



AHWATUKEE AMERICAN LEGION POST 64

January 2024

<http://www.americanlegionpost64.com>



Commander—Brenda Smull

We are starting 2024 with great momentum and positive movement towards our goal of Veterans Helping Veterans. December was an active and busy month with Buddy Checks, Social Mixers, collaboration with other veteran service organizations, and an amazing Christmas Concert fundraiser organized by the Auxiliary.

I feel an immense amount of gratitude for the following 3 things (gifts) which are increasing at Post and Unit 64:

- 1. Connection-** Authentic, warm, and cohesive social bonding is strengthening the fabric of our community.
- 2. Awareness-** Increased exposure, visibility and PR of the benefits and value we provide to veterans, spouses, and the military community. There was an amazing amount of articles, pictures, and posts on Facebook, websites, the local newspaper, LinkedIn, and on the national Legion.org page.
- 3. Action-** Active engagement from members. More people are participating in activities and events. More members are asking how they can help with our mission.

These 3 gifts are bright examples of how we are supporting some of the key purposes of the American Legion that are listed in the *Preamble to the Constitution*:

- *To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation.*
- *To promote peace and good will.*
- *To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our mutual devotion to mutual helpfulness.*



12/20/2023 Meeting Minutes — Roddy Charlton

Commander Brenda Smull opened the meeting to 19 members and guests. **Chaplain Rebecca Schmidt** provided an invocation. **Sgt-At-Arms Mark Shillinger** conducted the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony. **Commander Brenda Smull** led the Pledge of Allegiance and recited the American Legion **Preamble** to the Constitution. Commander Brenda Smull asked to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the 11/15/2023 Post meeting as posted in the newsletter. A request for corrections or changes was made, and none were made. A vote to accept as printed was made and a second to approve the November Meeting Minutes as published.

Officer Reports: Second Vice Commander Al Hunter provided an update to Post membership. We have 137 Post members and have 65% membership renewal. The Post roster has been updated to reflect current membership with the help of **Service Officer Craig Annis**. He discussed the Challenge of Membership. Members fall into different participation categories: most members pay their dues and do not participate in Post activities and a smaller portion that are members who actively participate in Post activities. The success of our Post, and the challenge, is to have a larger active member engagement. Craig discussed a Post survey being sent out to members to provide feedback on areas for interest and improvement. He discussed the positive impact of the Buddy Check program in increasing participation. **Service Officer Craig Annis** discussed the status of the Buddy Check program. All Post members have been contacted. All but 17 were direct contact. A letter was sent to the few that were not directly contacted. He is asking for additional Post members to become Buddy Check Ambassadors and continue to make phone calls. A script has been developed and is available to use as a engagement guideline. Commander Brenda Smull announced that she has been contacted by American Legion National and an article will be published highlighting Post 64 Buddy Check Program. **Chaplain Rebecca Schmidt** discussed Post Sick Call. Post member James Wood is still in assisted living. Also, on our prayer list is Joe Hendrix, Jay's younger brother; Sean Brown, Lary's son and John's wife Barb Augustyn. **Finance Officer Jay Hendrix** discussed a check of \$250 was received from the ARC for Post support of the Arts and Craft fair. Thanks to the ARC for the funds. He also discussed that a Post budget for the 2023/2024 year has been developed and approved by the Executive Board and is now available to Post members on request.

Information Officer David Green discussed the updates to the Post website and engagement with Ahwatukee Foothills News with many articles published on Post activities by Post Commander Brenda Smull. **Sgt-At-Arms Mark Shillinger** discussed recent Honor Guard activities and the continuing need for new Post Color Guard / Honor Guard members.

New Business: **Service Officer Craig Annis** and **Second Vice Pete Meier** discussed the quarterly Street Cleanup Program. The cleanup will be conducted on the third Saturday of the third month. This will be a set day for the year. Volunteers will meet at 8:00 AM at the Safeway marked parking lot on 48th Street and Elliot Road. The required equipment of reflective vests, trash bags, pickers and doughnuts will be provided. Detail information and sign up will be sent out to all Post members with a cleanup day set for January 20th 2024. **Past Post Commander Rod Green** discussed that he is investigating Post support to a Little League Baseball Team. He also discussed his interest to continue support to the Post as a Member-At-Large. He will discuss these items with the Executive Board.

Chaplain Rebecca Schmidt conducted a raffle of four items she donated

Refreshments were provide by the Unit 64 Auxiliary **President Darlene Hunter** and **Post Second Vice Commander Pete Meier**.



First Vice Commander—Al Hunter

The current holiday season is a time of celebration but also a time of reflection, to count our blessings and acknowledge our achievements. The same is true for that of our organization. Now that we are closing out 2023, our focus is directed towards 2024 planning. The Post has committed to the cause of “Veterans helping Veterans.” This does not mean that we will be replacing any of the commitments this Post has accepted in the past but adding another element to that list. The intent is to address the growing needs of veterans. Although there are many agencies and organizations that provide services for them, there are many veterans who fall through the cracks or struggle through the maze of the service providers. We must also not forget the families. Membership is key to address our mission of “Veterans Helping Veterans.”

There are 2 categories of membership, active members (those who are currently up to date with their membership dues) and participating members (active members who participate in Post in Post activities). Currently our roster of active members stands at approximately 140. On the surface, subtracting those who have health and aging limitations. As of this past September, the Post had approximately 52 members over the age of 80. These numbers will continue to climb. The trouble is we have approximately 17 members who participate in Post’s activities including leadership positions.

We need to approach this issue on 2 fronts. First, we need to get younger, attracting younger members. That is in the works. Unfortunately, that takes time, time which we can’t afford. Second, we encourage our non-participating members to get involved. That provides a much shorter-term line.

Bottom line is we of Post 64 need to determine what kind of post we want to be. The number of homeless vets, those suffering physical and mental afflictions and those electing to omit suicide are growing. Obviously, the need is there to support those of our fellow Veterans. We need to step up.



Adjutant—Roddy Charlton

Student Awards Program: We are starting our Post Annual American Legion Student Award program for 2024. We provide awards to two students selected by each schools nomination committees, one boy and one girl. based on six qualities: (Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service) We provide awards to four local schools: Desert Vista High School/Roddy Charlton Coordinator; Mountain Pointe High School, Pete Meier Coordinator, Centennial Middle School, John Augustyn Coordinator and Altadena Middle School, Roddy Charlton Acting Coordinator. We are looking for a Post member to take this position for Altadena Middle School. The Awards are a Certificate, Bronze Medallion and a \$200 Cash Award for each of the High Schools award recipient. The funding of the Cash Award is provided by matching funds from the Charlie Roloff’s daughters and Post, \$200 for Mountain Point High School. Funding of \$400 will be provided by Chaplain Rebecca Schmidt for Desert Vista High School. The Awards are presented to the students by the Post Coordinator during a ceremony held in May. If you are interested in filling the Altadena Middle School position, please contact me at E-Mail: WRCinAZ@aol.com.

Sgt-At-Arms—Mark Shillinger

At the December 20th monthly general meeting, the colors were pre-posted and the Pow-Mia ceremony was performed.

On Thursday, December 7th, a flag lowering ceremony was conducted outside at the ARC. Rod Green played the bugle while the Color Guard marched to the flagpole and lowered the flag to half-staff. Rod then played Taps as the Color Guard saluted the flag to honor those who died on that day. Roddy Charlton displayed memorabilia of his Uncle Charles, who perished on the USS Arizona.

On Monday, December 11th, the Honor Guard was present at Emil Jansky's funeral mass and presented his wife, Denise with a burial flag in a wooden display case. Thank you, Pete Meier, for preparing the flag and case.

On Sunday, January 7th, at 1pm, there will be a celebration of life for Alice Maynard at the ARC, in the Main Hall. Alice was a devoted participant in all post 64 activities. The Honor Guard will post the colors at this event.

Wednesday January 17th will be the monthly meeting, at the ARC, at 4pm.

Wednesday January 31st, there will be a Social Mixer at the Native Grill; on Ray Road. Everyone is invited.

Note: We have had two other post members pass recently, Ron Rasmussen and Dave Shepard. It is unknown at this time if the family will request an honor guard presence at their services. ** Post 64 is in need of additional Color Guard members. This is a very rewarding activity that honors our flag and veterans. If you are interested in joining or have questions, please contact me at markshillinger@hotmail.com, or 520-433-0538.



Post Information/Webmaster—David Green

American Legion Post 64 has finished out the 2023 year strong with our monthly meetings, social mixers, and Ahwatukee Community events. We still need volunteers to assist in accomplishing our mission of Veterans Helping Veterans for the 2023-2024! If you are interested in getting involved and volunteering to veterans within the Ahwatukee community, please contact Brenda with your interest. I have been working on a new website design for the post. I hope to put the site into production/publication at the end of January/beginning of February. As the new year starts, my New Year's resolution is to do more to help veterans and assist Post 64 in accomplishing their goals. What are your New Year's resolution?

01/07- Alice Maynard's Celebration of Life 1PM-2PM @ ARC (Main Hall) Refreshments & drinks will be served.

01/17- Monthly Membership Business Meeting 4PM-5PM @ ARC. Camaraderie and Refreshments afterwards.

01/31- Veteran Social Mixer 5PM @ Native Grill

Chaplain—Rebecca Schmidt

As the old year comes to an end, let us ponder on what it has held for us. Let us be thankful for the rich experiences it gave us--for every sympathetic smile, for every tear, for moments which brought laughter's melody, for nature's loveliness, and for friendship's beauty. Let us also ask for forgiveness for thoughts and deeds unwise. As we stand on a threshold of a New Year, let us be thankful for the opportunity to stand and peer intently, eagerly beyond the door to so many challenges that lie ahead. May we have the courage, truth, and faith to meet them without flinching and thought of self. Amen.

WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Past member Emil Jansky passed on 24 November. Emil was a proud member of our Color and Honor Guard for many years. A photo of Emil leading our Color Guard at the Easter Parade was front and center at his funeral. Our Honor Guard did a most impressive Flag Presentation at his service. Please keep his wife Denise and family in your prayers.

Members Ron Rasmussen and Dave Shepard passed in December. Their Celebrations of Life will be after the Holidays. Please keep Bonnie Rasmussen and Mary Turner in your thoughts and prayers.

SICK CALL

Jay Hendrix's youngest brother Joe

Lary Brown's son Sean

James Woods

Lord, please keep them in your healing, loving care.

ALICE MAYNARD'S CELEBRATION OF LIFE

We miss you, Alice! Alice's Celebration will be at the ARC on Sunday, 7 January 2024, at 1 p.m. All are welcome.

SPECIAL DATES IN JANUARY

Jan 1 -- New Year's Day

Jan 15 -- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan 17 -- Persian Gulf War Began (1991)

Jan 27 -- Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)

Jan 31 -- Panama Campaign Ended (1990)

"My wish for you is that you continue to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness." Maya Angelou

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!





Service Officer—Craig Annis

We finished the first round of Buddy calls. Some contacts were emailed and some had information mailed to them. All 139 Post 64 have now been contacted. Our goal will now be to continue contacts going forward and hoping we can do this monthly.

The calls are having a positive response, we have had several members who were contacted come to our Post meeting and our Social. There are still about 12-15 Post Members that need to submit updated date of birth, phone numbers and/or email addresses.

We have had 8 additional members needing additional information or assistance.

Please advise if you know someone that might need a call or visit from a Service Officer



**American Legion Auxiliary
Unit 64 Ahwatukee**

President – Darlene Hunter

Tis the Season...

Our Merry Christmas Concert was a roaring success! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment – all I heard was compliments from the attending patrons. Our Auxiliary members who assisted in producing this event pulled together as a united team to insure a beneficial result: Support The Troops will be receiving a \$629 profits donation from Unit 64...all in service, not self.

Bev Shillinger, Judy Stephan and myself will be the Auxiliary representatives who will pair with Post 64's Roddy Charlton, Mark Shillinger and Jay Hendrix to comprise the Bingo Evaluation Committee. We'll be immersing ourselves immediately in the city and state requirements and meeting with Post 91's Tim Harvey to discuss any recommendations or pitfalls to avoid in conducting Bingo.

We'll have 7 new members joining us, starting in January. Our count now lies at 21 members. We may be helping the Jewish War Veterans service their Fry's donation sites during Memorial Day and Veterans Day in 2024. More information will be forthcoming once a schedule is provided.

Once again, our Secretary position remains unfilled. We cannot hold any meetings without a functioning Secretary to record meeting minutes. We'll simplify the process for any newly-appointed, novice Secretary. We need a volunteer!

Fa la la la la, la la la la ...

Darlene Hunter, President



January 2024 American Legion Post 64



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2	3	4	5	6
7 CELEBRATE <i>Alice Maynard</i> 1:00 pm	8	9	10 <i>Executive Meeting</i> ARC 4:00 pm	11	12	13
14	15 	16	17 <i>General Meeting</i> ARC Main Hall 4:00 pm	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 VETERANS SOCIAL NATIVE GRILL RAY ROAD 5:00 PM			

Post Officers

Commander	Brenda Smull	303-301-4429	bsmull@me.com
First Vice Commander	Al Hunter	480-326-4656	alhunter50@yahoo.com
Second Vice commander	Pete Meier	602-690-3361	peterhmeier@gmail.com
Adjutant	Roddy Charlton	480-993-6980	wrcinaz@aol.com
Finance Officer	Jay Hendrix	480-831-9121	jayhendrix@cox.net
Chaplain	Rebecca Schmidt	602-292-8401	rebeccacinaz@aol.com
Service Officer	Craig Annis	480-255-5622	craigannis@ymail.com
Sergeant-At-Arms	Mark Shillinger		markshillinger@hotmail.com
Information Officer	David Green	928-830-0085	david.a.greenjr@gmail.com



An honor to serve: veterans helping veterans



BY BRENDA SMULL
AFN Guest Writer

In the United States, Nov. 11 is the national holiday when we recognize our fellow citizens who have served their country in the military.

Veterans Day, unlike Memorial Day, is meant to appreciate the sacrifices of the millions of living veterans who raised their right hand and pledged to defend the U.S. Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

This year, Veterans Day has more meaning for me than usual.

With the active and brutal battlefields in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, I am acutely aware and distressed at the heavy price that is being paid by both military personnel and civilians during wars.

As a U.S. Army Veteran from the Gulf War, it my honor to serve as the Commander of Ahwatukee American Legion Post 64, which is focused on helping veterans and their families in our local community.

Now more than ever, we need to strengthen the social fabric of our society and in our neighborhoods and, in my opinion, this is best done by connecting and bonding with people in person with a sense of common purpose.

One of the things I miss most about my time in the military is the camaraderie and sense of shared values with fel-

low service members.

When in a foxhole together at the morning stand to during my deployment in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, it didn't matter what color your skin was or what your religious beliefs were. The only thing that mattered was that you were an American and believed in freedom, liberty, and our country's Constitution.

As part of our Post's Veterans Helping Veterans initiative, we are conducting Buddy Checks, where American Legion members are actively calling members to check in and see how they are doing. We are letting veterans know that we miss them and are thinking about their health and wellbeing.

This focus is in support of the American Legion's "Be the One" program, a suicide prevention effort which is addressing the growth health concern among those who served and are suffering with PTSD, TBI, or other debilitating issues.

American Legion Post 64 is Ahwatukee's sole Veterans Service Organization and we meet monthly (3. p.m. third Wednesday of the month) at the Ahwatukee Recreation Center (ARC).

This Nov. 11 you can visit with veterans from Post 64 at our table at the 19th Annual Ahwatukee Car Show on 4700 E. Warner Road.

Please visit our website at americanlegion64.com for more information on the many events and social activities we are hosting in the local area. ■

