

The Hub Monthly

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Permit # 133
Crestview, FL 32539

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Return Service Requested



January 2010

For God & Country

Volume 27

Post Officers 2008-2009

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|-----------------|-------------------|
| Commander | Rob Davis |
| 1st Vice | Debbie Jimison |
| 2nd Vice | Glenn Rhyne |
| 3rd Vice | Robert "OZ" Osmon |
| 4th Vice | Don Lee |
| Finance | Maryanne Neumann |
| Service Officer | vacant |
| Historian | Frank Jimison |
| Sgt. at Arms | Jim Griffin |
| Chaplain | T.K. Johnson |
| Adjutant | Maryanne Neumann |
| Judge Advocate | Kenneth Bundrick |

American Legion SAL's Officers 08-09

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Commander | Rob Breeden |
| 1st Vice | David Wagner |
| 2nd Vice | Chris Richardson |
| Adjutant | |
| Finance | Aaron Blocker |
| Chaplain | Bryan Hope |
| Sgt at Arms | Stephen Crooks |

Auxiliary Officers 2008-2009

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| President | Ann O'Connor |
| 1st Vice | Donna Hinesley |
| Secretary | June Easterwood |
| Treasurer | Patricia Thomas |
| Chaplain | Lil Johnson |
| Sgt. at Arms | Linda Martens |
| Historian | Teresa O'Hara |
| Exec. Committee | Pam Davis |
| | Laurel Garrison |
| | Linda Osmon |

American Legion Riders 08-09

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Director | Laurel Garrison |
| Asst. Director | Robert "OZ" Osmon |
| Secretary | Sherry Richardson |
| Treasurer | Ann O'Connor |
| Sgt at Arms | David Price |
| Chaplain | Lil Johnson |
| Road Captain | TK Johnson |
| Asst. Road Cptn. | Phil Bahm |
| Historian | Isabelle "Izzy" Jenson |
| Safety Rep. | Brian Cunha |

From the Desk of the Commander

Hard to believe but a New Year is starting which means you must renew your membership for 2010 by the end of the month. We will have a new entry system in place in January so you will have to purchase a card or be buzzed in to enter the social quarters after it is installed. More on this once everything is put into place, but I know all of you will be waiting to see how it works.

The upgrading of the bar is complete and I would like to thank "Oz" and Brian for there hard work. They donated most of the material and all of the labor to make the improvements. Frank Jimison has been busy making the repairs to all the damage that was done to the Post during the break in over Thanksgiving weekend. Thanks for all your hard work Frank. I would appreciate if the members would tell all of them "thanks" if you see them around the Post.

To everyone that made this past year a success, Legion members, Auxiliary, SONS and Riders I want to give you all a special "thank you" from me. We could not have had as successful a year as we did with out all your hard work.

Our monthly clean up is January 16th at 9:00 am so please come out and give us a hand. It's hard to keep the Post looking great when we only get the same five people to help.

Here's to an even better year in 2010.
For God and Country
Rob Davis
Commander



Newsletter & Calendar NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!!!!

You can now download the Calendar & Newsletter online at www.americanlegionpost75.org . If you are able to do this, and would like to stop receiving them by snail (USPS) mail, please email us at legion@post75.gccoxmail.com to help keep our Post cost down. Thank you!

*Excellent Veterans information found at
www.floridavets.org.index.asp*

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Hub Booster Program

Thanks Boosters! A \$15.00 donation gets your name here! Email me at editor@americanlegionpost75.org Our sponsors are:

Billy Becknell(PC) to 11/09

Cmdr. Rob Davis to 11/09

Vincent Grund to 4/10

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2nd Vice Notes

Hey Everyone,

What a busy holiday month we had! Great Bands and holiday cheer. Here is to a prosperous New Year with many blessings upon us all!

God Bless,

Rhino

Hub Monthly Updates

Effective this October, the new contact email to submit articles, ad requests, birthdays or to contact me in regards to the newsletter will be editor@americanlegionpost75.org. The cutoff for these submissions is the 15th of each month for the following newsletter edition.

If you are interested in placing your business ad in the Hub, please email me for rates and sizes. At this time, we will not be placing political ads in the Hub Monthly. We can design your add for the hub at no additional cost and will submit proofs for your approval prior to print. If your ad is presently running we will be collecting for your fees for the year in the next few months. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Also, please support our Hub Booster program. This program helps defer costs of the newsletter, which in turn, helps relieve some financial fees for our Post.

Marie Bundrick

Hub Editor

editor@americanlegionpost75.org

1st District Commander

Constantly checking online sites throughout the 1st District to see who is doing what and when. We are 1st for a reason and it shows when websites just like this are promoting a positive impact to so many veterans – past, present and future. Easy to surf around. Thank you for extending this service to those online. Keep on marketing the American Legion, area activities and keeping our Veterans informed.

Steve Shuga

1st District Commander

Auxiliary Notes

Happy New Year to all!

I hope you all had a blessed Christmas. It is time to get together and decide the direction of Unit 75 in the coming year. Our meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Please do your best to attend.

For God and Country

Ann O'Connor

President Unit 75

A Wounded Soldiers Wish - By Ken Olsen - December 3, 2009

Days after losing his limbs in an Easter Sunday roadside bomb attack, 22-year-old infantryman Brendan Marrocco told his medical team at Walter Reed Army Medical Center he had one goal: to walk under his own power by the time his combat infantry brigade returned from Iraq.

Such a goal seemed impossible. Two weeks earlier, an armor-piercing roadside bomb had blown off both of the New York soldier's arms and his left leg. His right leg was mangled beyond repair. His body was severely burned, and one of his eyes was seriously damaged in the enemy attack. His mother, a nurse, couldn't picture Brendan standing, much less walking, in a matter of six months, when the 27th Infantry Regiment was scheduled to return to the United States. It was hard to believe the private first class had survived at all. "I had a hard time processing this," Michelle Marrocco remembered of the moment she learned of her son's goal. "But if that's what he needed to get going"

Yet when the 2nd Battalion of the 27th Infantry Regiment came home to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, Brendan was standing, walking and saluting his fellow soldiers. "People genuinely marvel at his resiliency," said Brendan's father, Alex, who joined other family members in accompanying Brendan to Hawaii for his American Legion-assisted reunion in mid-November. "They saw him at his worst. To see him go from that condition to where he is today has to be extraordinary.

Lt. Rich Kilcoyne, Brendan's platoon leader in Iraq, puts it this way: "Everyone who meets him – they are in awe of him. He inspires them."

This courageous soldier inspired The American Legion, as well, which went to work on his behalf after learning his wish. The Legion reached out to Mercy Medical Airlift, American Airlines, the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Helping Hands for Freedom and, of course, members of the organization. They, along with a rental car company that has asked to remain anonymous, helped make it possible for Brendan, his brother Michael, and his parents to spend 11 days with the soldiers and families of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company and the entire 2nd Battalion. The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program covered lodging expenses for the family in Hawaii.

Hawaiian Homecoming

Most of Brendan's fellow soldiers had not seen him since he and two other badly wounded soldiers – Cpl. Michael Anaya and Sgt. Justin Minisall – were loaded into a helicopter 145 miles north of Baghdad. Many of Brendan's comrades assumed he wouldn't survive.

When Brendan arrived at the airport in Honolulu, he expected a few of his buddies would be there to meet him. Instead, his entire platoon plus several other soldiers from Alpha Company stood at the airport gate, along with the battalion commander and his wife and the Alpha Company commander. They greeted Brendan with a round of applause.

Uncertain how to put such a moment into words, the soldier simply said of the reunion: "It was great." Later, he joined the 2nd Battalion for its early-morning 4-mile training run through Schofield Barracks, the Waianae Mountain Range hovering in the background. "My platoon pushed me the whole way in my wheelchair," Brendan explained. "That was incredible. Not only did I get to see everybody, but we were able to have conversations and catch up."

Brendan was standing and walking an hour later when Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., commander of the 25th Infantry Division, promoted him from private first class to specialist and praised him for his service. Brendan and his fellow soldiers of the post-9/11 generation volunteered for military service, knowing well they almost certainly would see combat. That is what sets them apart from the majority of their civilian peers, Caslen said.

Toward the end of the promotion ceremony, Brendan stepped to the microphone and shared a few words with the 2nd Battalion. That night, they celebrated with a luau that included the Marrocco family.

Alpha Company also gathered for a private memorial service for Anaya, who died from the injuries he received in the same roadside bomb attack that took Brendan's limbs. Anaya's mother had personalized Bibles for each member of the company; she and the corporal's sister gave each of the approximately 100 members of the company one of the Bibles during the service.

"Cpl. Anaya was definitely the leader among his peers," Kilcoyne said. "You could ask Anaya to do anything. And a lot of younger soldiers would go to him for advice. I could not say enough about him."

The reunion was capped by a redeployment ceremony for Brendan's brigade and a Purple Heart ceremony. Brendan's father was struck by the unfurling of the flags and sharing the moment with families of other Purple Heart recipients, "I didn't realize there were that many soldiers injured." Following the ceremony, Alex Marrocco presented Carmelo Anaya an Honor and Remember flag, in recognition of his fallen son.

For the Marrocco family, the journey to Hawaii was about more than the ceremonies, memorials or even the fulfillment of Brendan's wish. It was a chance to meet and thank the soldiers directly responsible for saving his life.

"If those three people, Lt. Kilcoyne, the medic – Matthew Kenney – and their Iraqi interpreter had not done what they did, I don't think Brendan would have survived," Alex said.

Healing, Looking Ahead

As the reunion drew to a close, Brendan's unit took a hard-earned leave before beginning training for its next mission. Minisall, who is enduring his own difficult healing in a Warrior Transition Unit after two combat tours in Iraq, hopes to recover to the point where he can rejoin 2nd Platoon

Brendan and his family, meanwhile, headed back to Walter Reed and months of rehabilitation. A few days after the reunion with his outfit, Brendan underwent his 13th surgery, another arduous step in his journey from the brutal attack 145 miles north of Baghdad to Schofield Barracks and his life ahead.

"He is in pain everyday," his father said. "And yet, he tries to do more than is asked of him every day."

Brendan approaches it with the simple, straightforward determination that few believed would lead to him to walk again in time to see his fellow troops in Hawaii.

"I don't give up when I'm tired," he says. "I don't give up when I'm in pain. I try and fight through everything."