

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 17-2, April - June 2017

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Vice Commander: Jake Rickli	269-343-3356	JMRickli@SBCGlobal.net
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COMMANDER'S POST- It's Your Time To Step Up

As we enter the spring and summer seasons our emphasis naturally shifts toward warm weather events and activities. Holiday parades, American Legion Boy's State, Student Trooper, youth baseball and softball, summer day camp, and Western Michigan ROTC awards are some of the activities that your Post members and resources will support this summer.

Each of these endeavors involves volunteers from our Post. Since our meetings are attended by less than ten percent of our membership, those that attend are carrying the load for us all. For those that don't attend the monthly meetings, this newsletter and our Facebook page are currently our best tools to keep you informed. A lot of time and effort goes into both. So ask yourself: What can I do to help? Call me at (269) 375-2544 or our Adjutant at (269) 873-5115. **It's your time to step up.**

JAMES A. SAUR, Post Commander



"Let's stick together" was one of the first American Legion recruiting slogans. This poster from 1290 holds true today- the Legion is comprised of veterans from all war eras who are "sticking together".

Monthly Trivia- Every part of The American Legion emblem has meaning. What do the wreath, the stars and the two rings represent? -*The first person to give the correct answer at a Post meeting wins a prize. Sorry, you can only win once per year.*
© Congratulations to Stan Rop, who correctly answered the 17-1 trivia question - *The 40 et 8's name represented the rail cars used to haul either 40 men or 8 horse during WWI. Stan generously donated his prize to one of our newest members, Travis Dowling.* ©

ADJUTANT'S CORNER- Continued Growth

I want to start out by saying - I'm proud of what American Legion Post 36 has accomplished in the last few years. Our membership has doubled, meeting attendance is great, we are doing more in the community and we're having fun doing it.

This growth and participation enable us to sponsor Little League and softball, Boys State and Student Trooper. We help at the Gospel Mission and the VA. We give to the Blue Star Mothers and the Pride of Scotts for their soldier care packages. We are helping WMU ROTC graduates and funding a WMU veteran scholarship. What an impact! That's just the start.

We need to keep this momentum going. Our membership growth is in a very large part due to the many years of hard work by our Senior Vice, Jake Rickli. Jake's not getting any younger and wants to step back, so we need to fill his big shoes.

We will always need volunteers, to continue to grow and when retiring volunteers step down. So, my appeal to you is to consider how well we are doing and then consider helping us grow more. We don't need a lot of help from ONE member, but we need a little help from MANY of our members. Help us continue growing and to serve the community and our veterans.

Still serving! DON GILLESPIE, Post Adjutant



Michael Walton presents a donation to Post 36 Commander Jim Saur.

SPECIAL THANKS TO- Michael and Virginia Walton

Michael and Virginia Walton recently made a very generous donation to Post 36. Mike said they made the donation after reading about the on-going challenge of paying for repairs and improvements to the post. This gift will be used to help with upcoming post improvements and also to promote the American Legion's pillars of mentoring youth and taking care of veterans.

Thank you again Michael and Virginia!

1LT Edward W. Adams

Post 36's Well Respected Third Commander



First Lieutenant Edward W. Adams was a charter member of Kalamazoo's American Legion Post 36. Ed served on the first executive committee and as an officer for the first 2 years. He was so well-liked and respected that he was the only candidate nominated and was unanimously elected as post commander in the fall of 1921. Unfortunately, he was only able to serve as the Post Commander for 3 months before he succumbed to an illness that he had battled since the close of the First World War.

Edward Adams was born in Kalamazoo, the son of Judge and Mrs. John W. Adams. After graduating from the Kalamazoo high school, he attended Kalamazoo College, but soon transferred to Cornell University, where he studied law. He returned home and worked in manufacturing until America entered WWI. Edward enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to Ft. Sheridan officers training camp as a private. He was commissioned as a 2LT in Nov, 1917 and assigned to Co. C, 11th Infantry and served with them in Europe during the war. Because he was a reserve officer, when he arrived in Europe, he spent a few months training with the British and French, learning Artillery and Infantry leadership skills, before being sent forward to the trenches. He was able to write several letters to friends in Kalamazoo, which were reprinted in the Kalamazoo Gazette and give quite a glimpse of life in France, from both behind the lines and at the front. He returned to the U.S. on January 28, 1919.

After the war, Ed returned to work as an official of the Electric Phonograph Co. of Kalamazoo. After being elected as our 3rd post commander, Ed's declining health caused him to move to California for treatments. Failing to improve, he returned to his home in Kalamazoo, and soon his health forced him into the Kellogg Sanitarium in Battle Creek, where after several weeks he succumbed to his illness.

The following is from Commander Adam's memorial service- "Ed...knew the men of the Legion as a commander should know them, finding his deepest pleasure in doing good for them. He would reach out a hand to the buddy who sought aid and through his practical kindness many a Kalamazoo ex-service man received succor in the hour of greatest need. His kindly helpfulness was given without thought of reward...he performed his duty as a soldier and a soldier's leader."

References- Kalamazoo Gazette

National Cemeteries are Offering Pre-Need Eligibility Determinations

The VA is offering eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the program, veterans can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA Nat'l cemetery.

Interested individuals may submit an Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, and supporting documentation, such as a DD-214, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by:

Toll-free fax: 855-840-8299

Email: Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov

Mail: National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543 St. Louis, MO 63151

The VA will review applications and provide written notice of its determination of eligibility; saving determinations and supporting documentation electronically to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need.

Eligible individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery, opening/closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care of the gravesite and a government-furnished headstone or marker or niche cover, all at no cost to the family.

Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, on the [VA website](#) or by calling 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

References- Mich. Veteran Affairs Agency. Thanks to Bob Edwards for the article.

CURRENT EVENTS- A new column designed to keep you up-to-date on Post 36 business. In the past quarter we-

- ❖ Sponsored a West Portage Little League team.
- ❖ Sponsored a Milwood softball team.
- ❖ Sponsored a WMU student veteran scholarship.
- ❖ Recruiting an all-post Honor Guard.
- ❖ Donated to Izzy's Lemonade stand.
- ❖ Donated to ranchers impacted by wildfires.
- ❖ Considering renting a bus to attend the 6/15 Tigers game on Veterans night at Comerica park.
- ❖ College student veteran memberships are now \$25.
- ❖ Expenses- we need to replace the boiler and one A/C unit, liquor license cost increased, need to install emergency lighting & bathroom drain replacement!
- ❖ We are raffling a special Red Arrow edition custom AR-15 to help fund all of the post repair bills.

Support the Red Arrow Post- AR-15 Raffle

To fund building repairs and improvements we are raffling a custom AR-15 built by High Caliber Firearms. The 350 tickets are \$20 each. See a post officer for details and to purchase tickets. The drawing will be held at the post at 6pm on Sunday June 18th. Food and festivities prior to the drawing.



MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Benjamin Rietkerk

I enlisted in the Marine Corps infantry in 2003 when we declared war on Iraq. While in the Marine Corps, I spent time in Europe training with the German, Russian, Danish, Lithuanian, and Polish militaries.

In 2006 I was deployed to Fallujah, Iraq. In 2007 after getting back to the U.S. my contract was up so I decided to leave the Marine Corps to spend more time with my family and friends. Last year I decided I missed being in the service so I enlisted in the Michigan Army National Guard as a medic and am in school to find a career in the medical field.

I have been an American Legion member for about six years. I joined because I believe in all the good the American Legion does for veterans and the community.



-MEMBERSHIP NEWS-

Congratulations! National HQ and the Department of Michigan have awarded our post the 2017 Certificate of Meritorious Service. This certificate is awarded to all posts that have by December 31, 2016 enrolled membership for the 2017 membership year equaling or surpassing the post's previous all-time high membership. This was made possible by all of you for your membership and early renewals and with a lot of hard work from our officers. Stop out and check out the award and ribbon.

And let's keep growing! If you know a qualified veteran who might want to join or transfer, call Don Gillespie or Jake Rickli.

If you have not renewed, please send your 2017 dues to the American Legion Post 36 at P.O. Box 19248, Kalamazoo, MI 49019. Dues are \$45 per year.

Let's keep Post 36 strong through solid membership!



3rd District Commander Bob Berger presents a Certificate of Meritorious Service, 100% banner, and award check to Post 36 members Jake Rickli, Chaplain Jack Post and Commander Jim Saur.

Please join us in welcoming these new or transferred American Legion members to Post 36. Welcome and thank you for Still Serving.

Travis Dowling - U.S. Army, G/WOT

Hiram Beane - U.S. Air Force, Korean War

Charles Powell - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Robert Huntington - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Richard Gazley - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Paul Michael - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Joseph Nardielle - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Roy Deaton - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Gerard Alexander - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Garrett Baker - U.S. Army, G/WOT



Let's Re-establish Post 36 American Legion Auxiliary

We welcome and need more spouse and family member involvement at our Post. If you or your spouse or eligible family member are interested in becoming a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, please contact a Post Officer. Annual dues would be approximately \$20 - \$25 per year. An Auxiliary membership would make a nice gift for your spouse or daughter.

DINNER NIGHTS ARE NOW WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY

Relic Catering is now serving dinners at the Post on **most** Wednesday - Saturday nights beginning at 6pm. Dinner choices include great burgers, baskets, wraps & more. They also prepare food on our meeting nights and for some of our special events. Come out and enjoy a great inexpensive meal and thank Relic Catering for the service they are providing.



CAN WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Each newsletter we can email saves us postage costs.

That's money we could spend on helping veterans.

We also need your change of address when you move.

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

ROBERT RAVEN SR.- Bob was born on June 20, 1925 in Kalamazoo, MI. He served in the US Army during WWII and was wounded in Leyte and in Ie Shima. Bob was preceded in death by his wife Marguerite and his daughter Mary.

CLAYTON STARKEY- Clayton was born Feb. 9, 1938 in St. Louis, MO. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Clayton was preceded in death by his first wife Ruth. Clayton later married his wife Cheryl, who survives.

ROBERT JANSSEN- Bob was born April 3, 1936 in Dowagiac, MI. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned home and worked at UPS for over 29 years. Bob was preceded in death by 2 sons: Gary and Bobby. Bob is survived by his wife, Marie.

JAMES KALLEWAARD- Jim was born on July 3, 1921 in Kalamazoo, MI. He enlisted in the USMC in 1942 and served as a head mechanic on F4U-1A Corsairs in the Pacific during WWII. In 1946 he married Dorothy Zander, who survives. Jim was preceded in death by a son James and daughter Susan. He was a life member of the Legion and VFW.

ROBERT RORICK- Robert was born May 14, 1942 in Kalamazoo. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. After serving, he owned Rorick Bro's Auto body. Robert was preceded in death by his wife Lauri Ann. He was a life member of the American Legion.

OSCAR POSTON- Oscar was born July 18, 1943 in Laporte, IN. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, retiring after serving more than 23 years. He is survived by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

LAURELL KNOTT- Laurell was born May 31, 1938 in Eldora, IA. He served in the U.S.M.C. during the Korean War. Laurell was preceded in death by his first wife Joan Marie. He later married Donna Knott who also preceded him in death.

CHARLES POWELL- Charles was born December 16, 1944 in Trenton, TN. After school he moved to Kalamazoo and enlisted in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. Charles is survived by a son, 3 daughters and 9 grandchildren.

PAUL DEBOER- Paul was member and officer of Post 36, until he moved to Florida due to his poor health. Paul served as a cryptographer in the US Army during the Korean War. He was preceded in death by his first wife Edith. Paul was survived by his wife Mildred "Mickey", who passed away on March 16.

**Your service to the Nation and to your fellow
veterans will never be forgotten. Rest in Peace.**

COMING EVENTS



- Tue. 4/4 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
Thurs. 4/20 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
Tue. 5/2 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
Sun. 5/7 3rd District Mtg. – Charlotte Post 42.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
Sat. 5/13 Dance night. Good music and food. 7pm
Thurs. 5/18 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
Sat. 5/27 Dance night. Good music and food. 7pm
Mon. 5/29 Memorial Day- Celebrate-Honor-Remember
Tue. 6/6 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
Sat. 6/10 Annual Red Arrow Golf Outing-
Details coming soon!
Thurs. 6/15 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm (at Tigers game?)
Sat. 7/22 Post 36 Family Picnic at our Post pavilion
1 – 4pm. Meat and drinks provided. Members
and family welcome. **More details coming!**

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.

Battle Creek VA Medical News & Numbers-

The toll free number for appointments & info. is 1-888-214-1247. The local number is (269) 966-5600. Phone extensions are- for triage ext. 35053, prescriptions ext. 35500, and customer service ext. 31990 or at ext. 31980.

The 24/7 Veteran Crisis Line is 1-877-927-8387.

For further VA questions you can also go to this website-
<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel>

For assistance obtaining discharge records, visit-
www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

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