Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
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The A-Team meeting on Jan. 22 at the ole 2nd Street Fire Station was very informative for those in attendance. Every veteran is welcome to attend these mostly administrative gatherings.

The main topic of the discussion on this day was the ability of veterans to take better care of themselves. Some do, but the majority doesn't. One tool developed by the VA is MyHealthyVet.com, a program designed to develop a baseline for the vet, and a permanent record of contacts with the VA. Medications and appointments for treatment become easier and quicker with less hassle, and according to the input to this conversation, can be vital in maintaining the health of many. This is not the same as the "Doctor in a box," which has justifiably come under massive criticism. This is more about having an outlet to provide the client with recommendations and other tools that may provide a better overall care.

If vets need assistance with this the fire station has two Internet-ready computers and personnel may be there as well to aid in this matter. To ensure this, please call Dave first at 879-3333.

The names of the sick and afflicted, though never totally complete, received extra prayers and thoughts from this group. Included among them were: Mike Schmaltz, Stephan Mahnkee, Pete Juarez, Tommy Bustamante, Steven Tobey, Lionel Gutierrez, Bill Martinez and Andy Herrera.

David Cuellar also mentioned a contact with Ceremonial President Dudley Byerley about parking concessions. That meeting is still in the future and will be announced when details are finalized.

A point of order was discussed for regular meetings and it was decided that rebuttals to any speakers will not be allowed during those times. Questions may be allowed during those sessions set up for them, otherwise the point/counterpoint uses up time and does not solve any potential problems.

It was agreed to recommend a change in the pillars at the courthouse to include only the names of veterans who served in a war theater of operations, including in those nearby but not in-country units actively supporting troops on the ground.

A new order of long-sleeved, red T-shirts has been ordered with the Veterans Helping Veterans logo on the front, although Felix Martinez will no longer be in charge of sales. His medical problems are first priority and a replacement will be found to continue this profitable operation.

A raffle has been scheduled for a two-piece, six-foot tall toolbox donated by Pep Boys with a value of $700. The large container is on wheels and only 150 tickets will be sold, at $5 each. The raffle will be held as soon as all the tickets are sold.

Cuellar reported the VA is actively seeking doctors for the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Gallup. The VA is being assisted in this matter by RMCH and County Commissioner Tony Tanner.

Cuellar also reported that the new Veterans Cemetery will not begin construction until Spring of 2017. Local politicians did not actively support this area, getting behind the Bayard area instead, which caused the local cemetery to be delayed almost a full year.

The next general meeting is in Don Diego’s on Jan. 29 and the next meeting of the A-Team is scheduled for Feb. 5 at the fire station.