



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46  
NEWSLETTER  
January, February, and March 2013

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

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To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

By the time you receive this newsletter, you will have celebrated Christmas and will be looking forward to the start of 2013 - yes, 2013!! Further, we will have ended the year with Bingo night at the Veterans Hospital for hospitalized veterans who are unable to return home to their families and loved ones during this otherwise festive time of year.

The elections are over and they did not change the political landscape at all so that I must assume that the people of this great country of ours are satisfied with what our representatives are doing in Washington. Concerns about the budget deficit, sequestration, the mass printing of money and the so called "fiscal cliff" apparently fell on deaf ears or we were somehow reassured that these issues would or could be resolved by our Washington politicians. If they are not, this poor old country of ours could be in for some tough years ahead.

Unfortunately, all of our good thoughts and celebrations for the New Year will be overshadowed to some degree by the inexplicable execution of 26 children and adults in Newtown, Connecticut, on December, 2012. We are somehow able to accept and absorb tragedies such as Hurricane Sandy if they are dealt to us by Mother Nature; however, tragedies such as the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre which was dealt to us by a fellow human being is much more difficult for us to digest and understand. As the facts and proposed remedies for this tragedy unfold, we must simply all extend our grief, condolences and prayers to the Connecticut families directly involved.

Post 46 continued to be involved in a number of activities this fall. Many Post 46 members participated at Veterans Day ceremonies throughout Washtenaw County and beyond. Members and their guests 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.

I hope you will take the time to review some of the articles in this newsletter. They deal among others with our annual Christmas Party; charitable giving; Navy SEALs in the news yet again; American Legion membership issues; the new University of Michigan Veterans Scholarship Fund; and local legal action on behalf of a decorated veteran. 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. We also would particularly 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.

On behalf of our Commander, Steve Duncan, Post 46 extends to all its members best wishes for a peaceful and healthy 2013. If we do in fact fall off the cliff, I hope that you all have a soft landing!!

Michael P. Malley  
Judge Advocate.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January	No regular Post Meeting this month.
January 6	2 <sup>nd</sup> District Meeting, 2:00 P.M. American Legion Post 31, Chelsea
January 13	Packing Party - VVA Chapter 310 - 2:30 P.M. 3230 S. Wagner Road, Ann Arbor
January 16	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
January 18	Bingo, Ann Arbor Veterans Administration Hospital at 7:00 p.m.
January 21	Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 7:30 P.M. American Legion Post 268, Milan
February 4	Regular Post Meeting, 7:00 P.M. Directors Room, Weber's Inn
February 20	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
March 4	Regular Post Meeting, 7:00 P.M. Directors Room, Weber's Inn.
March 17	2 <sup>nd</sup> District Meeting, 2:00 P.M. American Legion Post 180, Hudson
March 18	Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 6:30 P.M. American Legion Post 322, Saline Annual Dinner - tickets available at Post 46 meeting February 4 <sup>th</sup> .
March 20	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.

## 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. 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 Post 46 hosts and sponsors a Christmas Party at Webers to kick-off the Christmas Season. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, thanks to the organizational ability of Commander Duncan and the talented staff of

Webers, some 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, always promoted our annual Christmas Party justifying it by claiming it 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.

After some preliminary introductions of visiting dignitaries, the fortunate lunch crowd was then informed and entertained by our guest speaker, Randy Hotton, representing the Yankee Air Force Museum. Randy was introduced by our Senior Vice-Commander, Greta Krapohl. Mr. Hotton proceeded to present and describe a slide show of the history of the development of the Willow Run Bomber facility during World War II when it was converted from a civilian production facility to a major bomber production line in just a matter of a couple of years. Mr. Hotton's delivery also involved references to some of the many strong individual personalities involved with the development of Willow Run at that time - his presentation was truly a brief visit into the history of a local manufacturing facility which played a vital role in developing a war machine which enabled the Allies to gain victory in World War II.

The festivities were then ended with some questions and answers with Mr. Hotton and the traditional American Legion closing 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 this year we were again honored by the presence of Cathy Van Gasse. Please **today** make a note on your new 2013 calendar to join us next December to usher in yet another Christmas season.

### CONTINUING SAGA OF COLONEL DOOLEY

Last month's newsletter outlined the defense by Thomas More Law Center of Ann Arbor, Michigan, of Col. Matthew Dooley from charges that he had improperly portrayed Islam in a negative way while teaching a course at the Joint Forces Staff College entitled "Perspectives on Islam and Islam Radicalism". You will recall that Col. Dooley was removed from his teaching position and publically condemned by General Marin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, prompted by a letter written to the Department of Defense dated October 19, 2011, and signed by 57 Muslim organizations demanding that all training materials that they judge to be offensive to "Islam" be purged and that instructors involved "are effectively disciplined".

This newsletter was interested in this story not only because it appeared that a highly decorated Army officer was being publically disciplined and "put out to dry" for competently performing his assigned duties but also because a local institution, Thomas More Law Center, was providing his defense. The Thomas More Law Center recently announced that a newly revealed document has vindicated Col. Dooley's actions. This newly revealed document was an official communication to the Pentagon from Dr. Brenda Roth, the Deputy VP for Academic Affairs, and states, among other things, that Col. Dooley's curriculum was vetted through academic review committees and that the generals at the Joint Forces Staff College had the final review of recommended speakers such as Col. Dooley and his curriculum. Two Congressmen, Duncan Hoover (R) and Thomas Rooney (R) questioned the severity of Col. Dooley's punishment. General Scaparrotti, responding on behalf of General Dempsey, continued to blame Col Dooley for "poor judgment" but admitted "that there were institutional failures in oversight and judgment". (Does this sound like the "institutional" excuses for the Benghazi fiasco being issued from the White House noted later in this newsletter?) Surely, an "institutional failure" must rest on the shoulders of an individual general or two rather than upon the doorstep of an instructor who had

received multiple accolades from his superiors for the great job he was doing. Richard Thompson of the Thomas More Law Center issued a combative response on behalf of his client:

“Any fair-minded person would conclude that Matt Dooley was thrown under the bus to protect the generals who had institutional responsibilities over the course. I believe the Pentagon wanted to curry favor with the White House and the Muslim community, which demanded that all training materials offensive to Islam be purged and the trainers who use them be punished.”

We hope that there will be a just and honorable ending to this saga in your next newsletter.

### **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 siphoned away by fraud and deception for personal profit.

In your last newsletter, we issued a warning to you about a West Bloomfield man, Neil Thrasher, who had been charged by State Attorney General Bill Schuette for creating fake veterans' charities and spending the money for his own personal benefit. You will be pleased to learn that since that time, Neil Thrasher has been sentenced to 17 months to 10 years in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$74,000. Mr. Thrasher's successful gimmick was to slightly alter the names of otherwise established and honorable veterans' charitable organizations. For example, "Disabled American Veterans" became "Disabled Veterans of America"; and "Paralyzed Veterans of America" became "Paralyzed American Veterans". The lesson to be learned here is to know and vet the organization to which you make your charitable contributions. There are many Neil Thrashers out there willing to take your donation - it's unfortunate that Mr. Thrasher could not be thrashed for his theft of donations to veterans who have truly earned and deserve our contributions. 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.

### **NAVY SEALS CONTINUE YET AGAIN TO MAKE THE HEADLINES**

This newsletter is getting very repetitive insofar as reporting events in which Navy SEALS are involved; however, these exceptional military service people continue to earn our admiration and respect. In your last Post 46 newsletter, we briefly outlined what we knew then about the two former Navy SEALS who were killed in the attack of the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi. Since that time, the cover up of this tragedy by the White House and an official Pickering-Mullen report have done little to inspire any confidence that any responsibility has been taken by any one for the failure to safeguard our people serving overseas or that any corrective or preventive measures are being taken.

And so the reckoning or guessing games continue. The special task force report known as the Pickering-Mullen report concluded that "systemic failures and leadership and management of deficiencies" may have contributed to the deaths of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi. Once again, there is nothing in this report which gives one any sense as to who was personally responsible farther up the chain of command. Secretary of State Clinton's review board white-washed its own performance (or lack thereof) and simply detailed a broad failure by U.S. intelligence officials and policymakers to fully understand the growing Islamist threat in Libya; however, it remarkably failed to name a single person who could be held responsible for these failures. To the contrary, the Pickering-Mullen report confined its findings to the failures at "senior levels within two bureaus of the State

Department” and “did not find reasonable cause to determine that any individual U.S. government employee breached his or duty”.

Subsequent to this report, hearings in Congress did, in fact, find “serious deficiencies” in management and “grossly inadequate” security at the consulate. As a result, four State Department officials were forced to resign: however, at this point in time, we have had no direct testimony regarding this apparent total dereliction of duty and responsibility to protect our consulate from threats which had previously been identified from either the Secretary of State or indeed from the Commander in Chief.

Another sad note to remind us of the double jeopardy to which the hazardous duty of Navy SEALs exposes them is the news that a member of Seal Team 6 that killed Osama bin Laden was himself killed during a weekend rescue mission in Afghanistan to free an American doctor who had been abducted by the Taliban. 28 year-old Petty Officer First Class Nicolas Checque had been a SEAL for eight years and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Recently, Seal team 6 conducted a helicopter assault on a mountain hideout near the Pakistani border to rescue Dr. Dilip Joseph who had been captured outside Kabul a few days previously. Checque died from gunfire during the assault while seven of the Taliban holding Dr. Joseph were also killed. Dr. Joseph, who had been threatened with imminent injury or death, was safely rescued by the assault team. President Obama praised the assault team for their “extraordinary courage, skill and patriotism”. To which we can only add: “Amen”.

### MIDLAND, TEXAS TRAGEDY

This article is in memory of and serves as a brief tribute to the four military veterans who were recently killed by a cruel twist of fate when a freight train crashed into a parade float on which they were riding while being honored in Midland, Texas, for their military service. These four decorated men served on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan and had survived gunshots, explosions and grenade attacks that left some of them with brain injuries that slurred their speech and made it difficult for some of them to walk. These four wounded veterans were:

Army Sgt. Joshua Michael, 34; Marine Chief Warrant Officer Gary Stouffer, 37; Army Sgt. William Lubbers, 43; and Army Sgt. Lawrence Boivin, 47.

There is not sufficient space in this newsletter to provide in any sufficient detail the service records of each of these remarkable individuals – one had a wife back home battling cancer while he wrestled with a brain injury caused in Iraq when an IED hit his truck; another was starting a new career with a defense contractor after 20 years of military service which included a firefight in Iraq during which he earned a Silver Star for his valor; yet another had been injured in Afghanistan when an IED hit his vehicle and threw him around inside causing traumatic brain injury; and yet another was shot in the arm in an ambush in Afghanistan and had endured 13 surgeries during 15 months in hospital.

We sometimes forget the commitments and sacrifices made by our fellow veterans unless we come upon them face to face. This brief tribute to just a few of them is meant to serve as a tribute to them all. RIP.

### IN BRIEF - NEWS FROM THE MILITARY BAG

**Camaraderie on Campus:** Post 46 is justifiably proud of its participation in forming Student Veterans of America, an organization for the benefit and support of veterans who are returning to college campuses around the country. As troops are being withdrawn around the globe, these veterans are coming home in ever increasing numbers to continue their educations. Those veterans returning to Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) will have yet another great support system waiting for them – American Legion University Veterans Post 360 has been established right on campus.

Founded a year or so ago, Post 360 is the first American Legion Post to be founded on a college campus and its members are comprised of students and faculty at the school. “It’s not easy for a student vet” said

Post 360 Commander Kevin Mezger, "They have different scenarios going on in their lives. They are trying to acclimate back to a civilian sector area, plus handle school, plus other issues that the normal person doesn't experience on a normal basis".

**Using Ecstasy to Treat PTSD?:** Stars and Stripes reports that the drug known as Ecstasy may be effective in easing some of the most treatment-resistant forms of PTSD when coupled with psychotherapy. This obviously controversial therapy using an "illegal" drug has only been tested on a small 20 person group but the doctor in charge of the study says patients showed tremendous improvement in their reported symptoms even after years of being in therapy. The fact that the medical community is willing to accept such radical options for the treatment of PTSD is a reminder of just how difficult it has been to find a procedure to properly care for and treat veterans suffering from PTSD.

**Payment of Troops and the Fiscal Cliff:** According to the Congressional Budget Office, military compensation has grown to exceed private sector wages by more than 25% over the last ten years. If we go over the fiscal cliff and sequestration takes effect, the Department of Defense will be required to make a \$500 billion cut from the defense budget so that the issue of military compensation will obviously become a significant issue involved in the negotiations as to which budget items are to be reduced and/or cut.

### **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 27<sup>th</sup> with a Bingo session. The new policy of Post 46, at the suggestion of our Adjutant, Elmer White, is to reward the winners with prizes of \$2 bills because the hospital gift shop booklets were not easily available. So far, this policy has been popular with our hospitalized veterans - cold, hard cash is obviously the preferred prize. If you can help us on Bingo night 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  
Oleg Michajlenko, Service Officer  
Thomas Scott, Executive Committee  
Douglas Woolley, Executive Committee  
Dale Burgess, Executive Committee

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### **TO CONTACT POST 46:**

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