



Up To Now!

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PUFL CHECKS MAILED OUT TO POST ADJUTANTS

All PUFL checks and on line renewals for the month of July have been mailed out to all Post Adjutants.

CORRECTION

In the last Up To Now, Scott Bakken was listed as a Master Sergeant and should have been listed as a Sergeant Major.

FANG WONG ELECTED NATIONAL COMMANDER

A retired U.S. Army veteran has been elected national commander of the nation's largest veterans organization. Delegates to The American Legion's 93rd National Convention chose Fang A. Wong of East Brunswick, N.J., to lead the 2.4 million-member organization of wartime veterans for a one-year term.

Born in Canton, China, Wong immigrated to the United States as a 12-year-old in 1960. He attended New York City public schools and became a naturalized citizen in 1963. Wong volunteered for the U.S. Army in 1969, served 25 months in Vietnam, and retired from the Army as a chief warrant officer in 1989.

Wong earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at New York Institute of Technology in 1978 and a master's degree in management from Central Michigan University in 1981.

Following his retirement from the Army, Wong joined the Lt. B.R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial American Legion Post 1291 in New York. A former national vice commander and past department commander of New York, Wong has held elected and appointed offices at the post, county, district, department and national levels. Wong also served as a director of the New York Empire Boy's State Program and a member of the planning committee for the creation of the New York American Legion College. He has served on several national committees and commissions, including a term as chairman of the Legion's National Security Commission.

Through his American Legion post in Chinatown, Wong provided relief efforts during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. He has been a member of the Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training and Employer Outreach of the Department of Labor and served as chairman of the Special Investigation Committee for the Chinese Community Benevolent Association (NYC) and the Office of the Attorney General, State of New York in 2005.

Commander Wong took the oath of office along with five other national officers. Serving as National Vice Commanders are David N. Voyles of Amazonia, Mo.; Milton G. Heifner of Woodward, Iowa; Larry D. Sheets of Miami, Fla.; James H. Hales, Jr., of Blairsville, Penn. and Mervin G. Gunderson of Belgrade, Mont. National Historian. Robert B. Craig of Lincoln, Neb.; National Sergeant-at-Arms David J. Louie, of New York, N.Y.; and National Chaplain Gerald Theriot of Schriever, La., were appointed to their positions by Cmdr. Wong following the close of the national convention.

FALL DISTRICT MEETINGS CONTINUE

Fall District Meetings have been held in Districts 1 and 2 this past weekend. A main item on the agenda was to elect a District Commander and District Vice Commander. In District 1, Duane Riedlinger of Piedmont Post 311 was elected as District Commander and Bill Erhardt of Lemmon Post 66 was elected as District Vice Commander. In District 2, Dennis Edwards of Rapid City Post 22

was elected as District Commander and Verle Whipple of Martin Post 240 was elected as District Vice Commander. In Meade County, due to the redistricting, Richard Dieken of Piedmont Post 311 was elected as County Commander. Due to resignation, Kevin Klunder was elected as County Commander for Lawrence County. The remaining schedule is outlined below:

Sept 16 – District 3 - Reliance. Social 6:00 p.m. and Meeting at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Post Home. The Auxiliary will meet at City Hall behind the Legion Hall. Cookies afterwards.

Sept 17 – District 4 - Aberdeen. Social 12:00 Noon and Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Aberdeen Post Home (Eagle's Club, 316 S. Second). Auxiliary will meet at the Post Home.

Sept 18 – District 5 - Watertown. Social 1:00 p.m. and Meeting at 1:30 p.m. at the American Legion Post Home. The Auxiliary will meet at the VFW.(A bus will provide transportation between the Legion and the VFW). There will be bars afterwards.

Sept 24 – District 8 - Irene. Lunch 12:00 noon and Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Irene Community Center. The Auxiliary will meet at the Irene Community Center.

Sept 24 – District 7 - Dell Rapids. Lunch 5:00 p.m. and Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Legion will meet at the American Legion Post Home. The Auxiliary will meet at the Methodist Church (near the Legion hall).

Sept 25 – District 6 - Woonsocket. Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Woonsocket Community Building. The Auxiliary will meet at the Woonsocket Community Building.

NATIONAL COMMANDER WONG'S INCENTIVE AWARDS

During the 2011-2012 membership year, National Commander Fang Wong will award his National Commander pin to any Legion family member who obtains a combination from the following: sign up "New Members", transfer members from your Department Headquarters post or contact and renew current members. Must equal eight members from the list above. Certification forms are enclosed with the edition of the *Up To Now* and can be submitted any time after September 1, 2011.

A Post excellence award will be awarded to American Legion Posts that have participated in four areas, those being: membership, youth activities, community service and support to currently serving troops or veterans. Membership must be at least one member greater than the previous year. At least one Post officer attends District meetings. Must sponsor and actively participate in at least one of the primary youth programs; Boys State, Baseball, Oratorical, Boys Scouts or Junior Shooting Sports. The Post must accomplish a community service project that involves members of The American Legion Family actively working in the community, outside the Post home. Must accomplish a project supporting troops or veterans in the community that involves activity by Legion family members, outside the Post home. To receive this award, the District Commander is responsible for the certification

The District Commander Post Visitation Award will be presented to a District Commander who visits all of the Posts in their District. Each District Commander that achieves this goal will receive a certificate and their name will be included in a drawing for monetary awards with the dollar amount ranging from \$100 to \$500, depending upon the number of Posts within their District.

CONTINUED ON BACK

DID YOU KNOW?

- Ⓟ During the Vietnam War, soldiers used slinkies as radio antennas by stretching the coiled toy between two trees.
- Ⓟ President Obama addressed the Legionnaires at the National Convention stating “**the budget would not be balanced on the backs of our veterans**”.
- Ⓟ Chrysler built B-29’s that bombed Japan, Mitsubishi built Zeros that tried to shoot them down and now both companies build cars jointly in a plant called Diamond Star.
- Ⓟ The only place where the flag flies all day, never goes up or comes down, never flies at half mast and does not get saluted, is the **MOON**.

17 POSTS HAVE NOT CERTIFIED THEIR 2012 OFFICERS

State Headquarters cannot mail out the membership cards and packets until these Posts certify their officers. Posts are identified as they were listed in the old District structure. The following Posts have **NOT** certified their officers for the 2012 membership year:

Dist 1 - Parker 30, Alcester 86.

Dist 4 - Lily 156.

Dist 5 - Rockham 57.

Dist 6 - Pukwana 201, Artesian 47.

Dist 7 - Greenwood 257.

Dist 9 - Midland 143, Wood 19, Rosebud 125, St. Francis 297, Wanblee 269.

Dist 10 - Blunt 77.

Dist 13 - Pine Ridge 251, Porcupine 294, Manderson 302.

Dist 14 - Ipswich 67

WALMART CEO ADDRESSES NATIONAL CONVENTION

Walmart U.S. President and CEO Bill Simon, who spent 25 years in the U.S. Navy, says he will never forget what the “salty old sea captain” of his first destroyer told him when he reported for duty at the age of 22. “He sat me down. He looked me in the eye. He said, ‘I want you to know I trust you, that your country is counting on you, and that while we might make mistakes, we’re all in this together.’ Then he said, ‘Get out there and do your job.’”

Simon called those words “one of the most enduring gifts I got from my service. The confidence we gained in ourselves, the ability to do things we never thought imaginable, and what we can do together, is what America needs today. It’s what we need to bottle and deliver to our country.”

Now responsible for more than 3,700 Walmart stores and 1.3 million employees across the United States, Simon urged thousands of veterans gathered Wednesday for the 93rd National Convention of The American Legion in Minneapolis to help lead an “American Renewal” that can spring from the talents and capabilities of the newest generation of veterans.

Walmart’s commitment to that effort, he explained, includes approximately 100 new and expanded stores and 15,000 new jobs across the country this year with more growth expected to be announced in October. He said Walmart and the Walmart Foundation will also double its commitment to veteran job-training and entrepreneurship programs from \$10 million to \$20 million through 2015.

“We love to hire veterans,” he said. “Veterans not only have a record of performance under pressure, but they are educated and technologically savvy, quick learners, and team players.”

Simon said the corporation is using a dedicated website – www.careerswithamission.com – to attract veteran applicants and hire them. Among its features, the site provides searchable job listings as well as guidance about how to convert military experience into fulfilling careers. He added that whenever the spouse of a servicemember has to leave a Walmart job due to a military transfer, the spouse is offered another Walmart job in the new location.

“Today, after 10 years of war, there’s a new group of American men and women coming home, ready to lead us in the next American

renewal,” Simon told the Legionnaires. “I’ve got to tell you about this generation. They are incredible. When I signed up to serve, we knew combat was a possibility. For this generation, it’s a probability. Two, three, four deployments, and still they answer the call of duty. They are why I am confident everything is going to be OK.”

He said it is up to the nation at home “to create conditions for their success, so that when they come home, they can lead us to a better day. With respect to jobs, now is not a time to retreat or wait. Now is the time to tackle our problems head-on.

FREE AARP DRIVER SAFETY PROGRAM

To recognize and thank veterans for their dedication and commitment to service, the AARP Driver Safety Program is proud to offer a FREE classroom course to all veterans, regardless of age, from November 1 - 30, 2011.

To enroll in the course, instructors and host organizations of the DSP course should accept any individual who presents a military ID card, discharge papers, American Legion Membership Card, and VFW card. Spouses are also eligible to take the classroom course as long as they present a membership card in the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars, or a dependent ID card.

Check with your auto insurance company to see if they offer discounts for the completion of the course.

To receive the free course, contact Dosis Ann Werlinger, State Coordinator for Driver Safety Program at 605-484-1888 or 605-394-7798 or email dawerlinger@yahoo.com.

AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Now is the time to be planning your Post’s participation in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. The program is an outstanding opportunity for a high school student to earn up to \$18,000 in scholarship money to help pay for a college education.

High school students, under the age of 20 on the date of the National Contest, who are citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States, are eligible to participate. The student must be presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of the school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). The student must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of the contest. The contestant must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the state of South Dakota to participate in the contest in South Dakota.

Contest participation starts at the local school/American Legion Post level. Winners at the local level advance to the District Contest. **The eight first-place winners in the District contest will advance to the State Finals Contest** which will be held in Oacoma, SD, at the Cedar Shores Resort following the completion of the South Dakota American Legion MidWinter Conference.

THANK YOU AMERICAN LEGION POSTS

Commander Weinmann and Headquarters Staff would like to thank all the American Legion Posts who showed tribute and hosted an event to honor our WWII veterans on September 12. They truly are remarkable heroes.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership stands at 13,342 or 58.36% of the Department’s 2012 membership goal.

Department Membership Chairman Hugh “Homer” Holmes is urging all members of The American Legion to “Just Ask One More”. This is the year the membership slide stops.