



Welcome To The First Edition

Welcome to the first edition of the Post 46 Prieskorn Press newsletter. We hope it will provide you with information and events relevant to our Post and its involvement with veterans and our community. While we hope it will eventually be a monthly newsletter, that hope will depend on input and contributions from our members and readers. E-mail the editor with your suggestions for what you'd like to see or to submit an article.



Commander's Corner

I became the Commander of Post 46 in 2019. A time when our Post was somewhat stagnant. Since then we have made concerted efforts to become more recognized and active

within our community and, I would hope, within Washtenaw County. We have partnered with [Food Gatherers](#) in Ann Arbor by not only annual donations, but also with hosting food drives multiple times a year. New this year is our association with [Hope Clinic](#). Here, too, we both donate finances, but also our time as we recently packed 118 snack/lunches for the homeless. Many volunteer hours have been logged by some our members at both the [Ann Arbor VA Medical Center](#) and the Fisher House Ann Arbor. Post 46 takes great pride in these hours spent directly affecting the lives of veterans and their families. We have been reaching out to our veteran community for new blood. Through both our Legion phone calls and through the Veteran Resource Center we have been able to assist numerous veterans in need. These include homeless veterans reaching out for help and direction, stranded veterans crossing the country, and assisting with providing furnishings for apartments of formerly homeless veterans. Through the efforts of a few of our officers and the Legion Department over the past year, we have increased membership by around 23%.

It is my hope that we can return to the days of the past when we were well known and respected in Ann Arbor, where we participated in parades and wore our brand with pride. I think we started in that direction with the installation of the flagpole and American flag at Veterans Memorial Park. Thank you to all our members.

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Veterans Memorial Park

Before Veterans Memorial Park was a park, it was a riding stable owned by Guy Mullison. From 1922– 1942 Mullison would allow the property to be used for the Washtenaw County Fair for four days in the fall. After the end of WWII the property was sold to the City of Ann Arbor as a park.

Fast forward to around July of 2018, then Commander Oleg Michajlenko noted that there was no American flag anywhere near the sign for the Ann Arbor Veterans Memorial Park. Wondering why a “memorial” park didn’t have a flag he began investigating why that was.

In August of 2019 the flagpole was finally installed after many months of meetings and planning with the Parks & Rec Department. Oleg came up with the initial design of the layout. The day after the flagpole was installed our Post held an informal raising of its first flag. Former sheriff of Washtenaw County Doug Harvey was part of the team that fought to get the flagpole placed and was certainly one of the most proud of what it looked like when we raised it’s first flag.

A formal dedication ceremony took place on a very dreary day, September 29, 2019. Commander Dave Draper was the emcee for the event which included several speakers which included City of Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor. The flagpole project was funded mostly by a joint effort of American Legion Post 46 and VFW Post 423. The Parks & Recreation Department funded the landscaping.

Our Post has recently installed a couple of park benches and we are in the process of having branch-of-service medallions installed around the semicircle in front of the flagpole.

“Veterans know better than anyone else the price of freedom, for they’ve suffered the scars of war. We can offer them no better tribute than to protect what they have won for us.”

Ronald Reagan

Busy, Busy We Are

Post 46 has been busy helping veterans and our community. Concerted efforts are being placed to reach out to more veterans in need and helping those less fortunate within our community.

What in the world (community) are we doing?

Our Post has been busy with several projects over the past several months. Here’s some of them. Copies of each will be distributed by e-mail and USPS before we vote on them

- * Updating our **By-Laws and Constitution**. The last update to the By-laws was in 2003.
- * Chaplain Bull initiated the process to have the Ann Arbor **VA Medical Center renamed** to honor Medal of Honor Recipient LTC Charles S. Kettles. The bill was signed by President Trump. We are waiting for the official renaming ceremony at the hospital.
- * A couple of months ago Chaplain Bull started the process to implement the **Green Alert** system in our state. Green Alert is like the Amber Alert for missing children, except this would be for missing veterans. Michigan is one of eleven states that do not have a Green Alert system in place. A resolution has been passed at the post and chapter level by our post, VFW 423, and VVA 310. The resolutions now go to the next level in each organization.
- * In a joint effort with VFW Post 423 we opened our doors at the post for the newly formed **Veteran Resource Center** on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 0930 to 1700 hrs. It is meant to be a place where veterans can come to get help, socialize, play games, or just enjoy a cup of coffee.
- * Another **Open House** has been planned for March 20. As with the last one, there will be Veteran Service Officers, representatives from legal and medical benefits professions, a Veteran Navigator, and possible representatives from Department.

Member Spotlight

LTC Dale Burgess



Dale Burgess in the cockpit of his P-38 fighter

Dale Everett Burgess was born in Isabella County, MI on October 26, 1922 and passed away on October 31, 2020 in Ann Arbor, MI. He was raised in Mt. Pleasant and then Farwell. He attended Central Michigan College of Education for two years, where he met his future bride. He then volunteered for the Aviation Cadet Program and was sworn into the Army Air Force on May 27, 1942. He was called up for training on November 8, 1942 and went to Santa Anna, CA for his pre-flight schooling. His primary flight school was at Dos Palos, CA and trained in Ryan PT-22 Recruits. His basic flight school was at Lemoore, CA flying BT-13 Valiants. His advanced flight school was at Williams Field, AZ. There, on October 1, 1943, he graduated and received his wings and commission.

At the end of 1943, he was sent overseas to the South Pacific where he was assigned to the 475th Fighter Group and flew Lockheed P-38 Lightnings. While assigned to the 475th he participated in bomber escorts, strafings, bombings, napalm missions and some dog fights. He also flew with Charles Lindbergh, who showed the Group how to increase the length of the missions in the P-38s. The Group island-hopped from New Guinea to the Philippines.

Among his many combat awards, Dale received 4 Air Medals and the Philippine Liberation Medal with 4 Battle Stars. While assigned to the 475 Fighter Group, the unit was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Dale was in the air when the Japanese surrendered on the deck of the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945.

In his 15 months in the Philippines Dale performed 431 missions and accrued 452 combat hours. He returned to the U.S. in late April 1945 and joined the USAF Reserves, ultimately attaining the rank of Lt. Colonel.

He married Betty, whom he had fallen in love with at Central, May 20, 1945. He then attended Michigan State College and received a BS in Chemical Engineering in 1949. He was employed by the State of Michigan in July of 1950 in the Department of Public Health as an Occupational Health Engineer, where he remained until his retirement, after 35 years, in 1983. He and Betty had two children and one granddaughter.

Dale was a beloved and respected member of Ann Arbor American Legion Post 46 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 423.

SALUTING OUR MEMBERS

Member Milestones

<u>Member</u>	<u>Yrs</u>
Don Eschelbach	60
Bill Number	50
Mark Lindke	40
Ken Motley	40
Harold Brinkley	20
Richard Gabourie	20
Thomas Preston	10
David Dobritt	5
Ralph Easter	5
Don Miller	5

Member Birthdays

Chris Roe	Feb 3
Stanley Platsis	Feb 4
Mike Cook	Feb 4
Eugene Smith Jr.	Feb 4
Steven Gulick	Feb 10
Dale Peterson	Feb 10
Alan Owens	Feb 14
Anthony Derezinski	Feb 17
Douglas Viland	Feb 25
Bruce Lowry	Mar 1
Budd Frye	Mar 9
Jacob Wright	Mar 10
Don Hackbarth	Mar 18
George Hudson	Mar 19
Robert Bull	Mar 20
James Crosby	Mar 22
Bill Bryan	Mar 22
Dale Hammar	Mar 28

Fisher House Ann Arbor



The Fisher House in Ann Arbor was the first to be constructed in Michigan. Commander Oleg Michajlenko wanted to make sure this was a priority project for our post. The post committed to donating \$100,000 toward the construction cost over a five year period. We are now close to making our final payment on that obligation. Since then we have also donated funds toward the purchase of a shuttle cart to transport guests from the Fisher House to the VAMC. Commander Dave Draper volunteers there four days a week for a couple of hours each day. He says that the guests are super impressed at how beautiful the facility is and how well maintained it is. They compare it to a higher end hotel. It takes many hands and gifts to keep the facility running. Between the staff, housekeepers, and volunteers, Fisher House runs like a well oiled machine. Our post donates gift cards, water, and volunteer hours to help.

VA Medical Center To Be Renamed



WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) today announced that President Donald Trump signed their legislation to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Ann Arbor after Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles. Lieutenant Colonel Kettles, a lifelong resident of Ypsilanti who passed away in January of 2019, served in the Vietnam War as an Army helicopter commander and was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2016 for leading a rescue operation that saved 44 soldiers. The lawmakers' legislation passed the House of Representatives in October and the United States Senate earlier this month.

"LTC Charles Kettles never asked for recognition or sought the spotlight for his selfless service and courage. But by engraving his name above the Ann Arbor VAMC, we will ensure his story is told for generations and his legacy cherished by all who seek care within those walls," said Congresswoman Dingell. **"He was a hero, a mentor, and a friend, and I will forever be grateful for the time I was able to share with him"**

"LTC Kettles' bravery, selflessness and commitment to his fellow servicemembers embodied the values that make our military – and nation – so strong," said Senator Peters, a former Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve. **"I'm proud our bill is now law, recognizing LTC Kettles for his contributions to Michigan and our nation. As Michiganders, we are forever proud to call him a native son – and his exemplary service will continue to inspire generations to come."**

"Decades ago, Lieutenant Colonel Kettles courageously went back into enemy territory to save the lives of 44 of his fellow servicemen. With the renaming of the Ann Arbor VA, Lieutenant Colonel Kettle's story will now be known and honored for generations. We are forever grateful for his service to our country," said Senator Stabenow.

In May of 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Kettles led three rescue flights into enemy territory to deliver supplies, reinforcements and to evacuate wounded airborne soldiers who had been ambushed by Northern Vietnamese forces. After Kettles was informed during the middle of his final flight that eight soldiers remained on the ground, he immediately returned without any support to rescue the remaining men. All told, his actions saved the lives of 40 soldiers and 4 crewmembers from the 176th Aviation Company. In 2015, Dingell led legislation to waive time limitations that deemed Lieutenant Colonel Kettles ineligible for consideration of the Medal of Honor. Finally, after the bill was enacted, President Obama awarded Kettles the Medal of Honor on July 18, 2016, nearly 50 years after his heroic actions.

Preaching To The Choir

Words from Chaplain Bob Bull

FEAR

When we were children, we were fearless. Always doing things that got us into trouble or got us hurt, yet always going back again to conquer it. And when we did we were strengthened. As warriors in the service of our country we were surrounded by those who lifted us up when we fell. And we were strengthened. Today there are forces coming at us that want to divide us, weaken us. Our strength is in our numbers, and in our beliefs in “He who strengthens me, (Php 4:13).

When the Bible tells us, “Do not fear,” it means we are not to allow anxiety or worry to rule our lives or take root in our hearts. We are not people of panic. We are people of faith.

[Psalm 91](#) speaks of the one who “dwells in the shelter of the Most High” and who says of God, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust” (verses 1–2). Those who trust in God can live fearlessly. “Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble” (verses 14–15).

Isaiah 41:10 says; “. . . do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Our nation’s motto is “In GOD we trust”. ‘Fear not’ appears 365 times in the Bible.

FEAR – False Evidence Appearing Real. It has no power if we don’t allow it.



What do you call a soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray?
A seasoned veteran.

Hope Clinic

Since 1982, Hope Clinic has given attention to the often-overlooked corners of our community, bringing light to the beauty that exists there, and investing in hope for the future. Located on the south side of Ypsilanti, MI, Hope is a place where everyone has the opportunity to serve and be served. During the Covid-19 pandemic, record numbers of people have taken advantage of that opportunity.

At Hope Clinic, we partner with you to make lives better by providing free care for the whole person with Medical, Dental, Food, and Care + Prayer, in Jesus’ name. Our Medical and Dental Clinics provide critical care to the uninsured and underinsured members of our community. Social workers in our Care + Prayer office connect people to vital resources and community partners, walking with them on the path to a better life.

In the Food Program, we focus on making healthy food as easily accessible as possible, a task that has been all the more important during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since March of 2020, we’ve nearly tripled our food program’s impact. Donations from churches, families, and groups, like the American Legion, have allowed us to pivot services quickly and develop new programs like grocery delivery. Hundreds of volunteers, scheduled at staggered times through out the day and week to keep distant, have prepared meals, packed bags of groceries and kept our facility clean and our shelves well stocked.

It is not surprising that many folks have felt overwhelmed by the immensity of need during this time, but we’ve found at Hope that when a lot of people are empowered to do small things with great love, that makes a big difference.

The increase in requests for help has been matched at every turn by an influx of volunteers and supporters who want to care for their neighbors. The result is that food insecure community members can pick up free groceries at Hope, take home extra produce from the Hope Clinic Farm Stand, and get a hot meal to-go.

It is important to remember that in the midst of so much hardship, good things are happening. **Contributed by Emmeline Weinert, Food Program Manager**



Erwin Prieskorn

American Legion Post 46

A staple in Ann Arbor since 1919, Post 46 is rich in history of serving veterans and the local community. If you know of a veteran that does not have an American Legion home give them a copy of this newsletter. Invite them to come out to one of our meetings and see what we are about. Let them know that we meet on the first Thursday of each month at 1830 hrs at our post, located at 3230 S. Wagner Rd.

February 2021 Food Drive



Last year our Post started reaching out in service to the community in a more earnest effort. Realizing that in serving the community we actually serve two of our four pillars. As you might guess, serving the community inevitably serves veterans within that community. On Sunday, February 28 we hosted our second food drive to benefit Food Gatherers. We are hoping that we will exceed our pounds of food that was donated at our last food drive, which was 777 pounds of food items but unfortunately giving was down this year. For sure we surpassed our last years' financial donation of over \$100 by receiving over \$2,200 in checks and cash

at this event. There were several very generous financial donors, although we are grateful for all the donations, no matter how large or small. We had a really good turnout of volunteers too. We had a lot of fun listening and contributing to veterans' stories as we sat waiting for the next donor to arrive. The Commander would like to thank each and every one of the volunteers and generous donors.

Erwin Prieskorn

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