



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46
NEWSLETTER
January, February, and March 2012

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

To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

It is time to toss out the 2011 calendars and to flip to the first page of 2012. Some of you have been doing this for many more years than I have and some of you do not even bother with calendars - you have your Droid phones and I Pads. Either way you keep track of the years, they march on no matter what we do. One of our members, Sandy Elden, recently said to me that he was still waiting for October. We are all in the same boat on this particular issue.

Post 46 continued many of the same activities this fall as it did last year. Once again, many of us participated in Veterans Day ceremonies at Concordia University and, upon the raising and dedication of a new flag, the retired flag was entrusted to us for proper disposal. Other Post 46 members participated at Veterans Day ceremonies at other locations. Some of our members spent some time at the VFW on Wagner Road and participated in filling and sending "care" packages to our troops overseas despite the derogatory comments of some members of academia as noted later in this newsletter. Many members again assembled at Webers in early December to enjoy our annual Christmas party and exchange stories and renew friendships with Post 46 members, guests, ROTC cadre and students and Post 46 baseball team members and families. Finally, by the time you read this newsletter, we will have ended the year with Bingo night at the Veterans Hospital for those unfortunate veterans who are hospitalized at this otherwise festive time of year.

I hope you will take the time to review some of the articles in this newsletter. They deal with our annual Christmas Party, charitable giving, veterans having difficulties adjusting to civilian life and finding jobs as they return from Iraq, and some unhappy tidbits from academia.

At many of our meetings, we have discussed how to encourage members to become more involved in Post 46 activities and to increase our membership with new younger veterans. Needless to say, if any of you can find more time to devote to your fellow veterans or to the community, please let us know. We also would appreciate your suggestions as to how we can become more relevant to younger veterans. None of us are getting any younger and many of our officers have served for five years or more and need a break. Finally, I am pleased that the number of our members who are now "on-line" is slowly growing. I try to send out emails at least twice a month to as to keep in touch with those of you on the internet. Too many months go by between quarterly newsletters. In the meantime, you can always visit our Post 46 website at <http://americanlegionannarbor.org>.

On behalf of our Commander, Steve Duncan, Post 46 extends to all its members best wishes for a peaceful and healthy 2012 and also extends a cordial invitation to all of you to attend our meetings and luncheons so that we can better fulfill our duty to serve our community, our veterans and active military personnel. Best Wishes for a Happy New Year,

Michael P. Malley
Judge Advocate.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January 8 2nd District Meeting, 2:00 P.M.
Saline American Legion Post 322
- January 9 Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn,
Dinner at 6:00 p.m., followed by meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- January 16 Washtenaw County Council of Veterans at 8:00 P.M.
Saline American Legion Post 322
- January 18 Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11.45 a.m.
- January 20 Bingo, Ann Arbor Veterans Administration Hospital at 7:00 p.m.
- February 6 Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn
Dinner at 6:00 p.m., followed by meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- February 15 Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
- March 5 Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn,
Dinner at 6:00 p.m., followed by meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- March 18 2nd District Meeting, 2:00 P.M.
Jackson American Legion Post 29
- March 21 Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.

LUNCHEON MEETINGS

As always, our luncheon meetings are held each month at the Classic Cup Café on Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. 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. We intend to invite guest speakers from time to time on various topical issues. Please suggest what type of speakers you would like - salesmen, investment advisors, athletic coaches, veterans, etc. At our most recent luncheon on December 21st, we were honored to have as our guests Robert Prieskorn and his wife, Olivia, who was celebrating her 90th birthday. As all of you know, Post 46 is named in honor of Robert's uncle, Erwin Prieskorn, who was the first casualty of World War I from Washtenaw County.

REGULAR POST MEETINGS

Our regular post meetings continue to be held on the first Monday of each month at Weber's on Jackson

Road, Ann Arbor. This schedule might vary from time to time so be sure to check the schedule in your newsletter. Thanks to the generosity of one of our members, a delicious Weber's dinner is served before each meeting. This newsletter cannot predict how long we can hope to enjoy this delicious beginning to our meetings so you should not wait too long to join us. All members are invited to attend, enjoy a good meal, exchange a few war stories and become active in Post 46 activities; however, if you do, in fact, plan to attend, you must notify our commander, Steve Duncan, at least three days in advance so that he can order the proper number of meals. Otherwise, you will go hungry!! These meetings are operated in an informal manner with a minimum of ceremony and members are urged to participate to express their views, voice their opinions, and vote on any business matters on the agenda.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Every year it seems like Post 46 outdoes itself and sponsors a Christmas Party at Webers to kick-off the Christmas Season. On December 3^{rd.}, thanks to the organizational ability of Commander Duncan and the talented staff of Webers, over 100 members, spouses and guests assembled and enjoyed a truly festive occasion and the hospitality, food and service of Weber's was again applauded by all attendees. Our late commander, J.J. Van Gasse, liked to say that the Christmas Party was a present to ourselves for the activities performed by Post 46 members on behalf of veterans and the community during the year. Many of us, therefore, take advantage each year of the opportunity to attend the annual Christmas gathering of Post 46 members, ROTC cadets and midshipmen, Post 46 baseball team members and their families, active duty personnel, and other invited guests to exchange stories, revive old friendships and make new ones, or to simply enjoy a good meal courtesy of Post 46.

Prior to the introduction of our guest speaker, a number of distinguished veterans were asked to stand and be recognized. These honored guests included Tim Driscoll, John Kinzinger (and his wife, Jane), Tony Derezhinski, Tom Osmond, Ryan Pavel and Ron Silverburg. Then the fortunate lunch crowd was inspired and entertained by our guest speaker, Captain Rick E. Vanden Heuvel, U.S. Navy. Captain Vanden Heuvel was introduced by our Service Office, Graydon Krapohl. During his introduction, Legionnaire Krapohl noted that Captain Vanden Heuvel is the Commanding Officer and Professor of Naval Science of the Naval ROTC Unit at the University of Michigan and then continued a long list of the Captain's achievements and awards earned during his distinguished career. After listening to the long list of these milestones, many of us had to ask ourselves the question as to what we had been doing all our lives. Captain Vanden Heuvel's informative and inspiring talk was well received by all present.

This year, we reversed one of the traditions of our Christmas party. Instead of awarding prizes to those in attendance, we asked that everyone bring a suitable toy to donate to the "Toys for Tots" program sponsored by the U.S. Marines. The generous spirit of Post 46 members and guests was demonstrated by the fact that the large box at the entrance to our dining room where our Christmas Party was held was completely filled and overflowing with toys of every description. On behalf of Post 46 and the children who will benefit from your generosity, many, many thanks to all those who participated. The festivities were then ended with some closing remarks and a traditional American Legion prayer.

Each and every year, this Newsletter urges all members not to miss our annual Christmas party. It is a great tradition dear to the heart of our late Commander, J.J. Van Gasse, and continued by Commander Steve Duncan. Please **today** make a note on your new 2012 calendar to join us next December to usher in yet another Christmas season.

PACKAGES FOR TROOPS

SERVING OVERSEAS - A SHAMEFUL ACTIVITY?

The local posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America are fortunate to have a facility where they can pack and send "care" packages to our men and women serving overseas. Many of

our Post 46 members have participated over the years by contributing goods, services, time or money to assist sending these packages to our troops. Veterans know that our troops enjoy these packages not only for the tangible contents each package contains but, more importantly, as an intangible symbol of our thanks for their service. I am also sure that the participating members of our Post derive considerable satisfaction in knowing they are doing their bit to send some form of aid and support to our troops.

Unfortunately, however, according to some professors and teachers in our higher halls of learning, our Post 46 members have been involved in a "shameful activity" by participating in sending care packages to our troops overseas. Suffolk Law Professor, Michael Avery, sent a five-paragraph e-mail to his colleagues in response to a school-wide appeal for care packages for deployed soldiers. He responded "I think it is shameful that it is perceived as legitimate to solicit in an academic institution for support for men and women who have gone overseas to kill other human beings." The school responded with the old stand-by that Mr. Avery "has the right to say what he wants" without giving any credit to the same soldiers who have fought for and died for his right to do so, as follows:

"In the long history of Suffolk University, we have embraced discourse within the framework of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. We encourage free discussion, yet remain uncompromising in confronting acts of discrimination. (Brave words, indeed!) As Suffolk's history shows, all of this can be done while supporting our mission to provide access to excellence in education to those who deserve it, not the least of whom are active duty military personnel and returning veterans, who by their brave acts have honored each of us and our nation."

The next academic to take issue with groups who send care packages to deployed troops came from Thomas Walker, a "lecturer in the intensive English and orientation program" at Iowa State University. Mr. Walker was quoted as follows:

"I read in Tuesday's Iowa State Daily that the College Republicans have begun collecting sundries for U.S. soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Why? Doesn't the U.S. Army victual its soldiers? Don't their families send them yuletide goodies? Aren't GIs paid enough to buy what they need and even what they want? Soldiers create anti-American terrorists in the countries they occupy and don't deserve care packages."

And so you have it. Those Post 46 members and others who volunteered their time, money and effort to send packages to our troops overseas were obviously misguided by engaging in such a shameful activity. On the other hand, these volunteers might have been inspired by a different sentiment:

**MAY NO SOLDIER GO UNLOVED
MAY NO SOLDIER WALK ALONE
MAY NO SOLDIER BE FORGOTTEN
UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME.**

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT AND CHARITABLE GIVING

Each and every year, Post 46 members and other veterans open up their hearts and their checkbooks to their favorite charities. Understandably, veterans are inclined to donate to charitable organizations which provide benefits to veterans and their families. When making a charitable donation, we all want the gifts we give to go to the intended beneficiaries and not be used to compensate high priced executives or for other administrative costs.

You are all very well aware that there are literally hundreds of charitable organizations which claim to dedicate their services on behalf of veterans in one way or another. We should be cautious, however, to be sure that the major portion of our charitable dollars is, in fact, spent for the benefit of veterans and not for the benefit of the people who operate the charitable organization. As an example, just last summer one of our members, Elmer White, recently exposed a group selling products at the Ann Arbor Art Fair

who falsely claimed that its operations were for the benefit of veterans. In the recent December issue of Forbes, an influential and widely read financial periodical, there was a brief article entitled "Charity Champions" in which Forbes ranked the best and the worst of the charitable organizations as to how far your "donor dollar" stretches. It was very disappointing to note that, of the five "least efficient" of large U.S. charities, three of them were charitable entities specifically involving veterans. These three U.S. charities which were listed in descending order were: (2) Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (3) Paralyzed Veterans of America and (5) Disabled American Veterans. This particular article was not an in depth analysis but should raise some warning flags to all of us when making charitable donations to veterans organizations which solicit using names which obviously have a strong appeal to veterans. Usually, you can obtain significant information from the tax returns which they must file (Form 990) to determine how much each organization spends on its executive officers and other overhead expenses. This same Forbes article also exposed some other apparent misuse of charitable funds including the headline that the chief executive of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was receiving an income of \$4,068,143 annually. The editor of your Post 46 newsletter does not get even half that amount! Other charitable organizations have received a great deal of publicity over the years for their excessive executive salaries and huge overhead. One recent article listed the three worst offenders to be UNICEF (for some 12 years in a row), American Red Cross and United Way. It is unfortunate that these charities which perform so many valuable services do not police their internal operations to reduce administrative overhead, eliminate these excesses and gain a more favorable reputation. But more unfortunate is the fact that so many organizations serving veterans have apparently forgotten the very reasons for their existence, become indifferent and forget to devote our charitable donations to the intended beneficiaries - our military personnel, veterans and their respective families. Please do not reduce or suspend your charitable giving due to the information in this article. There are many veterans who are still in need and rely upon your contributions. Just become more selective and informed when making your charitable contributions.

WELCOME OUR TROOPS BACK
HOME - JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The USA's official withdrawal from Iraq effective as of December 31, 2011, will mean that thousands of service men and women have returned and are returning home. We can only hope that Iraq and its capital city, Baghdad, do not now go up in the flames of sectarian, religious and tribal discord. We can do more than hope, however, that our returning veterans will have help to readjust to civilian life because of the preparations which the American Legion and other veterans groups have made for their return. Despite these preparations, however, we must remind ourselves that the return to civilian life is not an easy adjustment. During World War II, virtually the entire population was in one way or another involved in war time activity either in the armed forces, in a war production activity or in a volunteer capacity of some kind. Today, our returning veterans actually comprise the true "1%" of our population that we hear so much about. Most of our civilian population barely knows that we were engaged in combat in Iraq and few have been directly affected by the war. One veteran described his return home in 2008 as follows:

"I felt as alien here as I was in Iraq. At home, it was impossible to tell we were a nation at war. I couldn't discuss it with pals without sounding like a Martian because they had no idea what the war in Iraq was like. The conversation would bog down, stall and then move on to other topics."

Although many veterans, particularly those involved in combat, have often experienced the same frustration, this Iraq veteran continued to describe his feelings upon his return home as follows:

"There are no bond drives. There are no food drives or rubber drives. It's hard not to think of my war as a bizarre camping trip that no one else went on"

Vietnam veterans can quickly identify and sympathize with many of these comments; however, even Vietnam veterans should remind themselves that the armed forces in Vietnam were then about four times greater in number and that there was a draft in place which gained the attention of a large segment of the civilian population to the fact that our nation was actually at war. During the intervening years, the military community has steadily been growing smaller and has been drifting apart from the civilian population. These brief comments are simply intended to remind all Post 46 members to assist returning veterans in any way they can to adjust to civilian life either by helping them find employment, providing temporary financial assistance, or just by mentoring them. Post 46 can be proud of the fact that Student Veterans of America, an organization which helps returning veterans adjust to college life, was first organized here in Ann Arbor with the assistance of Post 46. Please do not, therefore, waste the opportunity to encourage returning veterans to join The American Legion to join us as fellow veterans. Similarly, if you know of any such veterans who you believe are entitled to some form of benefits arising from their military service, please let us know so that we can point these veterans in the right direction. We cannot and should not forget the "veteran connection" which links us all together.

BINGO NIGHT AT THE VA HOSPITAL

By the time you read this newsletter, Post 46 will have entertained hospitalized veterans at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital on the night of December 29th with a Bingo session. Post 46 generally awards gift shop booklets as prizes to the Bingo winners and, so as to not let anyone leave empty handed, gives every participant a gift certificate to the hospital gift shop. One person who missed our session this time last year because of a medical issue should be back in action calling the numbers this year - our own Commander, Steve Duncan. If you can help us on Bingo night with hospitalized veterans either to assist with bingo cards, hand out prizes or simply chat with the veterans, please let us know. You will be glad you did.

POST OFFICERS

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