

SEABREEZE

THE AMERICAN LEGION NEWPORT HARBOR POST 291



MAY- JUNE, 2020 ♦ POST 291

THE AMERICAN LEGION NEWPORT HARBOR POST 291



AL POST 291



ALA UNIT 291



SAL SQUADRON 291



ALYC

The American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291 Family



From your
Commander Jon Reynolds

A New Way of Living – Lifestyle Changes

As the world continues through the fifth month of this Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we hope all Post 291 Family members and employees are staying safe and healthy. Clearly, we're all learning a great deal from this experience, including new personal habits — along with a new lifestyle — that may persist indefinitely.

Annual Election of Post Officers Canceled; Current Officers to Remain in Place for Another Year

Most of you know by now that the annual election of Post officers has been canceled, and current Post officers will remain in place through Wednesday 30 June 2021. This action was approved by the Post 291 Membership at a Special General Meeting held on Wednesday 29 April, and was preceded by unanimous approval by the Post 291 E-Board at its Special E-Board Meeting on Monday 13 April. Further, this action was enabled by and in accordance with Post Bylaws Article 9.1.1. and California Corporations Code for Nonprofit Mutual Benefit corporations, Title 1, Division 2, Part 3, Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 7220.

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SEABREEZE

Official Publication of The American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291. Published monthly, Non-Profit Postage Paid Newport Beach, CA. Online Circulation 3,000. Editorial Policy: Submissions to the SeaBreeze are due by the 10th of each month for publication the following month. We reserve the right to edit any submission for the purpose of publication. Letters to the Editor must include name, address and telephone number. Names will be withheld upon request.

AMERICAN LEGION NEWPORT HARBOR POST 291

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Office 949.673.5070 Ext. 100 Email: admin@al291.com
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Production and Graphic Design, Mizka Brick
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Post Operations

Post 291 is Closed

Post 291 is still closed — and will be until further notice under the current “stay at home” California Department of Public Health Order. And, of course, the bar, restaurant, and banquets are closed as well until further notice. Similarly, all meetings, events, and entertainment at the Post are canceled until further notice. However, there are indications that some official restrictions may be eased in the near future. When that occurs, notification will be posted on the Post 291 website and will be sent out by Constant Contact email.

Marina is Open

The Post marina, however, continues to be open; and all slip renters — both wet slips and dry storage — have full access to use of their vessels.

Takeout Food Service Available

The Post takeout food service, which began on Saturday 21 March, has been very successful and continues to grow in volume and popularity.

- It provides an extremely valuable service for Post 291 Family members, other military veterans, and the community by making available meals that are affordable, nutritious — and exceptionally delicious;
- It enables many of our terrific employees to be gainfully and usefully employed; and
- It makes use of important resources of the Post — the Post 291 kitchen, along with a skilled meal preparation and production staff — to serve a vital membership and community need.

Post 291 Food and Beverage Manager Dennis Fitzpatrick, Chef and Kitchen Manager Ulises Dominguez, Wait Captain Camilo Sabogal, and Bar Supervisor Peter Lara — and their entire staffs — all deserve special accolades and recognition for their superb efforts and talents in making this operation run so smoothly and effectively.

The takeout food service is available from 12:00 noon until 6:00 pm daily, seven days a week; and the menu changes every couple of days. All items offered are very affordable and are extremely delicious. Unopened containers of alcoholic beverages are also available (only) to Post 291 Family members for purchase — including wine, beer, and mini-bottles of liquor. Our outstanding Post 291 employees have put all this together and continue to make it an extraordinary success. The takeout food service is open not only to our Post 291 Family members, but also to the public community. — Moreover, boaters

in Newport Harbor, including those on moorings or at anchor, can come tie up at the Post Guest Dock, then come up and purchase food and beverages to take with them.

KABC “Salute” to Post 291 on Eyewitness News

Post 291 was honored with a “Salute” by KABC / Channel 7 during its Eyewitness News telecast on Friday 7 May. The video is a couple of minutes long and features appearances by Post employees, Post Family members, and community customers — and provides well-deserved recognition of all those employees and customers who are making the takeout food service such a resounding success. Here is the link to the video on the KABC website. Or, pasting this address into your browser should also work:

<https://abc7.com/community-events/covid-19-crisis-shifts-vet-kitchen-into-pick-up-service-/6165145/>

Use of Post Parking Lot — Restrictions

Until the Post is allowed to reopen, there are additional restrictions in the use of the Post parking lot. The takeout food service is operating under the auspices of “regulatory relief” measures by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), and in compliance with rules for takeout food service by restaurants. Currently, the parking lot serves most importantly as a path to the takeout service; and the limitations, therefore, on parking lot activities and use are:

- No open containers of alcoholic beverages and no consumption of alcohol in the parking lot.
- It’s not a “picnic area.” — Takeout food and beverage customers must pick up their order and depart.
- Parking is available only for:
 - o Employees on duty
 - o Post Officers on official business
 - o Marina slip renters

— After the Post reopens, these rules are likely to change; and updated information will be provided.

Reopening Planning Committee

The recently established Reopening Planning Committee is hard at work exploring how the Post can safely reopen and operate when restrictions are lifted and at least limited services can again be provided. The Committee is chaired by Third Vice Commander Jim Updike and includes representation from each of the Post 291 Family organizations. As additional official direction is received and more details become available, the Reopening Planning Committee will present recommendations to the E-Board for further action; and the Post Membership will be informed on the Post website and with Constant Contact emails.

CARES Act Loan from SBA for PPP

Under the second round of appropriations for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act — and thanks to the diligent efforts of Finance Officer Bob Wine and Manager of Administrative Operations and Accounting Tracey Kleimeyer — the Post secured a forgivable loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA) for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). This very important loan will enable the Post to continue fully paying our Post employees for two more months.

Membership Activities

National American Legion

National American Legion, at its National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting on Wednesday 8 April, canceled the 2020 National Convention and directed that all current National American Legion Officers are to remain in place until 2021. In addition, the NEC and the National Adjutant recommended that all Departments and Posts also cancel 2020 annual elections and for current officers to remain in place until 2021.

Department of California

Department of California has not yet canceled the 2020 Department Convention because current Department Bylaws do not permit this action. Therefore, Department has sent out a ballot to all Posts requesting expedited approval of a Department Bylaws amendment that would enable cancellation of the 2020 Department Convention and further actions related to continuation of Department officers.

Memorial Day Ceremony at Post 291 by Webinar

Pacific View Mortuary has canceled for this year the annual Memorial Day ceremony in which Post 291 is normally a major participant. And under the current “stay at home” order of the California Department of Public Health, the Post must cancel its usual on-site Memorial Day ceremony as well. However, a “virtual” Memorial Day service is planned for 11:00 am Monday 25 May, the National Memorial Day holiday. The link to the

GoToWebinar videoconference will be published on the Post 291 website at www.al291.com and will be sent out to all members by Constant Contact.

VEAF Campaign

Service Officer Chase Wickersham has established another fundraising campaign for the Veterans Emergency Assistance Fund (VEAF) that runs through Memorial Day on Monday 25 May. Donations are strongly requested to support this vital service for military veterans in need. And as part of the campaign, donors are encouraged to submit names of deceased veterans for posting remembrances on the Memorial Day Tribute page of the Post website.

Membership Renewal

Please renew your Post 291 membership! Although the Post is temporarily closed because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, membership dues are critical to the continued support of the VEAF service to needy military veterans and to the takeout food service. Your membership renewal is essential in ensuring that Post 291 can carry on its support and service to our fellow military veterans.

Other Events and Meetings

Other normally scheduled annual events at the Post — including Fourth of July celebration — are under further study by the Reopening Planning Committee for cancellation or for possible limited activities. Additional information will be provided when available. All Post meetings will continue to be conducted by videoconference using the GoToWebinar platform — very skillfully managed by Adjutant Mike Berdine, who serves as “Organizer” for the Post GoToWebinar service.

Hope to see you all soon at the Post! In the meantime, please follow good hygiene practices and stay safe and healthy!

For God and Country!

Jon Reynolds
Commander
Newport Harbor Post 291 of The American Legion



Flag Day is celebrated on June 14th.
It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress.



Letter from the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 291,

Timothy Sullivan, Commander

SAL SQUADRON 291



Greetings to you all from the Sons of the American Legion. It is my sincere hope that you are all healthy and well as we work through these difficult times. I pray that our leadership demonstrates the courage, tempered by wisdom, worthy of their positions, as we all move forward nationally, locally, and as

an organization.

As I realize that I am beginning my 4th term as Commander of Squadron 291, I am thinking toward the future and the leaders that we have and who might take this mantle in the future. Leadership is a tricky thing. Not everyone can be a leader. Not everyone IS a leader. But no one can be a leader without those who will follow. Cultivating those that will follow is part of the task of a true leader. You must be proactive and not reactive. You must be able to make decisions and provide direction. A leader does not wait for things to happen, a leader anticipates what will happen and takes action to prevent it or take advantage of it. You must be determined not to make mistakes, but able to adjust and move forward when you do. Fear has no place in true leadership.

My personal leadership style is simple. I look at what is and then begin to seek improvements moving forward and imagine how things could be. I begin by having a vision. When I began as the Commander of the Sons, I did not want the job, but others saw in me that I had a vision for where we could go and what we could do. What we should do. You can not lead without a vision. The vision lets you see past any roadblocks and interference to the goals that you've set for yourself and the organization. If you are simply reacting to what is happening around you and managing chaos, then you are a manager, but not a leader.

A leader seeks solutions to problems and not simply how to manage them. A leader shows courage and takes risks. A leader is not comfortable "in the box", but instead realizes that many of his answers are outside of the box. A large part of finding solutions is surrounding yourself with those smarter than you with different experiences in life. That is how you find many solutions. This is what I've done with our Executive Board. I'd say every one of our board members is smarter than I and each comes with life experiences that differ from mine, making their input invaluable. I respect their input and opinions. The vision does not get fulfilled without the ability to recognize the talents of others and allow them to rise up and reach their own true potential. As a team we improvise, we adapt, and we overcome.

We are strong as an organization, because our core is strong. Our strong core has led to a fantastic network of strong volunteers. As an organization, we've had over one third of our body volunteer at some point, each to their ability and availability, but all with the heart to honor their fathers and grandfathers. Each one with a determination and heart to make a difference. It is not a competition. Each contributes what he can and together we are a mighty force. We will still give \$100,000 this year in spite of being shut down. We will have to aggressively fund raise next year to continue that pace, but I have a few ideas and it helps knowing that we have such a great group of men on our team. We've got this.

I don't know who will eventually rise up from the board to take my place. I don't know which of you will rise up to take their place. But as I look at the talent and dedication that you all bring with you, I'm proud to be your Commander and I know that we have a fantastic pool of talent well into the future.

We are the proud Sons of a proud generation. Our heroes are smiling down upon us. Thank you.

The Sons of the American Legion

FOUNDED IN 1932 TO HONOR THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF LEGIONNAIRES



ALA UNIT 291

Letter from the Auxiliary Unit 291

Cindy Edes, Secretary

The last time we wrote for the Sea Breeze, things were status quo. We had several successful fund raising events like the Sweethearts Ball and a very successful blood drive. We were looking forward to upcoming events like envelope stuffing for our annual poppy fundraiser, officer elections and Convention. Then, the Covid-19 Pandemic arrived and it all came to a screeching halt. The Post was shut down and for the time being, major events were cancelled. However, as Plato said, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention," and we needed to create ways to keep moving forward.



The Post opened up for drive through meals and beverages and also provided an avenue for people to donate meals to veterans in need. The Auxiliary also found creative ways to keep our programs active. Several members took it upon themselves to stuff poppy envelopes at home. In all, over 7000 envelopes went out to the Legion families. These envelopes contained two "in remembrance" cards. These cards are normally placed on the mirrors and windows of the bar. Dana Johnston and Bobbie Renaghan made poppy boards to display them at the entrance to the Legion parking lot on weekends. All donations we collect in the month of May go directly to our veterans.

The wife of a Legionnaire sewed over 3000 cloth masks, some with patriotic material provided by Lily Romanow. These masks were distributed to our first responders and military personnel. Lastly, we are pleased to announce we are teaming up with STEP (Support the Enlisted Project) to help with a food drive the third week of May by having a collection site in the parking lot. STEP is expecting to pass out 300 boxes of non-perishable food on May 28th. We feel honored to help our military families by collecting food.

We may be in fact closed down, but the passion we have for serving others has not dampened our spirits. We continue to live up to our motto "Service before Self."

Cindy Edes
Unit 291 Secretary



OUR MISSION

In the spirit of service, not self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

Comments

Bob Wine, Finance Officer



All things considered, our Post is doing pretty well. Although our restaurant, bar and banquet business has been shut down, we still have the marina operations, membership dues, and our amazing drive-thru service to help sustain us. We've managed to keep all of our employees on the payroll, except for a few who decided that the expanded unemployment benefits are too generous to resist, but we expect them back after we reopen, whenever that happens. In the meantime, it's reassuring to

see how some essential functions are being carried out under these unusual circumstances. Some examples that you might not notice are:

- Membership operations, supported by Jeff Gottfredsen, have to continue. Dues must be collected, cards mailed, and questions from members answered. Jeff comes into the office for a few hours almost every day to handle these functions.
- Accounting and bookkeeping are essential to keeping the Post operating, as bill-paying, payroll, financial reporting, cash flow projections, banking, and other office duties don't stop. Office Manager Tracey Kleimeyer and I work on these at the office three days a week.
- Veterans support activities continue under the leadership of Service Officer Chase Wickersham, with lots of help from Chaplain Ken Wilson.
- The executive board, house committee and other special committees keep to their regular schedules using online meeting programs. We've chosen a program called "Go To Meeting", which suits our purposes pretty well.
- Website communications are especially important now, and are very ably handled by Mizka Brick and Adjutant Mike Berdine.

I could go on and on, but you get the picture. A lot of activities are still going on (using safe procedures, of course), keeping things together and planning for that happy day when we can all get together again at the Post.

Take care.

Bob Wine

American Legion Boys State/Nation

Jim Updike, Third Vice Commander



One of the most respected educational programs of government instruction for U.S. high school students.



As we reported in the last issue of the SeaBreeze, we had 29 candidates for 25 delegate positions to this year's California Boys State. The interview dates of March 21 and 22 were set, the young men had supplied us with their resumes, the interview dates and times were confirmed and then...

The Coronavirus reared its ugly head. Social distancing became the watchword which, of course, meant that interviewing the young men candidates in person was out of the question. However, the intrepid Post 291 Boys State Committee was not going to be intimidated and being ever resilient and resourceful, the committee established a conference call set-up and proceeded to complete the interviews via phone. While not the ideal method of conducting the interviews, the committee was still able to select 25 delegates and 4 alternates.

Unfortunately, it was all for naught because on April 5, California Boys State was cancelled. Needless to say, there was a great deal of disappointment all around. In spite of the disappointment, however, the young men selected by Post 291 as delegates at least have the knowledge that they were selected.

I want to once again acknowledge the members of the Post 291 Boys State Committee who volunteered their time and expertise to do the interviews. As you can well imagine, it was not an easy task to be on a telephone from 9 in the morning till 6 in the evening interviewing young men who desperately wanted to participate in Boy's State.

- Fran Capitanio
- Jon Kurtz
- Jim Moss
- Julie Roberts
- Rick Sundell
- Ken Wilson

Reopening Committee

While we are still constrained from using our Post, we know that the current situation will not last forever. At some point, hopefully in the not too distant future, we will once again be able to enjoy the company of our fellow Legionnaires, Auxiliary, SALs and ALYC friends at our idyllic location.

Of course we do not know when that will happen but we can be reasonably certain that it will not happen all at once and, as we phase into reopening, we

recognize that it will not be business as usual. Toward that end in an effort to be prepared, Commander Reynolds formed a Reopening Committee chaired by our 3rd Vice Commander, Jim Updike and made up of volunteers from the Post, Auxiliary, SALs and ALYC.

The committee was given the following scope to guide it as it builds plans for reopening: “Establish a flexible plan to accommodate the gradual reopening of the Post to Members and Guests while maintaining the safety of our Members, their guests and our Staff as well as complying with the State and local guidelines”.

The committee will be creating action plans to address such areas as:

- Health, Safety and Sanitation
- Dining Room Management and Banquets
- Providing for a positive Member and guest experience
- Marketing and Communication
- Financial Forecasting
- Upcoming Events

The committee is enthusiastic and is looking forward to the challenge by recognizing that this will be an opportunity to make our Post even better than it was before we were faced with this crisis.

The Members of the committee are:

- Dennis Fitzpatrick - Staff, Post 291
- Brian Fleming – Post 291
- Nick Giordano – Post 291
- Clover Hodgson – ALYC
- Art Jimenez – SALs
- Dana Johnston – Auxiliary
- John Long – SALs
- Kendall Madsen – Auxiliary
- Kevin Van Otterloo – Post 291
- Tommy Wheeler – ALYC
- Bob Wine – Post 291

If you would like to volunteer to help in the very worthwhile program, please contact,

Third Vice Commander
Jim Updike
jeusail@gmail.com

Homeless Veterans in Orange County

Chase Wickersham, Past Service Officer and Ken Wilson, Chaplain

Are there homeless veterans on the streets of Orange County? Sadly, there certainly are and as of April 6, they numbered 248 on the “by name list” which is updated each week by a coalition of agencies charged to address this homeless population. There are probably many more than 248, since a transient population is hard to count. Some homeless people always fall through the cracks and fail to get counted such as veterans living in a car or couch surfing. To some, 248 may seem like a huge number (and one is too many) but to those who have worked with the homeless, the number in Orange County is manageable compared with the 3800 homeless veterans in LA County.



The dedicated people who work with the homeless deserve tremendous credit. It takes patience and persistence to be successful. The homeless seem to fall into several categories – the temporary homeless who were hit with a crisis and suddenly found themselves on the street, the damaged who suffer from mental illness or some cognitive issues and can’t function without help, and the chronic homeless, most with significant mental illness and substance abuse issues, who have learned to survive on the street and won’t accept help or can’t get the help they need.

The highest priority is housing, getting people off the streets and into safe, secure shelter, preferably stable permanent housing. Consistent with Article 2 of our Post Constitution, we created the Veteran Emergency Assistance Fund (VEAF) to help veterans in need including homeless veterans and those at imminent risk of homelessness. The immediate objective is to find a bed and shelter, then a transitional housing program to start the behavioral changes needed for a stable solution, culminating in permanent supportive housing where the services are there to keep a veteran housed successfully. The VA plays an important part by providing rent subsidies and social services through the VASH program. When the VA can’t help or VA assistance is delayed, AL291 and the VEAF can fill the gap.

The VEAF provides financial resources when other agencies and the VA are unable to respond. The VEAF will provide a motel room when shelter beds are not available, transportation, if needed, and food or supplies. Often, we can prevent a family from falling into homelessness with rent assistance or help paying a few bills. We ask each client to fill out an application to verify their veteran status and assess their need. We ask tough questions about their finances and cash situation, we call other agencies who have helped them in the past for advice, we try to figure out what is needed immediately and we ask for a plan for the future. After all, we are making an investment and we want to see a return. We can’t help everyone but we try to find a solution when a veteran calls. Often it takes two or three agencies to work together to come up with the money and, as the largest veteran organization in the County, we should offer the leadership within the veteran provider community to make this collaboration work. We also are forced to reject many applications. If the veteran is not willing to change or the facts can’t be confirmed, we may refer the veteran to another agency and not get involved. VEAF is vital to our homeless veterans and we need your generous donations to keep it going.

Chase Wickersham,
Past Service Officer

Ken Wilson,
Chaplain

POST 291 Drive-Thru

Initially, takeout food service will continue its current operation; there will be only outdoor dining; the bar itself will remain closed, but beverages may be ordered through the wait staff. Details on reopening — along with associated new rules and regulations for Post Family members and employees to comply with health and safety requirements — will be provided as soon as they are approved and implemented.

In the meantime, the Post is still closed. Only employees on duty and Post Officers on official business are permitted inside the Main Building until further notice

Online Meetings

POST 291

The Post 291 General Membership meetings are held as a webinar.

We are providing a link and registration via Constant Contact to our members.

Check out meetings information in our calendar

www.al291.com/calendar



To update your email contact,
LEGION MEMBERSHIP
(949) 673-5070 Ext. 105
Email: membership@AL291.com

VETERANS RESOURCES

Fellow Veterans,
We have four local resources for our medical and related questions such as benefits, health issues and burial.

VA Hospital of Long Beach

Department of Veteran Affairs
Tel: 562.826.8000

Laguna Hills VA Clinic

23719 Moulton Parkway
Laguna Hills, CA 92653 - Tel: 949.587.3700

Anaheim VA Clinic

2569 W. Woodland Dr.
Anaheim, CA 92801 - Tel: 714.763.5300

Santa Ana VA Clinic

1506 Brookhollow Dr, Suite 100
Santa Ana, CA 92705 - Tel: 714.434.4600

Riverside National Cemetery

22495 Van Buren Blvd.
Riverside, CA 92518
Tel: 951.653.8417 · Fax: 951.653.5233

County Veteran Service Office

1300 South Grand Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92705 - Tel: 714.480.6555

County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative OCVMFC

Coordinator Jeff Pagano
Email: paganoj@uci.edu
Tel: 949.824.2435

Ken Wilson, Chaplain

Email: kenw49@hotmail.com
Tel: 949.230.2826

Chase Wickersham, Service Officer

Email: al291veteranassistance@gmail.com
Tel: 949.673.5070 Ext. 117



Pacific View Memorial Park Cemetery, Photo by Richard Frauenzimmer.



There are no upcoming events scheduled for the month of June at the Post, just a friendly reminder...

- Flag Day Sunday, June 14th
- Father's Day - Sunday, June 21st



American Legion Yacht Club COMMODORE'S CORNER

Commodore's Update

Bruce Batcheller, ALYC Commodore

Summer greetings from the bridge of the American Legion Yacht Club! Yes, we do have a summer season and we kick it off with our summer Sundowner's Race series, starting June 1st at 6:00PM. This traditional summer race series, sponsored for many years by ALYC, represents the first organized activity for the club since mid-March.



All interested racers, please sign up via the link on our web site alyc.com. Weather and pandemic permitting, we will still have 14 races this season. Each month will be a race series followed by an awards dinner. The first dinner is planned for July 6, so please cross your fingers that we get clearance to open the Post.

Next up is the Independence Day celebration at the Post and the Old Glory Boat Parade. While there is still uncertainty surrounding group activities in Newport Beach, we have petitioned the city to approve the permit for the parade. We know we can manage the parade even with social distancing restrictions, so we are hopeful the city will agree and all of us at Post 291 and ALYC cheer on our flag as we celebrate our nation's Independence Day.

In this year of cancelled events and missed opportunities, we have a lot on the schedule yet for the back half of the year. We have two open water regattas, monthly social events, general meetings, cruises to Catalina, and our annual Sail for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SVI). We are staying optimistic on fulfilling our fall schedule and getting all of you back together!

In the meantime, we are doing all we can to maintain open communication and connections. We are planning our first social event via Zoom video conference in June, and also hosting a New Member Orientation online. Our club sailboats, available to members who become certified skippers, have continued to be in use. We adopted more stringent cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and our members are happily cruising the harbor and enjoying some much-needed sun and time on the water. If you are interested in learning more about sailboat certification, please email portcaptain@alyc.com.

We are still processing new memberships, so if you would like to join alyc.com, please send inquiries to membership@alyc.com, or submit general questions to info@alyc.com.

ALYC is all about fellowship and building lifelong relationships with fellow veterans and families that enjoy being around or in the water. The quarantine has tested all of us, but these relationships are what helps us all through the tougher times. We appreciate all of you and can't wait to see your smiling faces and get that salt spray back in our eyes.

Fair Winds,

Bruce Batcheller
Commodore 2019-2020

Return to Duty Hits Close to Home

Clover Hodgson, ALYC Communications

One of our members recently discovered that the fine print at the bottom of an officer's commission relating to the "lifetime commitment" is legitimate and the military actually means it. Jack "Wyatt" Hoag, ALYC member and chair of our Dive Club, was recalled to Active Duty status after 14 years of retirement as a Colonel in the U.S. Army.

Col Hoag was contacted in late March to see if he could support the COVID-19 situation in San Antonio, Texas. Recalling the Oath of Office he signed in 1977 and his sense of duty, he agreed and began prepping for a May 4 deployment. His wife, Gesche, said he was sure they wouldn't take him since he had been retired for such a long time. He also told her it would be six-month deployment. "Well, we will see," she responded when he broke the news. "I did not want to stop him. He was excited about helping with the current situation," she said. As an active duty wife, she has done this before. She can handle anything that comes up. It's easier on the family this time, as their daughter, Devin, is now an adult. It's also comforting that he's only in San Antonio and not the Middle East, she says.

While uniforms aren't required for retiree recalls, Col Hoag went to work purchasing uniforms anyway. "There's a sense of pride in wearing the uniform and representing all warriors serving their country," said Col Hoag. "I didn't keep any of my old uniforms, but I did buy the exact same size I have always worn, and they fit, (which was) quite surprising." One difference, Col Hoag reports, the new boots are outstanding. They wear like tennis shoes.



Col Wyatt Hoag, Gesche Hoag, Clover Hodgson, ALYC Communications, Bruce Batcheller, ALYC Commodore.

After arriving on May 4 for a 179-day tour of duty, Col Hoag began a 14-day quarantine and just started processing into his regular duties this week. Col Hoag told of the unique experience in that so much of it was done virtually on his iPad and over the phone. It was very different from the old days. Also different is that Fort Sam seems empty; missing the hustle and bustle of a major military installation. They now have vending machines that dispense scrubs to the medical providers and ID cards that log them into any DoD computer station with the appropriate access. "Technology has radically changed since I left," he said.

Col Hoag is working in the logistical shop at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, which is the only tier one trauma center in the Department of Defense (DoD) and the largest medical treatment facility in DoD. That said, do they have enough masks? "Yes plenty," says Col Hoag. "In fact, Brooke has the only two Army seamstresses who do nothing but make masks for the non-practitioner staff in the hospital since everyone is required to be masked at all times." He's also being tapped to help out in another directorate where some of his civilian and military acquired skills are being capitalized on. When asked, he's just happy to help fill the gaps caused by the current situation.

Among the things he's missing, of course his wife, Gesche, his daughter, Devin, and Mali, their new puppy, as well as his closest friends. "I (also) miss the sunsets from the patio at the Legion with a Manhattan in hand that's been custom blended by Ken."

Well, sir, the Legion misses you, too. We salute your service to the Army and our country Col Hoag, and are honored to have you represent ALYC and Post 291. We look forward to your return in November.

A little about BAMC

- Largest DoD inpatient facility and only DoD Level I trauma center in United States with 425 inpatient beds and 32 operating rooms for inpatient and ambulatory surgery; providing trauma care to both DoD beneficiaries and the local community
- Largest DoD Outpatient Ambulatory Surgical Center
- DoD's only American Burn Association verified Burn Center
- DoD's only Bone Marrow Transplant Unit and Hematology/Oncology Clinic (ranking among the top cancer programs in the nation)
- High-tech Cardiac Catheterization Lab
- Center for the Intrepid provides full spectrum of amputee rehabilitation as well as advanced outpatient rehabilitation for burn victims and limb salvage patients with residual functional loss.
- DoD's only rooftop helipad for patient transport
- Renowned graduate medical education program (San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium – SAUSHEC) with 35 programs and over 600 residents in training. Our residents are among the top rated in the nation in board certification.



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