if not on Legion business. There is no cost to Legionnaires for this benefit.
- A list of companies that provide discounts and other benefits to veterans was distributed.
- Coastal Cosmetic Dentistry provided \$30,000.00 of dental services to local veterans, having served 55 veterans from the area.

- The Legion Emergency Assistance Program is available to veterans globally offering a variety of important benefits. The post has complete information if anyone is interested. The cost is \$129.00 per year.
- Post 543 Christmas cards are available. The cost is \$25.00 for 25 cards. Contact John Muuss if interested.

MOTION: A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the last meeting.

Dick Szot presented the Finance Committee report. Suggestions were made from the floor for changes which will be taken up at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Pom Pomeroy presented the Membership Report. We currently have an enrollment of 129 members vs. an annual goal of 165. We are at 78% of our annual goal – well ahead of department requirements.

John Muuss presented the public relations report stating that we had had fifteen entrees in the following publications: Three in the Record, One in the Star, Four in the Pilot, Five in the Brunswick County Magazine, and Two in Cat-Tales.

Commander Crowden presented “sick call”. Please keep the following Legionnaires in your prayers: Wayne Deutscher, Johnnie Holmes and John Whittico.

Doug Elznic presented the current status of our Annual Veteran’s Day Banquet. We have 22 members signed up. This is a wonderful event focusing on remembering the sacrifices of our veterans from all wars, and giving our post the opportunity to share our common purpose and fraternity.

Commander Crowden encouraged members to bring in pull tabs from beer and pop cans. We collect them and deliver them to the folks at Ronald McDonald House. This is a fundraiser for them that benefits families of the hospitalized affording them the opportunity to be close to their loved ones.

Commander Crowden mentioned that the cutoff date for the North State Christmas Packs is 1 Dec 2016.

Commander Crowden encourage all to bring in soaps, shampoos, etc. from hotel stays to contribute to “Sundry Packs”. These packs will be distributed to homeless veterans when they make use of traveling showers. Paul Witmer shared that there will be a box at post meetings for the deposit of these items.

Commander Crowden asked for comments and feedback on his monthly newsletter. There was a universal response that the newsletter is a valuable resource for all members of the post given that it informs those that are not regular in attendance of the good works the post performs, and encourages them to become more involved.

Commander Crowden informed the post that the District Meeting will be on October 15th. Topics to be discussed include motivating membership development.

Commander Crowden presented the Executive Committee report. Finance was a main focus of the meeting in addition to a variety of topics including the post Christmas Card.

Paul Witmer presented the Post Service Officer's Report.

- The Coastal Cosmetic Dentistry event was well attended and afforded the post an opportunity to get our message out, as well as recruit potential new members.
- There will be a Poppy Distribution at Walmart on November 5th.
- The PAVE program is progressing well. Paul's group will be recruiting new members at Brunswick Community College.
- Operation North State's Pier Fishing event still needs volunteers for the post. This is a gratifying event in which to participate. We encourage members to become involved.

Bill Morgan reported on the 911 Ceremony, Veterans day preparation, Guest Instruction for the JROTC at South Brunswick High School and a Funeral Service that the Honor Guard performed. All events were extremely well received.

Mike Fegan shared that the planning for the Oratorical Contest is progressing well. There are several other schools outside of our foot print that have contacted Mike indicating interest in participating.

Chuck Blackburn reported on the Colin Furr Scholarship program, Boys State, Girls State, North Carolina Junior Trooper program, and The Veteran's Speaking Program. All programs are progressing well.

Rick Sessa reported that the Richie Hat Trick Scholarship checks have all been distributed. The North Carolina Department of the American Legion awarded the St. James Service Club with the Children and Youth award for the state. This is a singular honor for our community.

Commander Crowden announced the next Corporate Members Meeting would be held on October 23, 2016.

Chaplain Jimmy Perryman offered the closing prayer. Mike Fegan, 2nd Vice Commander recovered the POW/MIA chair cover.

The Color Guard retired the colors.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Pom Pomeroy
Adjutant
NC American Legion Post 543

Gary Crowden
Commander
NC American Legion Post 543

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