



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46
NEWSLETTER
July, August and September 2013

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

To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

In the last issue of the newsletter, you might remember that there were a few unkind words about our tax system. This issue contains a few unkind words about politics in general and how they often have unfavorable results for our veterans. For those scholars among us, you might remember that the ancients conceived of politics as providing the very architecture of our society. Aristotle wrote that because the aim of politics is the highest good for humankind, it necessarily includes the ends of all the other arts – all the activities of man – and reaches to every aspect of life. Today, we might resent the intrusion of politics into every aspect of human life but this resentment might be because there have been so many recent incidents involving politicians in less than honorable pursuits – failing to pay taxes, sending improper pictures on the internet, lying about a mistress in South America, having an intimate affair in the White House, having a child with a mistress while a spouse is dying of cancer, etc. You have all read about these incidents and many more; however, we continue to elect and reelect such people to high political office. Maybe there is only a small connection between these moral relapses by our politicians and the political decisions they make; however, it is a point worth pondering. The political decisions these people make do in fact affect us all and sometimes fall particularly hard on our active military and on our veterans. Some examples of how politics affects the military and our veterans are included below.

With the warmer weather finally here, please note that our Post 46 baseball team is back in action. We hope that you can attend a game or two and support the team. Also, another reminder that Wilwin, our American Legion facility near Trout Lake in the Upper Peninsula, is now open to Legionnaires through October at a modest charge of \$50 per night. The facility is offered to veterans who served in Afghanistan or Iraq at no charge. If you would like to visit Wilwin or know of some Afghanistan or Iraq veterans who would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact Mike Malley at 734-996-1083 or send an email to our Post 46 web site at americanlegionann Arbor.org.

Other items involve the reminder that we are now posting job opportunities on our Post 46 web site for unemployed veterans, that the passage of time has caused us to recently lose a number of our Post 46 members, that our sales of poppies once again took place for the benefit of our hospitalized veterans due to the hard work of our volunteers and that our VA Hospital in Ann Arbor is continuing its focus on mental health care for our veterans. Another "thank you" for all you do for our Post 46 and our community. If you would like an article to be published in our newsletter, please forward it to my attention. Have a pleasant and healthy summer and we will visit you again in the fall.

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As is our regular custom, listed below are some of the events for the next three months in which all Post 46 members are invited to participate. Life and events slow down during the summer months which give you all time to enjoy the great Michigan outdoors. As all of you are painfully aware, we are losing some of our senior leadership members much too rapidly so that Post 46 needs the active participation of all veterans more than ever before rather than just names on a roster. The outcome of this brief outline should be obvious to all of you – please participate in the meetings and other events of your local American Legion Post which honor our veterans and our local community.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 1	Regular Post Meeting Director's Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 P.M.
July 4	Independence Day
July 15	Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 7:30 P.M.
July 17	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
August 5	Regular Post Meeting Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
August 16	Bingo, Veterans Hospital, Ann Arbor, 7:00 P.M.
August 21	Luncheon Meeting Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
August 19	Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 7:30 P.M.
September 9	Regular Post Meeting Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
September 16	Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 7:30 P.M.
September 18	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. This is usually just a social gathering and provides 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. At your request, we will invite guest speakers from time to time on various topical issues. We are often surprised when members we have not seen for some time show up and bring us up to date on what has happened in their lives since they last made contact with us. If you are one of these and have tales to tell, please drop in.

THE "ONLY" POST 46 FUND RAISER OF THE YEAR - "POPPY DAYS"

Again this year, eleven intrepid Post 46 members volunteered to sell poppies to finance the support which Post 46 provides to our hospitalized veterans at the VA Hospital in Ann Arbor. Our poppy sales were conducted at two locations in Ann Arbor - Busch's on Saline-Ann Arbor Road and Kroger on South Maple - from May 16th to May 18th. Our volunteer salesmen were: Ken Bupp, Dale Burgess, Steve Duncan, Scott Edwards, Frank Fike, Richard Gabourie, Jim Kerley, Michael Malley, Karl Meyer, Oleg Michajlenko and Elmer White. Fortunately, the general public was very generous so that, even with a limited number of volunteers, Post 46 was able to sell a substantial number of poppies. With a sufficient number of volunteers, there is virtually no limit to how many poppies we could sell to benefit our hospitalized veterans; further, the weather in the middle of May is ideal weather to greet the grocery buying public and you can exchange many "war stories" imagined and real with veterans or families of veterans of all ages. Some of our World War II vets took many 2 hour shifts and, of course, "Mr. Volunteer" Dale Burgess, took at least one 4 hour shift. Thanks to all our volunteers - each of you have earned a Post 46 baseball cap if you do not already have one for your charitable efforts.

We hope to see many, many more of you out there next year. As stated earlier, poppy sales is the only fundraiser which Post 46 conducts each year and, although the money collected is important, it is also just as important to remind the public of the sacrifices made by our veterans and some of the history behind them. In fact, our poppy sales volunteers also handed out a brief history regarding the sale of poppies together with a copy of that famous World War I poem, "Flanders Field". A copy of this handout appears below. It resulted, among other things, in the visit by about ten members of a 10th grade social studies class to our Busch's location where poppies were being sold together with some lively discussions and a \$20 donation to our poppy fund:

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE STORY BEHIND THE POPPY - ANN ARBOR AMERICAN LEGION, POST 46

On the 11th hour of November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed to end World War I, the "war to end all wars". In the United States, we honor this day as Veterans Day. Our Canadian and English cousins name the day as Remembrance Day. Much of the most serious and deadly fighting of World War I took place in an area then described as Flanders, a region between Belgium and France. The soil in this area was so overturned by artillery and other ordnance that it enabled poppies seeds to grow and multiply into fields of color while being surrounded by death and destruction. Their bright red color would forever serve as a vivid reminder of the blood shed during these terrible battles. A Canadian Colonel, John McCrae, wrote a now famous poem entitled "In Flanders Field" in honor of those who died and as a solemn reminder to those who survived:

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly.
Scarce heard amid the guns below
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

Post 46 is named after Erwin Prieskorn, the first Soldier from Washtenaw County to die in World War I.

BINGO NIGHT AT THE VA HOSPITAL

A Bingo night is scheduled at the VA Hospital on August 16, 2012. If you can join us and help hospitalized veterans with their bingo cards and hand out prizes now in the form of \$2 bills, please let us know. The VA Hospital has installed a digital type of bingo device which displays the random numbers on a screen so that neither Steve Duncan nor Elmer White have to pick up the balls and call the numbers on them. If this technical progress continues, will the players even have to mark a bingo card? Please volunteer your time and spend an evening with our hospitalized veterans - you will hear (but do not have to believe) some amazing stories.

LOSS OF LEGIONNAIRES

Post 46 lost a number of its veteran members during the past year. One of the difficult aspects of being an "active" member of Post 46 is that one becomes part of a close family of friends and, far too often, we lose each other. Unfortunately, we sometimes do not learn about the loss of a member until many months after the death or severe illness of the veteran particularly if the Legionnaire has not been active in Post 46 for some time and the member's family does not contact us. Our listing of our veterans in this newsletter who we have recently lost might not, therefore, be complete:

DAVID GRAY
CLAUDE MARSHALL
ROBERT MCINTYRE
DAVID SCHANKIN
ROBERT SHANNYFELT
EDWARD SKIPPER
LLOYD WICKS

Our best wishes and condolences go to the families of these treasured veterans. They all share together in the honor of having served their country. To them, we repeat a portion of our American Legion prayer: In memory of our departed comrades, may we sincerely say "May their souls rest in peace".

AMERICAN LEGION - WILWIN LODGE

For the past two years, this newsletter has informed all Post 46 members that one of the best kept secrets, it seems, is that The American Legion has a veterans' retreat just north of the bridge near Trout Lake where veterans can stay from May through October of each year for a modest charge of \$50 per night and is available to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans at no charge whatever.

As we described last year, Wilwin Lodge sits on some 600 acres of wooded land which was once a major lumbering operation complete with a mill, railroad spur and its own village for workers and lumber buyers. It is now a peaceful retreat deep in the woods of Northern Michigan with five or six of buildings including the main lodge, a "soldier's retreat" and a new assembly hall together with about ten miles of well-maintained trails winding throughout the property. The main lodge is truly a magnificent building which has been carefully updated and maintained to preserve its historic appearance. It can sleep fifteen people in a total of six bedrooms and is complemented by a two story atrium type balcony overlooking dual stone fireplaces at each end.

Planning is underway for a group of some 8 to 10 veterans from the Ann Arbor area to spend a week together at Wilwin this July which will include some members from Post 46. If any of you know of any veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan who would benefit from a vacation at Wilwin Lodge and would appreciate some time staying there while enjoying the peace and tranquility of 600 acres of woods and wildlife, please be sure to let me know. Further, if any Post 46 members would like to spend some time at Wilwin Lodge on their vacation, you are also welcome. Note that travel trailers or RVs can easily be parked on the grounds although at present there are no hook up facilities. So do not hesitate but take full advantage of this holiday opportunity and encourage any Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to do the same.

JOB POSTINGS FOR VETS

For those of you who are on line and for those of you who visit our Post 46 web site at <http://americanlegionannarbor.org> you will have received or will find on the Post 46 web site a new service which lists job openings in the area for veterans. We hope that this service will soon be available on the Washtenaw County, Department of Veteran Affairs, website and Post 46 will then simply provide a link to that listing. Post 46 has been receiving these job postings courtesy of Pete Bellaire, Marine Corps League, who has a direct pipe line to Sean Sims, State of Michigan, Veterans Service Division, Monroe, MI 734-240-7970. Veterans seeking employment would be well advised to contact Mr. Sims' office directly.

We have a number of Post 46 members who are currently unemployed and, further, many young, newly discharged veterans are encountering significant difficulty in finding employment. This newsletter has previously asked that all members who know of employment opportunities or who know of veterans looking for employment contact Post 46 and exchange this information. There are also a number of job fairs for veteran job seekers. For example, on July 16, 2013, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., there is a job fair at the CVS Regional Learning Center, 5901 Connor Road, Detroit, MI 48213. Information regarding these events and many others are also available from Mr. Sims' office.

During the next five years, it has been reported that one million military service members will return from active duty. There is virtually nothing more disheartening than being a veteran who cannot find work and who is unable to provide for his or her family when their service to their country in uniform is done; however, it can and does happen to any of us, and if you have personally never had the experience, you are truly blessed. All members of Post 46 should be fully aware of those veterans in need of employment. Simply stated, the best way to show appreciation to our service members is to hire them.

BASEBALL WRAP UP AND REPORT

This same time last year, we reported that Commander Steve Duncan has been following our Post 46 baseball team from state to state and from tournament to tournament. Not much has changed since last summer – Steve has provided just a brief report of the early results of the Post 46 baseball team which he has again been following from state to state and from tournament to tournament:

June 7 – 9; Troy, Ohio. Won – 3 games; Lost 2 games; Missed the playoffs

June 14 – 16; Blissfield, Michigan. Won – 5 games but missed playoff by runs allowed.

June 21 – 23; Kenosha, Wisconsin. Latest news flash from Steve –entire tournament washed out by storms,

June 27 – 30; Dayton, Ohio. Report to be posted on Post 46 website.

By the time you read this newsletter, many of you will have previously received an email inviting you to attend Veterans Appreciation Night at the Eastern Michigan University baseball field. We also hope that many of you will have attended and were honored at the Post 46 baseball team's Veterans Appreciation Night. This game is played at the baseball diamond of Eastern Michigan University on June 25, 2013. Ceremonies began at 6:00 P.M. at which time all Post 46 veterans present were asked to line up on the third base line of the field and, after a singing of the Star Spangled Banner, were presented with Post 46 baseball team dog tags by the Post 46 team players. American League baseball is a time-honored tradition and the baseball team is the most significant activity sponsored by Post 46 on behalf of our youth and our community. Please support the team in any way you can, either financially or by attending games, or both. You will enjoy the competitiveness and company of these fine young men, we guarantee it!

POLITICS AND THE MILITARY

The last two issues of this newsletter have kept you abreast of the trials and tribulations of Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dooley. We have chosen to follow this particular story because a local Ann Arbor lawyer, Richard Thompson, from the Thomas More Law Center is representing Col. Dooley in his efforts to protect his good name and military career. You will hopefully recall that Col. Dooley was a rising star, according to his officer evaluation reports, until a letter dated October 19, 2011, addressed to a number of high military and federal defense department officials was signed by dozens of Islamic groups alleging that Col. Dooley was, among other things, using bigoted training materials, disparaging the Muslim religion and fostering fear and suspicion of American Muslims among law enforcement and the general public. Less than a year after that letter was sent, Col. Dooley's career was sidetracked when he was relieved from his post as an instructor at the Joint Forces Staff College when he was also denounced by then General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The course which Col. Dooley had been asked to present was entitled "Perspectives on Islam and Islam Radicalism" and he had received many accolades for the content and research involved in the course. Student evaluations were very favorable but, despite the assurance of the National Defense University that all such courses and presentations would be held in "strict confidence", the contents of the course and its guest lecturers were somehow made public and General Dempsey publically punished Col. Dooley, ordered him to be relieved of his position and that all military training offensive to Islam be scrubbed.

Fighting back as well as he could, Col. Dooley is represented by the Thomas More Law Center. In the opinion of his lawyer, Richard Thompson, Dempsey's actions appear to create a serious threat to America's security. Mr. Thompson quotes the warning of Marine General and former Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Peter Pace, that, if we are to defeat Muslim extremists, it is important to know the nature and motivation of the enemy and that the public punishment of Col. Dooley effectively sabotages our ability to "know the enemy".

When contacted by this newsletter, Richard Thompson stated that Col. Dooley's appeal is still going through military channels because, before being allowed into the federal court system, he must first "exhaust his administrative remedies". Mr. Thompson did not choose to comment any further; however, as all veterans know, when the order comes down from the top, very few people further down the command structure are inclined to risk their careers in questioning it. One such brave officer was Col. Moening of the National Defense University who wrote a memorandum to the Command Review Board as follows:

“I find it disturbing that (Col. Dooley’s) character and flawless reputation have been called into question, and that our academic freedom and non-attribution policies seem to have been disregarded in this case. If the best among us can so readily be cast aside, with disregard for the protections of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs own Academic Freedom policies at NDU, I am left with great concern for the rest of the military and civilian faculty to perform their duties without fear.”

Richard Thompson has indicated he will provide further information regarding the outcome of the case as soon as he is able to so.

There are dozens of other recent political actions which affect the military which time and space do not allow us to cover. For example, you might have been following the following stories:

UNIFORMS: A Congressional subcommittee recently voted to end service-specific camouflage uniforms so that the camouflage uniforms of the various branches would be all alike. Some members thought that the amount of savings to moving to a joint combat uniform was relatively small compared to the morale gained within the services of having separate uniforms.

STOLEN VALOR: A new version of the Stolen Valor Act, backed by The American Legion, was enacted on June 3rd which now makes it a “federal crime for an individual to fraudulently hold oneself out to be a recipient of any of several specified military decorations or medals with the intent to obtain money, property or other tangible benefit”.

UNLAWFUL COMMAND INFLUENCE: A Navy judge recently held that two defendants in military sexual assault cases cannot be punitively discharged, if found guilty, because of “unlawful command influence” derived from comments made by President Obama. The judge ruled that harsh comments made by Obama, as Commander in Chief, would unduly influence any potential sentencing of the defendants if they were to be found guilty.

FLAG AMENDMENT: Yet another flag-protection amendment was introduced proposing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would give Congress the authority to protect the U.S. flag from desecration. The American Legion has traditionally thrown its support behind this type of legislative action while many have viewed it as a threat to the freedom of speech and are concerned as to how it would be enforced.

LEGAL SEMINAR - BENEFITS FOR VETERANS: A local legal education seminar recently offered the following ten tips to lawyers for getting benefits for veterans and their families: 1. Ask every client about military service in the family 2. Get VA accreditation 3. Stay on the right side of restrictions 4. Non-service connected disabilities may be covered. 5. Look into health care benefits. 6. Look into VA nursing homes. 7. Know about the \$40,000/\$80,000 asset limit myth. 8. Deduct unreimbursed medical expenses if income limits loom. 9. Set an early effective date for pension benefits. 10. Know the effect of planning for VA eligibility on Medicaid eligibility.

ANN ARBOR VA HOSPITAL - MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: The Veterans Affairs Office announced recently that it has met its nationwide goal of hiring 1,600 mental health workers. For our local VA Hospital in Ann Arbor, this has meant the addition of eight new employees to the staff – a compensation and pension psychologist and seven social workers.

VALUABLE INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET: For those of you are connected to the internet, we hope that you regularly visit some of those sites which are dedicated to providing information about and to the military and its veterans. The “main stream” press often ignores or gives little coverage to events or items directly affecting the military. There are literally hundreds of such websites and our Post 46 website links you to some of them. To get you started, here are a couple of such sites you might visit and you can then expand your horizons from there if you are so inclined:

www.legion.org (The American Legion, of course); www.military.com; and www.militarytimes.com.

The Department of Defense and each branch of the service also each has an individual website. Enjoy and learn.

NIDAL HASAN, THE FORT HOOD SHOOTER, AND HIS BENEFITS

Always a difficult story to report involves the protections and benefits awarded by our American system of government to some of our most fanatic enemies. The Department of Defense has confirmed that accused Fort Hood assassin, Major Nidal Hasan, has now been paid more than \$278,000 since the November 5, 2009, shooting which left 13 dead and 32 injured. The Army reported that, under the Military Code of Justice, Hasan's salary cannot be suspended unless he is proven guilty. If Hasan had been a civilian defense department employee, the Army would have suspended his pay after just seven days.

The irony or even tragedy of this story is that, more than three years later, soldiers wounded in the mass shooting are fighting to receive the same pay and medical benefits given to those wounded in combat. The Army has not classified the wounds of the Fort Hood victims as "combat related" and even declines to label the shooting as a "terrorist attack". The Army has chosen to describe the incident as "workplace violence". Rep. Thomas Rooney (R) Florida has recently drafted and signed a bi-partisan letter urging defense secretary, Chuck Hagel, to correct the current situation which has "...resulted in an embarrassing lack of care and treatment for the victims and their families". Rep. Rooney protested that, while we give the Defendant, Hasan, every conceivable benefit of the doubt, we refuse to give any such benefits to the victims.

POST 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
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