



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46
NEWSLETTER
October, November and December, 2013

"In Memory of Those Who Served and to Honor Those Who Are Serving."

To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

The only possible way to fairly cover all the events which occurred during the past three months which either involved our military service personnel or had a direct impact upon our service personnel and our veterans would require issuing your newsletter at least once a week and then Post 46 would have to double, maybe even triple, the amount it pays to its Judge Advocate. Overseas, the rapidly developing crisis in Syria and the confused and contradictory reactions to it by the United States administration is distracting our attention from other hot spots around the globe such as Egypt, Benghazi, North Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. On the national scene, the trial of the Fort Hood killer, Nidal Hassan is finally over (although appeals are sure to follow) and veterans continue to face problems involving suicide, finding employment, gaining access to VA benefits and medical treatment, and even surviving attacks on the street from teen-age thugs. Closer to home, Post 46 continue to assist veterans looking for employment, the University of Michigan finally approves in-state tuition for veterans (while also doing the same for unauthorized immigrants), and rip-off artists continue to plague veterans charities.

With all this activity, no wonder that the summer months passed so quickly. While it is still summer, Post 46 has already designated the date and time of its annual Christmas Party at Webers to be December 7th at 12:00 noon. Please put this date on your calendar so that we can get together to both celebrate Christmas and commemorate Pearl Harbor on the same occasion. Further, if you would like to nominate or suggest a speaker for our annual party, please send your suggestions to Commander Duncan. Also, we make the annual request that you make any contributions you can afford to our Christmas Party funds so that Post 46 can continue this holiday tradition so much promoted and enjoyed by our late commander, J.J. Van Gasse.

The Calendar of Events follows this introductory letter. Please note the dates of these events and make an effort to participate if you are able to do so. All Legionnaires are invited to make some effort to participate in and contribute to at least one of them. Veterans Day on November 11th is, of course, the grand- daddy of them all. It is the one day of each year when veterans can commemorate and honor all of those veterans who have served before them. Although this date (marking the end of World War I) is not celebrated to any large extent by the civilian population, there is certainly no excuse for veterans to ignore it and not celebrate and commemorate it in one way or another. If you are unsure as to how and where you can participate in a Veterans Day celebration, please contact one of the Post 46 officers who will give you the dates and times of scheduled celebrations honoring our veterans. Also note the dates of our monthly Post 46 meetings and our luncheons at Classic Cup Café. These gatherings are conducted for the benefit of our members and it makes no sense for Post 46 members not to take advantage of them and participate.

If any Post 46 member feels that a particular news event might be of particular interest to our members and deserves some further attention in our newsletter, please let me know or send me a summary of the event which we can include in our next issue. Some of the news events contained in this issue were contributed by Post 46 members. I hope you all have pleasant memories of this summer to keep you warm as the days grow colder. Thank you for your support of Post 46 and its commitments to our community, our veterans and our military personnel serving on active duty.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| October 7 | Regular Post Meeting at 7:00 P.M.
Directors Room, Weber's Inn |
| October 13 | 2 nd District Meeting, 2:00 P.M.
Post 40, Monroe |
| October 16 | Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 A.M. |
| October 31 | Halloween |
| November 4 | Regular Post Meeting at 7:00 P.M.
Directors Room, Weber's Inn |
| November 11 | Veterans Day
Celebrations at many locations - ask your Post 46 officers |
| November 20 | Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 A.M. |
| November 28 | Thanksgiving |
| December 2 | Regular Post Meeting at 7:00 P.M.
Directors Room, Weber's Inn (Might be cancelled because of Christmas party a few days later so be sure to first check with Steve Duncan) |
| December 7 | Post 46 Christmas Party
Weber's Inn, 12:00, noon
Please bring unwrapped Christmas presents for Toys for Tots. |

December 18	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 A.M.
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Holiday Bingo, VA Hospital at 7:00 P.M.

LUNCHEON MEETINGS

As most of you know by now, our lunch meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Classic Cup Café on Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. The exact dates of these lunch meetings are listed above. It is an opportunity for all members to get together, relax, enjoy a meal and get to know other members of Post 46 in an informal setting. Many “regulars” continue to be well informed on the details of current events, particularly those involving veteran interests, and usually have a unified view as to how we should solve the problems of the world. Please try to join us from time to time and meet up with the “regulars.”

THE SYRIAN MERRY GO ROUND

You are all very familiar with the recent events taking place in Syria. These events have particular relevance to veterans because we all fully recognize and understand that any diplomatic efforts that the United States might undertake around the world must be supported by the full weight, abilities and sacrifices of our armed forces. In this modern day and age and depending upon the particular circumstances involved, the United States appears to have three political alternatives when a major international crisis takes place – to continue to act as the “policeman” of the world; to allow another major power such as China or Russia to take the lead in controlling or resolving the crisis; or to simply adopt a somewhat isolationist position, ignore the crisis and take no part whatsoever.

The administration in Washington adopted all three of these positions at various times as the events in Syria took place. There now seems to be no question that sarin gas was used in the civil war in Syria but there is some continuing debate as to which side employed its use. It was well established that Sadaam Hussein used sarin gas to kill thousands of Kurds in Iraq and the use of this terrible weapon was certainly one of the factors which prompted the United States to invade Iraq and to depose “the butcher of Baghdad.” Our current administration chose to draw a “red line” regarding Assad’s use of chemical weapons and initially took a very belligerent posture threatening military action against Syria to remove Assad from power. Later, after some reluctance from Congress to approve full military action, the administration softened its stance to “pin prick” bombardment of Syria to destroy its chemical weapons arsenal. However, Russia then entered the picture and expressed its support for Assad. Russia has some historical ties with Assad and has some interest in preserving Russia’s influence in the area. To further confuse the situation, the United States seems to be short on intelligence regarding the identity or the purpose of the rebels attempting to remove Assad from power – are they friendly to the principles and interests of the United States or are they united in their views which despise the United States? In short, are they the “good guys” or the “bad guys”?

As this newsletter goes to press, it appears that Russia has taken the lead in defusing the situation and is taking the credit for preserving Assad in power and for allegedly supervising the destruction of his supply of chemical weapons. Obviously, Russia will now have major influence in the region and can continue to advance its special interests there. Many, many questions and concerns remain and the United States will apparently have little input in providing the answers: Will the rebels continue their war to depose Assad? Do we believe that Assad will really permit his chemical weapons to be destroyed while the revolution is continuing or has he already dispersed them to various hiding places? Did Assad obtain his chemical weapons from Iraq when Hussein moved them to avoid detection before the US invasion of Iraq? Can we trust the Russians to supervise the destruction of the chemical arsenal? Will there be any objective inquiry as to whether Assad used sarin gas and will Assad be punished if he is found to have used it? This Merry Go Round is bound to continue for many months ahead but hopefully the United States has learned not to embarrass itself and will not draw anymore "red lines" of international engagement unless it has both the will and the ability to enforce them.

BINGO NIGHT AT THE VA HOSPITAL

Post 46 has continued the tradition of volunteering to sponsor Bingo Night at the VA Ann Arbor Hospital during the most difficult period for those veterans who cannot return to home or family during the holiday period between Christmas and New Year's Day. This year, Bingo Night for Post 46 is scheduled at the VA Hospital on the day after Christmas, December 26, at 7:00 P.M. If you can interrupt your Christmas festivities for just one evening and share your holiday spirit with our hospitalized veterans, it would be much appreciated. Please make an effort to join us at the VA Hospital to hand out some holiday cheer. Thanks.

WORLD WAR II VET TAKES A DEADLY BEATING

Some stories about the shooting death of a person make instant headlines around the United States. For example, the public media worked day and night to keep the Trayvon Martin - George Zimmerman incident before the public eye for months and months on end. What about the beating death of Delbert Belton? Does the name mean anything except to veterans?

Because the public media barely gave the story of the beating death of Delbert Belton even a couple of paragraphs hidden in the third or fourth pages of their newspapers, a brief tribute to the memory of Delbert Belton appears to be appropriate. Delbert Belton was born and raised in Spokane, Washington, and joined the Army during World War II. Belton took a bullet in the leg in 1945 during the battle for Okinawa, the site of one of the fiercest battles of the war. According to his sister, Belton returned to the United States suffering from PTSD (then known as "shell shock") but slowly returned to health.

On a Wednesday evening, August 21, 2013, police reports stated that two 16 year old boys approached Belton in his car outside an Eagles Lodge in Spokane on a Wednesday evening and savagely beat him to death. Belton suffered severe blunt force injuries to his head and torso and was found by police wedged between the seats of his car and he died in the hospital the following day. According to his daughter-in-law, Belton's face had been battered so badly that

doctors could not stop the bleeding. The teen agers – Demetrius Glenn and Kenan Adams-Kinard - were subsequently arrested and charged with robbery and murder. Both of them have pled “not guilty” but one of the teens later tried to explain that the violence stemmed from their planned crack cocaine purchase from Belton. Police said there was not a single trace of evidence to believe that Belton had ever been a drug dealer or even that he had ever used drugs.

The difficult details of this tragic event are difficult to accept and they are being reproduced in this newsletter primarily to alert veterans to the facts of the case so that they can better follow its outcome because the public media will probably continue to suppress or ignore it. If any of you become aware of further developments as the case progresses, please share them with your fellow veterans.

VETERANS IDENTIFICATION CARDS

A good number of you know that many businesses offer discounts or other privileges to veterans as a way to express gratitude for their service; however, the veteran must usually be able to show some form of proof of veteran status. It is obviously cumbersome for veterans to carry their military discharge certificates (DD-214 forms) around with them. The Washtenaw County Clerk’s Office is issuing Veteran Identification cards for this purpose and we offer this brief outline of the application procedure as another reminder of the one which was published in this newsletter last year. Veterans may request issuance of a card by visiting the County Clerk’s Vital Records Office at 200 N. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48107 between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday.

This photo identification card is available at the Washtenaw County Clerk’s office to Washtenaw residents only and is the same size as a Michigan driver’s license or state ID card.

TO OBTAIN YOUR CARD, YOU MUST BRING:

- 1) Original Military Discharge papers such as DD-214 which shows Honorable Discharge or equivalent status (unless already on file with the County Clerk’s office);
- 2) Photo Identification such as a Michigan Driver’s license, State ID card or Passport;
- 3) Passport quality photograph (2” x 2” showing face and shoulders against a neutral background); and
- 4) \$10.00 filing fee.

The card will then be mailed to the veteran within 3 to 4 weeks from the date of application. If you need any further information regarding this procedure, please call the Vital Records Section at 734-222-6720.

NIDAL HASAN SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR FORT HOOD SHOOTING

A military jury last month sentenced Maj. Nidal Hasan to death for the 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas. During the trial, the Army psychiatrist seemed to be courting martyrdom by making almost no effort to defend himself. In effect, the military jury granted Hasan the death sentence he wished for.

Hasan walked into a medical building where soldiers were getting medical checkups, shouted “God is Great” in Arabic and opened fire at random killing 13 people and wounding many others. Hasan, who said he acted to protect Islamic insurgents from American opposition, showed very little visible reaction when the sentence was announced. The American-born Muslim of Palestinian descent acted as his own attorney and never denied that he was the

“shooter” of the thirteen victims. In fact, Hasan told the jurors that the evidence would prove he was the lone gunman and simply described himself as a soldier who had “switched sides.” The same jurors who had convicted Hasan earlier deliberated the death sentence for about two hours. They needed to agree unanimously on the death penalty or the alternative would have been life in prison without parole.

Although the conviction of Hasan and this death sentence will be appealed and the case will undoubtedly drag on for many months to come, all military service personnel and veterans can finally be assured that Hasan will be held accountable for his planned and careful murder of the soldiers he slaughtered. The only questions we will continue to ponder are how deranged people like Hasan are actually given substantial authority and control as commissioned officers in the United States Army, how this tragedy was ever allowed to happen and how could it could have been prevented through more careful personnel review and more detailed background investigation.

JIM DOYLE - ENJOYING LIFE AT THE GRAND RAPIDS HOME FOR VETERANS



Three American Legionnaires, John Kinzinger, on left, and Mike Malley, on right, and Mark Lindke (the photographer) visited Jim Doyle in August in Grand Rapids. Jim’s smile says it all.

A number of Legionnaires plan another visit to Jim in Grand Rapids in October. If you wish to join us or send a card of greeting or other memento to Jim, please let us know.

IN BRIEF - NEWS ITEMS FROM THE MILITARY BAG

Charitable Contributions: A charity patriotically named “Disabled Veterans Services of Pompano Beach, FL.,” recently reported raising more than \$8 million in cash and collecting \$4 million in donated goods but it was later revealed that less than 5% of each dollar the charity raised went to help veterans. This is simply another reminder that the problem with alleged veterans’ charities continues. “The scoundrels and the thieves and the rip-off artists ... know that these are categories of charities where the American public is gravitated, it pulls at the heartstrings and they know that the tendency of the Americans is to give impulsively, emotionally with that pull” said Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator. Please continue your charitable contributions to veteran organizations but be sure to investigate how your money is going to be spent.

University of Michigan approves in-state tuition for military and honorably discharged veterans: This summer, the University of Michigan Board of Regents finally approved a change in its residency guidelines so that all military and honorably discharged veterans will now receive in-state tuition rates at the University of Michigan. The residency requirements had been criticized for many years because they made it difficult for veterans from Michigan to qualify for residency if they were stationed overseas for any lengthy period of time; however, the final decision had many political overtones because it was coupled with the decision to permit unauthorized immigrants to also qualify for in-state tuition. In other words, the in-state tuition benefit for veterans had to be coupled with the same benefit for unauthorized immigrants for the measure to be approved. The difference between in-state tuition and out-of-state tuition is not small – the University of Michigan has one of the most expensive out-of-state tuition rates in the country. In the fall, students from Michigan will pay \$13,142, while non-residents will pay \$40,392. Student veterans will obviously be pleased to accept this tuition benefit which they earned through their service to their country no matter how it was accomplished politically.

Navy Yard Shooting: Another tragic shooting spree involving a veteran occurred recently at the Washington Navy Yard. Aaron Alexis, a former Navy reservist serving as an information technology employee with a defense contractor, used a valid pass to get into the highly secured installation and started shooting randomly. He killed some 12 people before he was himself shot to death. The motive for the mass shooting remains a mystery. What also remains a mystery is why many red flags were not raised in regard to the capacity and mental stability of Alexis. Alexis had been suffering a host of serious mental problems, including paranoia and sleep disorder and had been hearing voices in his head for which he had been treated by Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately, the Navy had not declared him mentally unfit which would have rescinded the security clearance Alexi had acquired from his earlier service in the Navy Reserve. Hopefully, those in charge can put in place certain safeguards to lessen the likelihood that deranged people such as Alexis are placed in positions of trust and authority so that similar tragedies can better be prevented.

Post 46 Annual Christmas Party: Please save the date in your schedules and note that the Post 46 Christmas Party will be held at Weber's Inn on Saturday, December 7th, beginning at 12:00 noon. This is yet another opportunity to share a meal, good times and good cheer with your fellow veterans sponsored each year by Post 46 and the generosity of individual contributors. We have established a holiday tradition of asking that your only price of admission is that you bring an unopened Christmas toy or gift to donate to "Toys for Tots." We recognize that "Toys for Tots" is a charity primarily sponsored by the Marines Corps but hope you will overlook that fact and donate a gift to this worthwhile organization anyway. In order to allow Commander Duncan to make the necessary arrangements and reservations, please be sure to let him know if you (and a guest) plan to attend or send your regrets to Steve Duncan either by telephone (743-997-9485) or by e-mail (duncanssm@comcast.net). Please contact Steve as early as your schedule will permit (even though it is still October) but no later than November 29th if possible and be ready to let him know if your choice of entre is chicken, london broil or vegetarian. WE HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE AT THE PARTY ON DECEMBER 7TH SO THAT WE CAN CELEBRATE BOTH CHRISTMAS AND REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR TOGETHER!

American Legion seeks to protect veterans benefits from sequestration: If Congress does not act to modify the impact of the current sequestration budget cuts, the Pentagon will face another reduction of \$52 billion in cuts for the fiscal year 2014. Secretary of Defense Hagel has proposed a number of ways to cut the budget, none of which are very appealing. Beyond hardware options to cut Air Force tactical squadrons, retire bombers and reducing the number of carrier strike groups, Hagel has floated some other unpopular options: downsizing strength by up to 202,000 active and reserve component troops; pushing military retirees to use private sector health care insurance; cutting basic allowance for housing; ending commissary subsidies; etc. While we all recognize that debt reduction is, and should be, a national priority, the Pentagon has been saddled with a disproportionate share of this burden. Politics is obviously in play when these budget cuts are imposed on certain branches of the government and not others so that these cuts to the Pentagon budget make the debt reduction process unpopular with the general public and more difficult to achieve. The politicians should look elsewhere to impose such drastic budget cuts, examine unearned entitlements, waste and "give-aways" and protect the benefits which our military personnel and its veterans have earned.

POST 46 OFFICERS

Steve Duncan, Commander & Finance Officer
Greta Krapohl, Sr. Vice Commander
Michael Malley, Jr. Vice Commander & Judge Advocate
John "Laurie" Howley, Sgt. at Arms
Elmer White, Adjutant
Oleg Michajlenko, Service Officer
Thomas Scott, Executive Committee
Douglas Woolley, Executive Committee
Dale Burgess, Executive Committee

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