

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 18-1

Post Commander: Jim Saur 269-375-2544
Sr. Vice Commander: Dave Sytsma 269-370-2125
Adjutant: Don Gillespie 269-873-5115
Mailing address- P.O. Box 19248, Kalamazoo, MI 49019

quacol@charter.net
citori1220@gmail.com
dlgilles@att.net
Post email - MILegionPost36@gmail.com

COMMANDER'S POST-

A GOOD YEAR AND EXPANDING THE LEGION FAMILY

Last year was a year of consolidation and service to the community. We invited our new and transferred members into our fold and made sure they were comfortable with our members, goals and the Red Arrow facility. Several of them started coming to our monthly meetings and helped out at our events. We hope to see more of them this year. We can grow in other ways as well.

This year we have an excellent opportunity to welcome family members into the American Legion Auxiliary and The Sons of The American Legion. Our ladies have been very supportive of our events and activities but reluctant to form or join "another organization". It is time to move forward.

The Auxiliary is not just another organization. They provide volunteer service at veteran hospitals, assistance to families of deployed service members, fund raisers for their programs, and social events for the Legion family. And our sons and daughters also deserve an opportunity to join an organization that supports veterans like their Dad and/or Mom. Membership in either organization entitles them to visit Legion Posts worldwide just like their parents.

Most successful American Legion Posts have both an Auxiliary and a Sons collocated with them. Let's make an effort this year to organize both.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, Jim Saur



American Legion baseball. This picture from 1952 shows the Post 36 team at the Michigan State tournament in Lansing. Member Ken Kelly is kneeling at the very left, front row.

STATE CONVENTION COMES TO KALAMAZOO

This summer Kalamazoo and Third District will host the Department of Michigan Annual AMERICAN LEGION State Convention at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Kalamazoo. The convention will kick off the 100th year birthday celebration of the forming of the AMERICAN LEGION. This is a big deal and we need everyone's help to make it successful. The event runs from June 26 through June 30th.

Our Post will have an information desk, sell pins, and hand out Kalamazoo Information. We will also need to shuttle attendees from the hotel to The Red Arrow Club and other attractions like the Air Zoo. The event will begin on Friday and end at noon on Sunday. Saturday night the Posts from the UP will have a cook out in the pavilion area behind our Post where they will offer BBQ hot dogs, hamburgers, and beer free of charge. We will need members to help with set up and tear down for that event. The convention will be a great weekend and a chance for our members to attend an annual convention without the cost of getting a hotel room for the weekend.

ADJUTANT'S CORNER- HOW ARE WE DOING?

Last year our Post achieved 100% of our membership renewal goal by year's end. This year, we are only at 80%. When we are growing, it's easy to reach our renewal goal, which is based on the previous year's smaller numbers. But we have stopped growing. And we have more than 40 members who have not renewed. I worry some of you may feel that you are not getting what you expect out of your membership. If you have concerns, or if you expect more, let us know. If there is something more you want us to do to help our community or fellow veterans, let us know and volunteer. We all joined the Legion because it is the largest veterans' organization in the world and our voice on Capitol Hill. We joined to support our fellow veterans, their families and the community.

If you have not renewed for 2018, please renew soon. If you are having health or financial concerns, we can help with your membership. We are here for you.

And always encourage your fellow veterans to become members. We need to keep recruiting young members, to grow and to continue to serve!

STILL SERVING! Don Gillespie

Military quotes-

"A young man who does not have what it takes to perform military service is not likely to have what it takes to make a living."

- John F. Kennedy



Post 36 members delivered flags and their stories of service to local elementary schools during on Veterans Day week.

MENTORING YOUTH- School Flags and Veterans Day

At the invitation of Kristine Lassitter, the Training and Sales coordinator for Immunodiagnosics at Thermo Fisher Scientific; Jennifer Erwin, Jake Rickli, Tom Paccione, Jim Saur, and myself had the opportunity and privilege to spend time with elementary students at two local schools.

We visited the fifth grade classes of Mrs. Pullo and Mrs. Taylor at Moorsbridge Elementary on November 6, and Mrs. Hokenmaier's third grade class at Greenwood Elementary on November 13. We distributed comic books and crossword puzzles that explained facts about the American Flag, veterans, and the importance and significance in celebrating Veteran's Day. We each shared what branch we had served in, Commander Saur shared experiences during his Vietnam service, explained what an aircraft navigator did, and answered numerous questions.

A new flag was presented to Greenwood Elementary, the old flag was retired, and two students raised the colors while their classmates watched. All the staff at both schools were extremely grateful that we could spend time with their classes, increase their knowledge of why veterans are special, why we revere the flag and what it stands for, and the many ways the American Legion serves the veterans and community.

Post 36 Senior Vice Commander, David Sytsma



Commander Jim Saur, Jennifer Erwin, and Dave Sytsma discuss patriotism, the American flag and Veterans Day at Moorsbridge elementary School.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS

Some VA facilities host non-VA legal service providers that can assist Veterans free of charge. The Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist at the closest VA Medical Center may be a source of information. There are two Michigan VA facilities that host legal service providers-

VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System

2215 Fuller Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Contact: Jamie Wright, LMSW VJO Coordinator
734-478-3551 jamie.wright@va.gov

Provider: U. of Michigan Law School/Legal Clinic
701 S. State St., Ann Arbor 48109 734-763-2798

Cases accepted: All civil legal matters

VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Service Center

620 Century Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Contact: John Koch john.koch3@va.gov

Provider: Veterans Legal Assistance Program

Cases accepted: Administrative, civil or family law cases; No criminal law cases.

Your local Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist may also know of community resources for legal assistance, or you can contact one of these legal service clinics-

www.Statesidelegal.org *

Pro Bono Resources for Veterans at the American Bar Association *

* **VA Disclaimer-** these clinics are not part of the VA and the VA assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these legal service providers.

Information courtesy of the Veterans Administration website-
<https://www.va.gov/OGC/LegalServices.asp>

THURSDAYS DINNER NIGHTS!

We have a new cook preparing and serving dinner at the Post every Thursday night at 6pm. HopCat has donated food for dinners at our post, and on the days Shaun cannot cook, they will provide another volunteer. That is a great act of charity for our veteran's post. This means we will have great food at a very affordable price. Our menu will include items such as "steak tacos, pulled pork, scallops, etc." for a very affordable price (\$5-7 range they are estimating). So, please come out on and have dinner while supporting your post and the volunteers who cook and bartend. It's open to the public, so bring friends and family.

(The food is cheap and workers don't get paid, so tip big!)



MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Micheal Walton

I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1968 after earning a B.S. degree from Western Michigan University. (Graduation photo below). I was sent to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas for basic training. From there I was sent to Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas. I spent 6 months there training as a Medical Laboratory Specialist.

My next assignment was to Scott AFB in Belleville, Illinois, for further training. I spent the rest of my time at the U.S.A.F. hospital in Wurtsmith AFB (SAC) in Oscoda, Michigan.

After the Air Force I worked for the Upjohn Company in the Clinical Research Laboratory in Kalamazoo until my retirement.

My uncle, Arthur DeWitt served in WWII in the U.S. Army in New Guinea and the Philippines for 40 months as a member of the 32nd Infantry, Red Arrow Division. He was a member of Post 36 for many years.



For the Good of the Legion



Micheal and Virginia Walton recently made another generous donation to Post 36. They requested this gift be used towards local programs or improvements.

Thank you once again Micheal and Virginia!

Pictured above (L-R) - Frank Nock, Adjutant Don Gillespie, Michael Walton, and Commander Jim Saur.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

We are trying to establish a Sons of The American Legion squadron at our post. Eligible members must be male and have parents, including step or adopted parents, or grandparents who served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership.

The S.A.L.'s mission is to serve veterans, the military and their families and to sponsor programs to improve veterans communities. Programs can include scholarships, veterans-help programs (i.e. ending veteran homelessness), and youth sports.

The key to forming and maintaining our new S.A.L. squadron will be finding members who will assume the initial responsibility as officers. We currently have over ten people interested in membership, but we need to have at least 4 more who are willing and able to serve as officers. Annual dues are \$20 or \$10 for minors.

If you, family, or friends are eligible and interested in helping us establish a S.A.L. squadron, please have them contact one of our officers. If you are a Legion member, please consider a dual membership to help us become established.

For more information, visit - www.legion.org/sons

Please join us in welcoming these new members to Post 36.

Welcome and Thank You for Still Serving.

David Rowe - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Raymond (Mike) Applegate - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Andrew Meulman - U.S. Navy, Gulf War

Frank Warren - U.S. Air Force, Korean War

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Currently our membership is at 304, with 245 members renewed for 2018. **Help us reach 100% by renewing soon.**

And keep us growing! If you know a qualified veteran who might want to join or transfer, have them call Dave Sytsma or Don Gillespie. Anyone who recruits 3 or more new members (not transfers) before June will be eligible for a 2018 recruiters pin.

Let's keep Post 36 strong with solid membership!

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH YOUR CONCERNS-

Please feel free to contact your Post officers with any issues and concerns about your health or benefits. You are important to us and the American Legion can assist with questions you may have concerning your veteran benefits, the VA Hospital, funerals, etc. And we will make hospital and nursing home visits. If you have questions, please call one of your Post 36 officers-our numbers and emails are listed on top of the front page.

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

JESSE BLALOCK - Jesse was born in Harleton, TX on July 18, 1922. During World War II he served in Europe and the Pacific with the US Army. After the war, Jesse met his wife Davada at Ft. Custer, at a USO dance. She preceded him in death, after 65 years of marriage. Jesse worked his entire career as an accountant, retiring from Michigan Dept. of Ed. He is survived by his children, 2 granddaughters, and 6 great-grandchildren.

CHARLES R. MCDANIEL - Chuck was born March 25, 1929 in Grand Rapids and a graduate of Paw Paw High School. He served in the Air Force during the Korean War. Chuck spent most of his working life at National Waterlift Co. He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Mildred. He is survived by his children, 8 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren & 2 great-great grandchildren.

DAVID A. WINDOVER - Dave was born in Saginaw, MI on August 15, 1941. He served his country in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Dave enjoyed motorcycles, golfing, hunting, fishing and birdwatching. He is survived by 2 sisters, one brother and many nieces and nephews.

STANLEY BRADLEY- Stanley was born November 1, 1948 in Harrisburg, Arkansas. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, where he received the Purple Heart while serving with the US Army. Stanley is survived by his wife Clavel, along with their children and grandchildren.

JACK MITCHELL- Jack was born in Kalamazoo on March 24, 1946. He served his country in the US Army from 1965 – 1967, serving in the Viet Nam war. Jack retired as a general laborer. On June 23, 2015 Jack was united in marriage to Jacqueline Jeffries, after 43 years of courtship. He was preceded in death by his daughter Jackie Orr. Jack is survived by his wife, four step children and four grandchildren.

DANIEL BRENNAN, ESQ.- Daniel graduated from Loy Norrix High School, the University of Michigan and the University of Detroit School of Law. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, earning the Bronze Star while serving with the US Army. Daniel was a long-time resident of Sarasota, Florida.

Rest in Peace - Never Forgotten!

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.***



COMING EVENTS

- Tue. 1/2 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
Sun. 1/7 3rd District Mtg. – George Custer Post 54.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
Fri. 1/12 Battle Creek VAMC- Bingo night 6:00 pm
Thurs. 1/18 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
Tue. 2/6 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
Thurs. 2/15 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
Fri-Sun 2/16-18 2018 Winter Convention- Ann Arbor.
Marriott Ypsilanti.
Sun. 3/4 3rd District Mtg. – Cole-Briggs Post 48.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Mtg. - 1:00pm.
Tue. 3/6 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
Thurs. 3/15 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm

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

NEWSLETTER 18-1, Jan - March 2018