

Joint District 7 & District 8 Meeting – Sons of the American Legion

April 30, 2017, Herbert W. DeLong Post 808, Belmont, NY

Meeting was convened at 1:00 p.m. by Detachment Vice Commander 7&8 Jim Coates. After proper opening ceremony, Detachment Chaplain Jim Parks invoked the blessing of God with an opening prayer. After the reading of the Preamble, all members present were seated.

Tom Kurk, Past Detachment Commander made a motion that the meeting be dedicated to David “Lefty” Caldwell, who recently passed away from Squadron 808. Ron Kuczenski seconded, motion carried. 8th District Commander Tim Van Patten led a Squadron Everlasting Ceremony for David “Lefty” Caldwell.

Detachment Vice Commander Jim Coates then welcomed and thanked all in attendance. He stated that he was very pleased with the turnout, and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The get together is meant to be informative and thought sharing, with ideas on ways to retain and recruit members and discussion of projects that work and don’t work. There were 41 members present, representing 20 different Squadrons and Posts in 13 different Counties across the 2 Districts.

Detachment Vice Commander Coates presented Hebert W. DeLong Squadron 808 with a certificate of appreciation for hosting this 7th and 8th District Get-Together.

The Head Table was introduced as follows: 8th District Commander and Detachment Historian Tim VanPatten. 8th District Adjutant and Past Detachment Commander Jeff Jordan. 7th District Commander Jerry Toepper. 7th District Adjutant, Detachment Public Relations Chairman, and Webmaster Gabe Cinquegrana. Detachment Chaplain and 7th District Treasurer Jim Parks.

Special Guests in attendance were also introduced: Detachment Commander J. Bruce Ruthven. 2nd Leading Candidate for National Commander and Past National Vice Commander and Detachment Commander Greg Doc Gibbs. Legion Riders Vice Director Districts 7&8, and Past Detachment Commander Jerry Ketchum. Remaining Past Detachment Commanders, County Commanders, and Squadron Commanders were introduced, as well as Advisors Maurice Arthur, Paul Sewart, and Bill Crane. Department Commander’s Aide Ray Hoxie was also introduced as a guest, as well as Past Department Commander Timothy VanPatten Sr.

7th District Commander Jerry Toepper stated that the District is currently in 4th place at 90.43%, nipping at the toes of District 8. A strong membership finish is expected. Commander Toepper remarked on the completion of the District Visitations, and that 3 Officers attended all 8. Ontario County and Steuben County both had Walk-A-Thons in April, and the District held a Youth Bowling Tournament in Hornell. The District will be having its annual Flag Education Program on May 21st at Noon in Lima at Post 282. A great Program and full attendance is anticipated. All are welcome. The 7th District Convention will be June 10th in Newark, NY.

8th District Commander Van Patten welcomed all to the District and reminded everyone that it is currently ahead of District 7 in membership, and intends to continue as such. Letter writing and dues reminders have been instrumental in getting membership numbers up. District Convention will be June 17 at the Post in Blaisdell NY. June 16th will be a District Golf Tournament at the Concord Crest CC in Concord, NY. It is open to all and forms are available.

Detachment Commander Ruthven then spoke, and commented on the great turnout and the historic comradeship between 7 & 8. He congratulated both Districts on their membership, which represents 35.6% of the entire Detachment. Person to person contact is the key, which is being proven in District 8. The Commander then spoke about reporting and communicating, and the importance of both, as well as a number of other subjects (see report attached). Share your numbers with your Post, we are part of them, and they should be aware of what you do.

Jerry Ketchum spoke on behalf of the American Legion Riders, and their inaugural year in 1993. There are currently over 2,000 chapters, and growth continues at about 40 per month. The Riders promote the Programs of the American Legion, and exist to assist Veterans and the Community. Members of the Riders must be a member of the Legion, Sons, or Auxiliary, which makes it a good membership tool. The process for starting a Chapter was discussed, as well as its emphasis and success with the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

2nd Leading Candidate for National Sons Commander, Greg "Doc" Gibbs, was introduced. At the Reno Convention he hopes to become the Leading Candidate, which would lead to his potential election in Minneapolis in 2018. Until the Reno Convention, his campaign is really just now within the State. His fundraising efforts will be at the grass roots level, and no huge events are planned. He will make himself available to anyone if he is available. Doc mentioned that he is looking forward to the 100th Anniversary Year of the American Legion, and that there are rumors that there will be a push to have a 10,000 man march in France in March of 2019 to celebrate. Stay tuned for details. Doc explained his "What's Up Doc" slogan, and how it renews the memories and service of his Father. Campaign Pins and Shirts are available on the Detachment Website, and Doc stressed his appreciation for everyone's support now and over the years.

Advisor Bill Crane stressed the importance of getting your Consolidated Report Data to your Post, as you are a part of the Post and need your support. It educates your Post as well on what you do. Maury Arthur thanked all for the thoughts and prayers during his recent illness.

Jim Coates presented Certificates of Appreciation to District Commanders Jerry Toepper and Tim VanPatten, for their dedication and service to the Sons. A review of details for both the Homecoming on June 10th and State Convention in July were discussed. All were encouraged to register for the Convention as a County. Candidates for Detachment positions in the new year were mentioned: Jim Parks will be running to continue as Detachment Chaplain; Tim VanPatten will be running for the first time to replace Jim Coates as Detachment Vice Commander 7&8; William Clancy from Long Island City will be running for Detachment Commander, and sends his regrets for not being able to attend.

For the Good of:

Detachment Chaplain Jim Parks mentioned that it is important to notify him when there is serious illness and/or deaths that need to be shared. His info is on the Website.

American Legion College is open to all Legion Family members, and all are encouraged to get leadership applicants or those who could be applicants, interested in attending.

A question was raised about the absence of an on-line version of the Consolidated Report on the Website, and also if more fill-able forms could be put on the site, and that additional features be available for them. In response it was stated that the Consolidated Report is a National Form, and is not doable at this time. It can be done on mysal.org, but it does not get channeled to the State. We therefore do not encourage their use. Webmaster Gabe Cinquegrana also stated that the version of Adobe Acrobat you have makes a difference as to features available for documents, and they had a further discussion in more detail after the meeting.

7th District VAVS Representative Gabe Cinquegrana encouraged members to contact their District VAVS Rep and/or local VA to determine needs and projects the Sons can become involved in. In addition, Squadrons should be encouraged to make a line-item in their budgets for VA projects/funding.

The meeting was then adjourned at 2:15pm without opposition, and with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Gabe Cinquegrana, Adjutant

7th and 8th Districts Get-together

April 30, 2017

Belmont, NY

I would like to touch on a few items that I feel are important to our success.

Membership – Congratulations to both the 7th and 8th Districts, you are over the 90% goal. Together you make up the largest two Districts in the Detachment with 10,582 members or 35.6%. Your leadership is important to the growth of the Detachment. Now the hard part, the last 10% requires some personal contact from your Squadron members. Personal connections are a must - phone, email or a visit works.

Reporting – Last year only 33% of our Squadrons turned in a report, I hope we will do better this year. The due date has passed to be judged for Detachment awards, however it is not too late to submit a report for the numbers to be set into national.

Now that this report is finished do something with the information. Tell your legion family, your community but most importantly tell your members what you are doing. Use this one page report form as a "to do" list for your Squadron.

Education through Communication – Throughout my 37 years with in the American Legion Family, I have seen our strengths and weaknesses. I have seen what makes a strong and productive Squadron that gets our members involved! Educating our members on who we are and what we do. With only 10% of your members attending a meeting you have to find a way to reach the other 90%. We need to communicate by Facebook, your website, email and newsletter.

Social Media – Spread the word we have a great website and face book page. Get our members involved in our social media; ask them to sign up for email notifications of what's happening in the Detachment. Squadron should be signed up for mysal.org. This is a great tool for the commander and adjutant change member addresses, add members date of birth and email address.

Department Family Homecoming – A great weekend is being planned for June 9th and 10th. Registration forms are on the Department and Detachment websites with a deadline of May 25th.

Detachment Convention – Convention information including housing forms are on line a deadline of June 1st. It's still not too late to donate to NEF, CWF or OCW and the convention provides a perfect opportunity.

Thank you, the members, of the 7th and 8th Districts for your past, present and future support provided to me and the Detachment of NY.

J. Bruce Ruthven
Detachment of NY Commander