



AMERICAN LEGION POST 46
NEWSLETTER
April, May, and June 2011

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

To All Fellow Legionnaires of American Legion Post 46

Like many of us here in Michigan, a few weeks ago I was wondering just how much longer the cold weather of March would continue to linger on and I was actually beginning to feel sorry for myself for the discomfort caused by the unseasonably cold temperatures. However, three news events occurred in March, any one of which caused all my personal feelings of discomfort to be totally forgotten.

The first news event occurred on March 11, 2011, when an earthquake struck off the coast of Japan registering a 9.0 on the Richter scale. The earthquake was then followed by a devastating tsunami which swept over cities and farmland in the northern part of the country. To compound these disasters, nuclear reactors then suffered partial meltdowns and a severe radiation emergency extended over the affected area. As of this writing, the death toll is expected to exceed 20,000 and 200,000 remain homeless. North Africa and the Middle East suddenly going up in the flames of civil rebellion was the second such news event. As you are well aware, the United States has become militarily involved in one of these "hot spots", Libya. For those Post 46 veterans who served in the Marines, the words "to the shores of Tripoli" have again become particularly relevant. These words actually date back to the Barbary Coast wars of 1805 when the Marines first marched into Tripoli and hoisted the U.S. flag. The city was later lost and then recaptured by the British Eighth Army in World War II. Tripoli is now again the focus of military action as it currently serves as the primary stronghold for its strongman dictator, Colonel Gadhafi. The casualty figures arising from the civil uprisings in these Arabic countries are alarming and will apparently continue to increase for some time to come. Finally, we are confronted with the "kill-team" news story originally published in Rolling Stone a week or two ago about some "rogue" members of 5/2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team who allegedly murdered and mutilated Afghanistan civilians. This story is particularly difficult for veterans to digest. The true facts have yet to be fully disclosed and its consequences are still to be measured. All of these agonizing news events were reported in March and each will continue to affect thousands of people around the world well beyond the final arrival of the warmth of spring.

On a more pleasant note, spring does, in fact, bring many of us out of the inactivity of our winter blahs. I urge all of you, therefore, to consult the Calendar of Events for Post 46 for the next three months which is included in the newsletter and again ask that you make plans to become active and participate in some of our events.

This calendar not only includes dates of luncheon meetings and Regular Post Meetings but also includes dates for our annual presentation of ROTC scholarships at the University of Michigan, our annual poppy sales dates, bingo dates at the Ann Arbor Veterans Hospital and information about the opening day for our Post 46 Baseball Team. Each year, this newsletter invites all members to attend our luncheon meetings and regular Post meetings. We would also enjoy it if you would become more actively involved, if you are able to do so, and join in our other activities. For example, if you

can volunteer to spend a couple of hours selling poppies, it would be a big help. The workload is considerably lessened if it is shared among 30 members rather than 15. Poppy sales are what support our activities on behalf of our disabled veteran comrades who are confined to the VA Hospital. If you are a baseball fan of any kind, please get involved in supporting our Post 46 baseball team. The young athletes involved depend on our support and it offers an opportunity to relive your youth as a young baseball player. If you have never participated in a packing party to send packages to our troops overseas, this is the time to make the commitment. There is an item in this newsletter which outlines where and when and how you can contribute to aiding in this effort to show solidarity and support to military personnel currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Please do not just sit on your hands this year but remind yourself that you are a veteran still capable of flying the flag. Post 46 activities also put you in contact with some of your fellow veterans of Post 46. Most of them are pretty special people. If you can volunteer for any of these activities, please call me or our Commander, Steve Duncan, at 734-997-9485 to let us know when you are available to help us out.

Many thanks for your support of American Legion Post 46 and for any contributions you make of time or money (or both) to its various missions to serve our veterans, active service personnel and our community.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| April 4 | Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m. |
| April 5 | ROTC Awards Ceremony, Rackham Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. |
| April 15 | Bingo
Ann Arbor VA Hospital, 7:00 p.m. All volunteers welcome. |
| April 18 | Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 8:00 p.m.
Chelsea American Legion Post 31. |
| April 20 | Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m. |

- May 2 Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
- May 15 Baseball Meeting
Hand out uniforms, rosters, etc.
Contact Steve Duncan directly for further details
- May 16 Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 8:00 P.M.
- May 18 Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
- May 19, 20 & 21 Poppy Days
(See more poppy details later in this Newsletter)
- May 22 2nd District Meeting – Memorial Service 12:30 P.M.
Regular Meeting 2:00 P.M.
- June 6 Regular Post Meeting
Directors Room, Weber's Inn, 7:00 p.m.
- June 7 American Legion Post 46 Baseball Team Season Begins
(See more baseball details later in this Newsletter)
University of Michigan Fisher Field – 6:30 p.m.
- June 15 Luncheon Meeting
Classic Cup Café, Jackson Road, 11:45 a.m.
- June 20 Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, 8:00 p.m.
- June 28 Veterans Appreciation Baseball Game – 6:30 P.M.
Chelsea High School Field
All Post 46 members invited to attend this special night.

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. It is always a welcome surprise when members we have not seen in some time attend and renew old friendships. If you would like us to invite any particular speaker or special guest to one of our luncheons, please let us know.

POPPY SALES

Post 46 will again be selling poppies on behalf of our veterans who are patients at the Ann Arbor Veterans Hospital. We will be selling poppies from at least three (3) locations in Ann Arbor (probably Busch's at both Green Road and Saline-Ann Arbor Road and K-Mart in Maple Village). We plan to conduct poppy sales for three days on May 19th, 20th and 21st. The proceeds of our poppy sales are earmarked (if that word is still politically acceptable) to cover the expenses which Post 46 incurs for providing entertainments, prizes and other items to our hospitalized veterans. THIS IS AGAIN AN ANNUAL APPEAL FOR POST 46 MEMBERS TO VOLUNTEER TO SELL POPPIES SO THAT THE PRIMARY BURDEN DOES NOT ALWAYS FALL ON THE SHOULDERS OF JUST 8 OR 10 MEMBERS!!

Our schedule generally calls for 2 hour shifts from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Surely, everyone can make the time to volunteer for at least one shift for such a worthwhile cause. Please contact Steve Duncan at 734-997-9485 or at duncanssm@comcast.net so that we can add your name to our roster of volunteers. You will note that our Calendar of Events is quite full for the next three months. We need volunteers to fulfill these obligations more than ever before if Post 46 hopes to continue these activities on behalf of our community, veterans and those on active service. Please get involved!!

BINGO AT VA HOSPITAL

As the Calendar of Events indicates, our next bingo night at the VA Hospital is April 15, 2010. As always, we expect our Commander, Steve Duncan, to be present to catch the bouncing balls and to read the numbers; however, as you are probably already aware, Post 46 has been instructed not to serve the food and soft drinks which we previously provided to the veterans apparently because of dietary restrictions. Although this restriction might reduce some of the entertainment value this activity brings to our veterans, Post 46 hopes to make up for reduction by increasing the size of the prizes to be awarded to our bingo winning veterans, if our budget permits.

POST 46 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Our post 46 American Legion baseball team will soon be back in action. Commander Duncan has submitted the following report:

Our baseball team starts its 2011 season on Tuesday, June 7, at the University of Michigan Fisher Field. The team plays its home games at Chelsea High School baseball field. The season runs until mid-July followed by tournament play. The season schedule is posted on the team website. The team website is post46baseball.com. You will also find a map to the field. If you are interested in donating to support the team, send your donation to American Legion Post 46, P.O. Box 2192, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. All donations are tax-deductible. Please make your checks payable to American Legion Post 46 Baseball.

On Tuesday, June 28, there will be a Veterans Appreciation game at the home field. There will be a special ceremony before the game to recognize all veterans attending the game. Please come to as many games as you can and support the Post 46 baseball team. If you have any questions, please contact Commander Duncan at 734-997-9485 or duncanssm@comcast.net.

POW-MIA - AN UNUSUAL ANN ARBOR CONNECTION

As you are all aware, when members of Post 46 gather together, we designate an empty chair on which we place our POW-MIA banner in memory of those who are unaccounted for either as prisoners of war or as missing in action. One of the longest and most puzzling cases involving a missing soldier is the continuing mystery regarding the disappearance of a former resident of Ann Arbor, Ahmed Kousay al-Taie.

Al-Taie, an Army interpreter, was apparently kidnapped in Baghdad back on October 23, 2006. More than four years later, al-Taie is the only American service member still missing in Iraq (There are 7 American civilians currently missing and unaccounted for). About a week after his kidnapping, an al-Taie family member reportedly received a ransom demand but the details are not clear. It has also been reported that al-Taie was last seen four months after his abduction in a video posted on the Internet by a Shiite militant faction called Ahl al-Bayt Brigades.

Al-Taie grew up in Iraq but fled the country with his family when he was in his teens. The family finally settled in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His mother said that her son, like many Iraq exiles, was eager to help rebuild his homeland after the U.S. invasion. The ouster of Saddam Hussein gave him renewed focus and he joined the Army Reserve program for native speakers of Arabic and was deployed to Iraq in November, 2005. He was assigned to a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad until he was kidnapped the following year while on his way on a motorcycle to visit his Iraqi wife who was still then living in Baghdad. As an American soldier and a Sunni Muslim, al-Taie had two strikes against him when he left the safety of his base inside the Green Zone, a well guarded area within Baghdad.

Since his disappearance, al-Taie has been promoted, in absentia, from specialist to staff sergeant and this former Ann Arbor resident continues to be the only military soldier currently missing in Iraq. The Personnel Recovery Division, a group of some 20 people under the command of Col. Michael Infanti of Stafford, Va., is continuing to conduct the search effort. Although Col. Infanti believes that al-Taie is alive until someone proves him wrong, al-Taie's family fears he will never be found. If any Post 46 member has information to supplement, correct or revise this report, please get in contact with us and we will publish the new information in our next newsletter.

CHELSEA AMERICAN LEGION POST CHALLENGES

Post 46 sometimes feels at a disadvantage because it does not have a bricks and mortar post where its members can assemble and relax; however, having a post building can also involve additional liabilities, expenses and responsibilities. Unfortunately, many American legion posts around the country are closing their doors due to decreasing membership, increasing maintenance costs and general disinterest. One of our neighbors, the Chelsea American Legion Post 31 in Chelsea is facing a different challenge in the form of tax collectors from Sylvan Township.

Last month, Post 31 received a notice from Sylvan Township that stipulates that the post must obtain a costly special use permit for its annual fund raising chicken broil event. A letter to Post 31 from a zoning official stated, among other things, as follows: "Recent township attorney opinions determined that the chicken broil is an illegal expansion of a non-conforming use." Post 31 holds two fund raising events each year - a chicken broil and Winter Carnival. These events are the major sources of revenue for the post. Unfortunately, the "special use permit" is not cheap. Reportedly, the fee amounts to some \$3400 and the post will be ticketed for \$500 if it does not apply for and obtain the permit.

According to its financial officer, Craig Maier, Post 31 makes about \$8,000 a year on both events and the money is used to maintain its building and property on Cavanaugh Lake. Any balance is put back into

the community. Post Commander Gunnis is quoted as saying: "To the best of my knowledge, the permit request was instigated by one individual who is taking exception to the Legion's activities". Apparently, a Township Trustee lives on Cavanaugh Lake and objects to the additional traffic generated by the two annual Post activities.

Township officials said that the two events at the Legion post are the only public events held each year in the township so that the township obviously has little if any experience in issuing such special permits. There is also a legal issue as to whether or not the chicken broil or the Winter Carnival predated the applicable township ordinance and should be grandfathered from having to apply for a permit. And so it goes - having a post building can have its ups and downs. We are sure that Post 31 will not surrender the field without a challenge. Post 31 Commander Jeff Gunnis is quoted as saying: "The Legion is investigating and considering all its possible options." We will keep you posted.

PACKAGES FOR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

The local chapter of the VVA, Post 310, has scheduled another packing party for troops overseas for Sunday, May 22nd at 3:00 P.M. at the VFW Post on Wagner Road. The VVA chapter proudly boasts that, in the 8 years since it began this effort for our troops, it has mailed 2,431 packages overseas.

The Washtenaw County Bar Association in association with Thomas M. Cooley Law School is also participating in "Operation Iraq-Afghanistan PAC" collecting clothing, personal care items, food and other items requested by our troops overseas. This "Operation" is a tri-annual collection drive that collects the requested items, packages them and ships them to bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. The items are initially collected locally at drop off points here in An Arbor and Ypsilanti and then delivered to a central collection and packaging facility at the Ford National Parts Distribution Center Garage located at Middlebelt and Plymouth in Livonia where volunteers help with the packaging and labeling of donations for shipment.

It is time for more Post 46 members to get involved and help in these worthy efforts to provide support and encouragement to our military personnel serving overseas. Veterans who give back to our community and our military service personnel is what we are all about. Please contact Post 46 without delay so that we can let you know how and where and when you can participate in either of these packaging drives by donating either your time or money (or both).

REGULAR POST MEETINGS

Our regular post meetings continue to be held each month at Weber's on Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. All members are invited to attend and become active in Post 46 activities. These meetings are also operated in an informal manner and members are urged to participate to express their views, voice their opinions, and vote on any business matters on the agenda.

ADDITIONAL NEWS ITEMS

If any Post 46 members have any announcements, news items, or other information which he or she would like to see published in our next news letter, please forward it to us and, if it survives the review of our editor and censors, you will see it in print.

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
Robert Oxenger, Chaplain
Graydon Krapohl, Service Officer
Thomas Scott, Executive Committee
Douglas Woolley, Executive Committee
Dale Burgess, Executive Committee

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