

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 16-02

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COMMANDER'S POST- It's Our Time Again

When we took that oath we knew that we were signing up to a cause that was more important than anything we had ever done before. Each of us became "honor bound" to Protect and Defend The CONSTITUTION of THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Against All Enemies Both Foreign and Domestic. As veterans and service members we continue to carry that obligation.

As Legion members it is our duty to make our country strong through programs that inspire adults and youth to be interested and active participants in the affairs of our country. The principles of patriotism and strong moral values must be preserved. Volunteer your time and ideas in your community. As a veteran you have your fellow citizens' respect and ear.

Encourage the youth in your neighborhoods to participate in programs like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and organized sports teams. Volunteer your time to youth organizations to help mentor kids from broken homes or help out as a tutor after school and on weekends.

As summer approaches, we will be rolling out our patriotic float to get ready for the holiday picnics and parades. Our parade theme this year is the 25th Anniversary of Desert Storm. If you have some ideas and would like to help decorate the float, let us know. We also hope to see you and your family at our awards picnic in June.

Until then, For God and Country. Jim Saur



Monthly Trivia- In what year did Congress charter the Blue Star Mothers of America as a veterans service organization?

.....*The first person to give the correct answer at a monthly Post meeting wins a nice prize. Sorry, you can only win once per year.*

© Congratulations to Sgt. at Arms Cordell Gardner, for correctly answering the 16-1 Newsletter trivia question - In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the original GI Bill. Six months earlier, The American Legion wrote the first draft of the "GI Bill of Rights".

ADJUTANT'S CORNER- "What You Can Do as a Member"

After young Army Iraq/Afghanistan veteran Edgar Morales was introduced to the American Legion and encouraged to participate in Legion programs, he decided to join. Morales said, "We need to promote our programs. If we do our programs and serve our community, we are going to end up serving veterans and those veterans are going to find out who we are and what we stand for. That's going to bring in our membership."

Post 36 is staying very active in the local community. We promote Legion programs in several ways. We send high school seniors to Boys State and Student Trooper. We help local veterans in times of financial emergency and to get the benefits they have earned. We sponsor youth little league and softball. We give supplies to our VA and deployed local veterans. We bring our float to local parades and the county fair. These are just some examples.

Why do our members stay active? Are we just trying to increase our membership? No, we joined the Legion because we want to continue to serve our community. Morales said "The new generation of veterans also want to continue to serve. They want to find somewhere where they can reunite with....and serve as a veteran for their community." If our current members lead by example and promote Legion programs, we will show the new veterans how they can serve their community. You can help. You could volunteer to lead our youth sports program- it would only take about 6 hours of time, annually! Or, give about 12 hours of your time and head up our youth scholarship program.

So, I'm asking you to consider volunteering some of your time. The new generation of veterans is eager to learn about our programs and to know they too can still serve. Let's talk about what you can do to help.

Veterans Still Serving, Don Gillespie

Note- the quotes by E. Morales in this column are from the Feb. 16 Dispatch.



WANTED- POST 36 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS-

Unfortunately, many of our Post's old historical documents have not been saved. If you, your family or friends have items of historical value to the Post, please let me know. We are looking for old Legion magazines, meeting minutes, newsletters, photos, and other printed history. I can copy them if you want to have returned, if not, they will belong to the Post, not me. I especially want to put together a roster of all past members. Call Don Gillespie at 873-5115. Thank you.

AMERICANISM- Sponsoring Youth Sports

Spring is almost here and it's time to sponsor youth sports. This year we are sponsoring two teams, one from Portage West Little League and another from Milwood Junior Softball.

We hope to have a meeting at a game, or just schedule a "field trip" to at least one game of each team. When the schedules come out, I will email them to you. If you are interested, both leagues have a website or call one of our Officers and we can give you more information. Batter Up!



Second Annual Picnic and Member Recognition .

Last year we had a good turnout for our members' picnic and recognition ceremony. We were proud to award 29 members for continuous membership milestones, and we also gave a special recognition award to Jake Rickli for his hard work. We hand delivered 24 of the certificates, which turned out to be fun as well, because we were able to meet quite a few of our members. This year we hope to have a better turnout. Members who have 10, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 55, and 60+ years of continuous membership will receive a certificate of recognition. We'll all have some good food and a good time.

MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Arlie Bennett

Arlie was raised on a farm in Antrim County, MI. When she entered the service in 1944, she was sent to Brookley Air Service Command in Mobile, Alabama. After training as a stenographer, she was sent to France to spend a year in Paris and Reims. She was discharged in 1946 as a Tech Sergeant.

After her discharge, Arlie went to Alma College for 2 years, and then graduated from U of M with a BA in social work. She worked in a hospital in Ypsilanti Hospital for 3 years, went back to school and earned her Masters degree. Arlie says if it wasn't for the GI Bill- "I would have never seen the inside of a college". And she is very grateful. She worked in child guidance in Kalamazoo and 19 years at the rehab center at Pine Lake. She spent her life serving her community and country.

Her hobbies include wood working, reading and listening to music. At 94, Arlie lives a quiet life with her cat Sishy.



Please join us in welcoming these new or transferred

American Legion members to Post 36.

Welcome and thank you for still serving.

James Ouding, Sr. - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Richard Brown - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

James McNett (PUFL) - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Danny First - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Donald Vanhoe - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

George Schumacher - U.S. Army, World War II

Michael Mulhearn - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Tommie Palm - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

David Blizzard - U.S.M.C., Persian Gulf



TAPS- The members of American Legion Post 36 extend their deepest sympathies to the loved ones of these fallen members.

Chuck Wilson - Chuck was born on March 15, 1926 in Pontiac, MI. He served proudly in the US Air Force during World War II and was recalled for the Korean Conflict. Chuck is survived by Jeddy, his wife of 69 years, three children, eight grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren. Rest in Peace Chuck.

Friday Night Dinners- are available starting at 6pm every Friday. Dinner is prepared and served by a different group at the Post each week. The dinner schedule is-



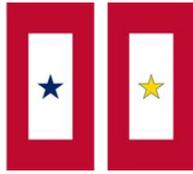
1st Friday - served by the VFW.

2nd Friday - VFW Auxiliary

3rd Friday - meal served by the American Legion.*

4th Friday - VFW Auxiliary.

**We could use your help with the 3rd Friday dinners. We need people to help prepare and serve food or you could simply offer to prepare something at home and bring it in. We'll cover expenses for the food. In the past we have brought in self serve chili and cornbread, and we have served burgers on other months. Please help out.*



Blue Star Service Banners-

There are few causes more important to those of us in The American Legion, than supporting our Military and their families, both during and after times of war. One way we show our support is through the free distribution of Blue Star Service Banners that celebrate and honor the families of America's service men and women.

Ninety years ago, Army Capt. Robert L. Queissner of the 5th Ohio Infantry had two sons serving in Europe. He wanted to show his pride in what his sons were doing, so he designed a simple banner consisting of a white field surrounded with a red border. On the white field, up to 5 blue stars would be placed to indicate the number of family members that were serving in the war theater.

The Following was read into the Congressional Record by an Ohio Congressman on Sept. 24, 1917: "...the Mayor of Cleveland, the Chamber of Commerce and the Governor of Ohio have adopted this service flag. The world should know of those who give so much for liberty. The dearest thing in all the world to a father and mother - their children."

During World War I and II, Blue Star Banners were widely displayed but soon fell out of favor. After September 11, 2001, The American Legion pledged to rekindle the spirit of pride in our military by providing Blue Star Banners to the families of active duty members.

The Blue Star Banner is displayed in the front window of a home and shows a families pride in their loved one's service to this Country to include the National Guard and Reserves on active service. It also acts as a reminder to the community that preserving America's freedom and way of life, demands sacrifice from not only the service person, but their family as well.

Please watch for families in the Kalamazoo area who have a son or daughter serving in the military. Then let one of the Post Officers (listed on the front of this newsletter) know, so we can arrange a banner presentation to the family. Let's show our local veteran families that we really care. If you are interested in helping with the presentations, please let us know because we could use your help.

OTHER CLUBS at the RED ARROW POST-

As you probably know, there are several other groups that call the Red Arrow Post home. Here is a profile of one of the clubs that is meeting at your Post-

KALAMAZOO NUMISMATIC CLUB (COIN COLLECTOR'S CLUB)

The Kalamazoo Numismatic Club was founded in 1960 to promote the hobby of coin collecting through educational programs and shows. They meet at 7pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, January through October, and the 2nd Tuesday in November and December. Typically, the first meeting of the month is a member coin and collectibles auction, and the second meeting of the month there is a guest speaker.

If you are interested in the club, or even just a little curious, feel free to drop in on a meeting! They are a friendly group, have lots of fun and welcome newcomers of any age or experience. Come on in and see for yourself!

If you would like to know more about the KNC or become a member, contact Mike Dennany at: irishdennany@yahoo.com, or come to a meeting.



Re-establish Post 36 American Legion Auxiliary

Still no replies to our question – "is there any interest in re-establishing an Auxiliary at our post?" We will not stop asking. The Post 36 Auxiliary disbanded several years ago, due to low membership and participation. We already have a few interested women, but we need 10 paid members in order to establish an Auxiliary Unit at our Post.

The American Legion and Auxiliary were designed to serve together, to have the support and inclusion of their spouse and family members. We sure would welcome more spouse and family member involvement at the Post.

Eligibility requirements are- "Any woman who is eligible for membership in the American Legion is also eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. The mother, wife, daughter, sister, grand-daughter, great-grand-daughter, or grandmother of members of the American Legion, and deceased veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the listed war eras".

If you or your spouse is interested in becoming a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, please contact a Post Officer. Annual membership dues would be approximately \$20 - \$25 per year. An Auxiliary membership would make a good gift for your spouse or daughter.



Have you visited the Post Library? We have a growing selection of books and movies for members to borrow. Most of them are military non-fiction or fiction. The next time you are at the Post, borrow a book to read, or a movie to watch. Library donations are welcome too.

PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR POST-

Please contact your Legion Post about health issues, because you are important to us. Please feel free to contact us and keep us up to date. Post 36 might be able to help or assist you with questions about the VA Hospital, benefits, nursing home visits, and veteran's funerals. Please call one of your officers from the top of the front page.

It takes strength to ask for help and we can't help you, if we don't know about the problem.

MEMBERSHIP

Current membership is 287, with over 85% of our members already renewed for 2016. Renew soon if you have not for 2016.

And, if you know a qualified veteran who might want to join, call Jake Rickli @ (269)343-3356.

Colonel Joseph B. Westnedge



Joseph Burchnall Westnedge was born in Kalamazoo on August 16, 1872. Joe joined the Michigan National Guard in 1894. He also attended Kalamazoo College and was a star halfback on the undefeated football team in 1895.

After college, Westnedge continued to serve with the Michigan National Guard. He was a captain during the Spanish-American War in 1898, and in 1916, after serving on the Mexican border, he was promoted to colonel.

When the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, "Colonel Joe" was a manager at a Kalamazoo paper company. He again volunteered to serve his country, stating "We are going, perhaps never to return, and the parting is hard, but a call greater than any other summons us away." Col. Westnedge was one of the few National Guard officers to retain his command in the National Army. He commanded the 126th Infantry, part of the famous 32nd "Red Arrow Division". The 126th arrived in France in March 1918, where they participated in a number of key offensives. A few days before the armistice was signed, Colonel Westnedge was sent to an army hospital in Nantes, France. He died of complications from the effects of mustard gas on 29 November 1918, eighteen days after the war had ended.

Two years later Col. Westnedge was finally brought home and reburied at Riverside Cemetery. Thousands of people lined the streets for his funeral procession. West Street was renamed Westnedge Avenue as a tribute to the city's fallen hero. Col. Westnedge was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix-de-Guerre. Reference- Kris Rzepczynski, Kalamazoo Public Library Staff, 1998, 2005.

VA Medical News & Numbers- The Battle Creek Toll Free number for appointments and information is 1-888-214-1247. The local number is (269) 966-5600, and for afterhours triage is 1-888-838-6466. Extensions are, for triage ext. 35053, Prescription ext.-35500, customer service ext.31990 or at ext. 31980. For further VA questions you can also go to this website for current VA news. <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel>
For assistance obtaining discharge records, visit-
www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/



COMING EVENTS

- Tues. 05 Apr Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Thurs. 21 Apr Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm,
Nominations of 2016-2017 Post Officers.
Come at 6pm to help with Post 36 cleaning.
- Sun. 01 May 3rd District Mtg. – Quincy Post 157.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
- Tues. 03 May Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Thurs. 19 May Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm.
Election of 2016-2017 Post Officers.
- Mon. 30 May Memorial Day – join us at a parade!
- Tues. 07 Jun Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Sat 11 Jun Annual Red Arrow Golf Outing.
Indian Run Golf Course. 9am registration,
10am tee time. \$40 in advance, \$45 day of.
Food and prizes.
- Thurs. 16 Jun Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm. Clean-up at 6pm.
- W-Sun 22-26 June Dept. of Michigan- 2016 Convention.
Sault Ste. Marie, Kewadin Casinos.
- Sat. 25 Jun Member Recognition Ceremony and Family
Picnic, at our Post Pavilion, 1 – 4pm. Good
food provided. Members and family welcome.

CAN WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Each newsletter we can email saves us postage costs. That's money we could spend on helping veterans. Thank you.
We also need your change of address when you move.

The Four Pillars of the American Legion



1. Strong National Security
2. Taking Care of Veterans
3. Mentoring Youth
4. Patriotism & Honor (Americanism)

THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218

Post 36 meetings are held every 3rd Thursday
from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW Post at
1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Portage

NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS OR POST EVENTS?

If you need a ride, please contact us. Lack of transportation should not stop anyone from participating in our Post events.