

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 18-2

Post Commander: Jim Saur	269-375-2544	quacol@charter.net
Sr. Vice Commander: Dave Sytsma	269-370-2125	citori1220@gmail.com
Adjutant: Don Gillespie	269-873-5115	dlgilles@att.net
Mailing address- P.O. Box 19248, Kalamazoo, MI 49019		Post email - MILegionPost36@gmail.com

OUR STATE CONVENTION

The American Legion is almost 100 years old and we in Kalamazoo are honored to be hosting the 2018 State Convention in June and next year's celebration of this great century milestone. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find details of this year's convention.

When the founding officers of our organization met in Paris in January 1919 to renew acquaintances, they discussed their soon to be "mustering out" and the future prospects for the American citizen soldiers. Lt Col Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Lt Col George S. White, Maj. Eric Fisher Wood, and Lt Col William J. Donovan pondered the increasing threat of Bolshevism and "Red" extremists at home. The separate peace deal made by the Russian Bolsheviks shortly after coming to power had enabled the German Army to concentrate more forces on the Western Front and caused greater loss of American lives. "Shouldn't soldiers and sailors join together as civilians to uphold and protect the traditional values unique to America?"

When General Pershing asked to see Lt Col Roosevelt, the son of President "Teddy" Roosevelt, about reported morale problems in his Army, the group saw its chance to present their ideas. Reluctantly, Pershing agreed to a "morale conference" at which representatives of the soldiers could express their ideas and concerns. That conference spawned many more led by Roosevelt and his group. At the Paris Caucus in March 15-17, 1919, they adopted a temporary Constitution and the name The American Legion. It was reported at the Legion 1919 Minneapolis convention by the Legislative Committee that our federal charter had become law on September 16th, 1919. This would ignite a growing and continued support of The American Legion by veterans and the US Congress.

The continued trust of the American people and our representatives is exactly why we must remain strong in numbers and principles. Our programs demonstrate our commitment to the four pillars of our organization. MEMBERSHIP demonstrates our relevance to Congress, veterans, our local leaders, and our fellow citizens.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, Commander Jim Saur



Military quotes-

"Always do everything you ask of those you command." – General George S. Patton

HAVE YOU BEEN TO YOUR POST?

If you have never been to your Post, I encourage you to visit. We meet in the Red Arrow VFW Post 1527 at 1920 E. Kilgore Service Road, near the airport. It can be confusing because the building does not say American Legion Post 36. Owned by the VFW, this post is home to the American Legion, Marine Corps League, Blue Star Mothers, Disabled American Veterans, Red Arrow Riders, and the VFW. This connection between our groups allows us to maintain strong fellowship, share resources and expenses, and to better assist each other when needed. It is the Red Arrow "Veterans" Post.

Thursday night dinners are always a great reason to visit. Bring your family and friends because dinners are open to the public and served from 6 to 8pm. Whatever the reason, stop out and visit your Post. STILL SERVING! Don Gillespie

KALAMAZOO WELCOMES THE AMERICAN LEGION

This summer Kalamazoo will once again host the State Convention of the Michigan Department of the American Legion. The convention is open to all current members of The American Legion, The Women Auxiliary, The Sons of the American Legion, and The Legion Riders. It begins on Thursday, June 20th and carries through the weekend at the downtown Radisson Hotel. Several businesses will offer discounts on food and drink throughout the weekend for those who wear the convention pin.

This is a great opportunity for our members to attend and participate in a State Convention without incurring the cost of an expensive hotel room. It is a chance to meet members from throughout the State and hear from prominent national and state leaders on issues important to veterans. Look for the convention registration forms in the March edition of the MI Legionnaire newspaper or ask for one at our monthly meeting.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, Commander Jim Saur



The Paris Caucus, March 15-17, 1919

2LT Lawrence Reynolds Verdon



'Ren' was born in Kalamazoo on Oct 13, 1888, the son of Laurence and Margaret Verdon. In 1913 he married Irene Buckingham. After war was declared, he left his paper mill job and entered the service on Aug. 27, 1917. He was sent to the 2nd Officer Training Camp at Ft. Sheridan, IL where he was commissioned as a 2LT. He was then assigned to the 351st Infantry Regiment, 88th Division, at Camp Dodge, Iowa, where he was the Assistant Camp Adjutant at the Personnel School. Camp Dodge was a training and mobilization center and the demands of the war meant troops would arrive, be in camp for a few weeks and they were quickly shipped to other divisions destined for France. The 88th Division trained approximately 40,000 men before it received permanent personnel and deployed to France. 2LT Verdon remained at Camp Dodge, training soldiers until the end of the war.

After the war, Ren returned to work at the Paper Mill Supply Company. Like many returning doughboys, he soon joined The American Legion Post 36 and in 1923 he was elected as the 5th commander of our Post. By 1930 he was working at American Cyanamid & Chemical Corp., eventually becoming a manager at the plant. Lawrence 'Ren' Verdon died August 2, 1955.

STRENGTH COMES FROM MEMBERSHIP

By Denise H. Rohan, National Commander

There is strength in numbers. There is dedication among American Legion Family members. Combine American Legion dedication and strength through numbers, and we have a time-honored formula for meaningful advocacy for the values we share: *support for veterans, our troops, young people and patriotism.*

Every day, we see American Legion members supporting today's servicemembers. Sons of The American Legion members are diligently attending to the needs of older veterans. American Legion Riders are raising money right this minute for scholarships to help young people. And Auxiliary members are working tirelessly to support their posts, chapters and squadrons.

Communities across America today are better off due to American Legion membership. I know this first-hand, having witnessed the kindness of American Legion Family members in many ways. I also know the impact we have on veterans, servicemembers and their families can't always be expressed in numbers.

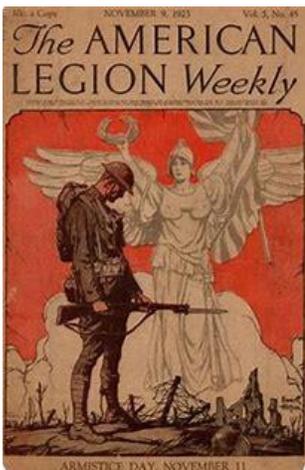
Yet, it's numbers we need now, more than ever before. Without strong numbers, our influence to fight for veterans' rights on Capitol Hill is jeopardized. Our youth programs will mentor fewer children who need our guidance. Our charitable donations will help fewer veterans, servicemembers and families who need us.

In my travels as your national commander, I have seen the best of The American Legion. Veterans helping veterans and strengthening every corner of our nation.

We need to retain current members and recruit new ones to continue effectively serving our communities, states and nation in ways only The American Legion Family can.

But we need your help. Check in with expired members and encourage them to rejoin. Connect with younger veterans and let them know how The American Legion has their backs.

Together, our dedication and the strength of numbers will allow us to continue standing tall for veterans and servicemembers as we near the beginning of a second century of service. We will fight to ensure that veterans receive the health care they deserve, that our troops are poised to succeed, that rewarding career opportunities are available for veterans and their spouses, children are educated, and our nation's flag is treated with the respect it deserves. Family First.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Currently our membership is at 302, with 268 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 through solid membership!



**BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA
GREATER KALAMAZOO AREA CHAPTER #186**

Do you have a family member who is currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or has served? Are you interested in supporting our active service members and veterans? The Greater Kalamazoo Area Blue Star Mothers are looking for chapter members and associate members. You can attend meetings, hear updates on our service members, help pack CARE packages to send to our U.S. Military personnel, give moral support, and enjoy a night out with other people who have the same interests. We are mothers of children who are serving or have served their country in the U.S. Military.

The Blue Star Mothers do all we can for our sons and daughters and other U.S. Military personnel. We meet once a month, update each other, give each other support, especially to the moms who are new to the military experience. We are a national organization and have chapters throughout the U.S. We would love to have you be part of our organization.

If you would like to submit a name and address of a member currently serving for a CARE package, or send a monetary donation to help with postage our address is P.O. Box 20252, Kalamazoo, MI 49019

The Blue Star Mothers meet the second Tuesday of every month, at the VFW Red Arrow Post, 1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd. Our meetings start at 7pm. For more info, call Marianna Gáncs at (269) 420-7607 or email GreaterKalamazooBSM@gmail.com

MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Fred Stevens

Born in 1922, Fred excelled as a 3-sport athlete at Hart high school and then at WMU. He was halfback on Western's undefeated football team in 1941, forward on the basketball team, and he was the school's first All-American in any major sports, as captain and first baseman. He was selected to play in the East-West College All-Star game. WWII temporarily interrupted his education and sports career. Fred was soon serving in the US Navy, as a 1 LT on tank landing ship 572.

LST-572 delivered supplies and equipment on Omaha beach. After serving about 6 weeks in the Atlantic theatre, the Navy sent them halfway around the world to the Pacific Ocean, where they participated in the battles around Okinawa and the Philippines. Fred's shipmates are like his family and they have had 3 reunions since the war.

Returning home, Fred soon married his wife Ann, who unfortunately passed away in 2010, after 65 years of marriage. He turned down offers to play pro baseball and joined WMU's Athletic Dept. where he worked for about 40 years. Fred has been a member of Post 36 for 71 years.



**Please join us in welcoming
these new members to Post 36.
Welcome and Thank You for Still Serving.**

Ben Atchison - U.S. Army, Gulf/G.W.O.T.

Joseph Voellm - U.S.M.C., G.W.O.T.

Andy Gergye - U.S. Air Force, Gulf War

Aaron Bunn - U.S. Air Force, Gulf/G.W.O.T.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

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

If you, family, or friends are eligible and interested in joining our 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



U.S.S. LST-572 on Omaha Beach, Normandy

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

JOHN SINGLETON, JR. – John was born Sept 29, 1932 in New London, CT. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War. After serving his country, John was married to his wife Donna. He worked several jobs in the area and delivered the Kalamazoo Gazette for 32 years in Pavilion Township. John was preceded in death by his wife and his son Brian. He is survived by his daughter-in-law, June Singleton.

TOMMIE PALM - Tommie was born Sept 19, 1947. After graduating from Kalamazoo Public School, he enlisted in the US Army and served during the Vietnam War. Returning home, he served in the Army Reserves for over twenty years and worked for the Kalamazoo Public Schools for 30 years. Tommie is survived by Nannie, his wife of 46 years, along with their children and grandchildren.

ROBERT HUTCHINS – Robert was born in Allegan, MI on November 9, 1942. He served his country in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. Robert lived in Kalamazoo most of his life, retiring from Arvco Container. He was preceded in death by his wife Joanne. He is survived by three children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

JOSEPH MEJEUR- Joseph was born on June 18, 1924 in Kalamazoo. After graduating from Kalamazoo Christian, he served in the US Army from 1942 - 46. Joseph attended MSU, receiving a BA in Police Science. He was employed by the Federal government as a treasury agent and retired from the Social Security Administration. Joseph was preceded in death by his wife Shirley and their infant daughter Ruth. He is survived by his daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

DENNIS HODGSON- Dennis was born in Cadillac on February 16, 1950. He served his country in the Viet Nam war with the US Army's 1st Cavalry, from 1969 – 1971. In 1971 Dennis married his wife Kathleen, who survives. He was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Megan. Dennis is survived by his wife, four children and eight grandchildren.

DONALD VANHOE- Donald was born in Kalamazoo on Sept. 12, 1926. He worked for his grandfather in the celery fields and then served in the US Army during WWII. He retired from Michigan Bell/Lucent Technologies after 38 years. Donald was preceded in death by his wife Loretta. He is survived by his four children, eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

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. 4/3 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Sun. 4/8 Gilmore Car Museum 3 – 4:30pm
100th Anniversary of Col. Jos. Westnedge
- Thurs. 4/19 Monthly Meeting – Officer nominations 7pm
- Sat. 4/21 Drew Russel Memorial 5K @ WMU 9am
- Tue. 5/1 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Sun. 5/6 3rd District Mtg. – Hillsdale Post 53.
Exec. Mtg. - 11:30am, Dist. Meeting - 1pm
- Thurs. 5/17 Monthly Meeting – Officer elections 7pm
- Mon. 5/28 Memorial Day. Never Forget.
- Tue. 6/5 Red Arrow House Meeting 6:30 – 7:30pm
- Sat. 6/9 Red Arrow golf outing- details coming
- Thurs. 6/21 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
- Th-Sun. 6/21-24 2018 Dept. of Michigan State Convention-
Kalamazoo Radisson Plaza Hotel

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