

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 20-2, Sept. – Dec. 2020

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COMMANDER'S POST- 2020

It's an understatement to say that 2020 has been a strange year, the likes of which we will never see again. I'm sure you are all aware of the quarantines and the restrictions that we continue to live under. Personally, I've had to cancel vacations, flights, burials, memorial services, had three family members catch the COVID 19 virus and am grateful that they all recovered.

When the pandemic began, we were close to the time when nominations for officers were to start and our annual elections held. With the inability to meet due to stay-at-home orders, the Michigan State Department of Legion gave us a pair of options. Option 1: We could hold an election, but ballots would have to be voted electronically and ALL members had to be offered the chance to vote; meaning we would have to create a mailing to send ballots to those who don't have email capability, and they would have to mail their ballot back to us. Option 2: The State Executive Committee would agree to extend current post officer positions until the 2021 election cycle if we agreed. We chose Option 2 (called Resolution 9) as Option 1 would be nearly impossible to achieve.

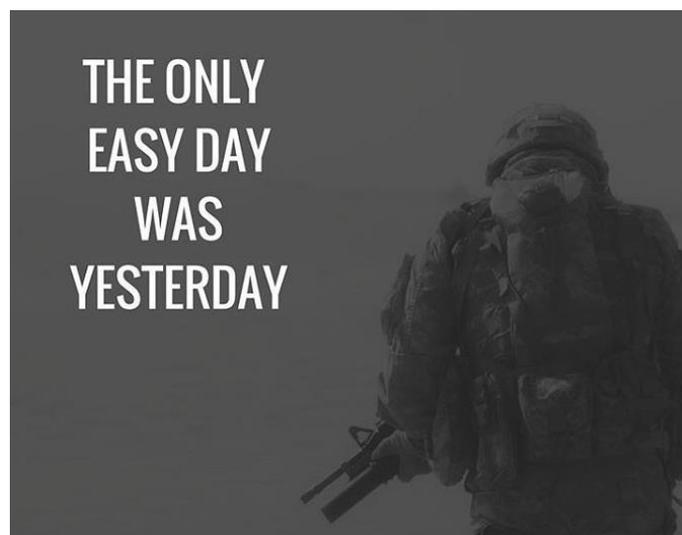
After much soul searching, I have chosen to not hold monthly meetings until further notice. My logic is as such:

1. Due to the age and health of many of our members which puts them in a high-risk category, I can't in all good conscience ask them to attend a meeting. I don't want someone contact the virus and end up hospitalized or worse because they felt duty bound to come.
2. We are limited to how many can gather at any one time. If the entire officer contingent attends, the number of members allowed is greatly diminished.
3. We can't plan for the future, until we know what it is.

After a long hiatus the Red Arrow Veterans Club was re-opened with the current restrictive guidelines in place. I've been told that the 6' social distancing mandate is being implemented, the number of patrons at any one time is limited, masks are required until your beverages are served, and that stringent cleaning procedures are in place. If you want to try and catch up with friends and have a drink, I encourage you to stop out.

When it has been determined that it's safe to meet, I'll inform the Post membership. I know that a lot of people are tired of the restrictions and just want to live life as it was done in 2019, but patience and compliance with the safety measures is the new normal until the pandemic becomes part of history. In the interim, I encourage all of you to take a few minutes and call a fellow member to check on them and cheer them up.

Keep the faith, Dave Sytsma, Post 36 Commander



ADJUTANT'S CORNER- MEMBERSHIP

Each year we start from scratch notifying our members that it is time to renew their membership. The national office contacts a vendor to send out renewal notices with envelopes. These are sent out periodically until the Legion national office enters the member's name as renewed. The sooner that a member renews, the sooner that member is removed for the "renewal notice list".

The process has been improved greatly in recent years. Now a member has options for renewal that save time and money for the member and the Legion. You can now renew online and be instantly recorded at national as paid up the new membership year. You get a temporary card, and I will send you your permanent card in the mail.

A second more convenient way to renew is drop by the Red Arrow Club where we meet and give the bartender your dues and renewal form. When you do that, I will generate a new card and mail it to you. This may take about a week and you may get another notice in the meantime. Still, this is faster and less expensive than snail mail.

The final way to renew and the most expensive in time and postage is to mail it in. This takes additional steps, costs you time and a stamp, and may result in another reminder from the contractor. If you prefer to continue mailing it in, that is fine. We value your membership and hope you will renew soon. For the PUFL members and those who have already renewed their membership – THANK YOU.

Adjutant Jim Saur



COMING EVENTS

- Fri. 9/11 Patriots Day- Never Forget!
- Sun. 9/13 3rd District Mtg. via Zoom
- Thurs. 9/17 Monthly Meeting - cancelled
- Thurs. 10/15 Monthly Meeting – to be determined
- Tues. 11/3 Election Day – Remember to VOTE!
- Sun. 11/8 3rd District Mtg. – Post 298 or via Zoom
- Wed. 11/11 Veterans Day- *"The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude."* – Jeff Miller
- Thurs. 11/19 Monthly Meeting – to be determined
- Sat. TBD All Post Christmas Potluck.
- Fri. 12/25 Merry Christmas, Peace on Earth.
- Fri. 1/1/21 Happy New Year – Goodbye 2020!



Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency can Help You Connect to Assistance during COVID-19.

Veterans have earned their benefits. And for individuals or families struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, we're making every effort to make these benefits easily available to you.

Although the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency is unable to accept visitors in Lansing currently, we remain committed to serving Veterans 24/7 through our **toll-free hotline, 1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838)**, and additional programs.

During COVID-19, we can help if you:

Have questions about benefits and services- Call the toll-free hotline (above) to learn about healthcare, education, employment, and other quality of life service.

Email MVAAResourceCenter@michigan.gov or visit michiganveterans.com for more information.

Need help filing a claim- To easily file a claim, contact your Veteran Service Officer (VSO). If you do not have a VSO, call our hotline to start filing.

Are a Veteran in crisis-

Call the Veteran Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press '1,' or chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net, or text '838255' to receive free, confidential support.

Are concerned about a loved one who is a Veteran- Call the Veteran Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and explore the mental health resources available on this page.

Reference – Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency



The American Legion 100 Miles for Hope Campaign

The American Legion has issued a 100 Miles for Hope campaign as a way for American Legion Family members to raise donations for the Veterans and Children Foundation, as well as encouraging members to stay active in this time of social distancing. Participation costs \$30, which includes a nice t-shirt.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation has delivered over \$30 million in financial assistance for disabled veterans, military families, and young people who lost parents in service to our nation.

Although the 100 Miles campaign officially kicked off August 3 participants have until Veteran's Day to run, walk, or ride for 100 miles. For more info. Visit- <https://www.legion.org/100miles>

Join us in getting active while you contribute to a great charity. And share a picture to us or social media, so we can encourage others to join and contribute.

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

Donald Atkinson - U.S. Air Force, Korean War

Craig Butler - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Joni Duflo - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War

Alec Hegge - U.S. Army, Global War on Terror

Anita Hyder - U.S. Army, Lebanon/Grenada

Donald Jarzambek- U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Randall Jones - U.S. Air Force, Vietnam War

Thomas Jones - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War

Walter Jones - U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Walter Jones, Jr. - U.S. Navy, World War II

David Peck - U.S. Air Force, Vietnam War

Tessa Thomas - U.S. Air Force, Vietnam War

Jackie Vermette -U.S. Air Force, Global War on Terror

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

ARLIE JOYCE BENNETT – Arlie was born November 22, 1921 in Antrim County, Michigan. She graduated from Central Lake High in 1939. After working at the Traverse City State Hospital, she enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1944. Trained as a stenographer, she was sent to France, spent a year in Paris and Reims, and was discharged in 1946 as a Tech Sergeant. After her discharge, Arlie went to Alma College, and then graduated from U of M with a BA in social work. She worked at Ypsilanti Hospital for 3 years, went back to school and earned her Masters degree. Arlie 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.

LAWRENCE “LARS” SVENDSEN - Lars was born March 25, 1949 in Lyons, Nebraska. He attended the University of Nebraska and Western Michigan University. Lars served six years in the Air National Guard. He began his career in Management at Continental Restaurant Systems. He then went into the publishing business as owner and publisher of Michigan Auto Trader, and later The Auction Exchange & Collector's News. In the 90s he worked for Hebdo Mag International as the General Manager of Eastern Canadian Operations in Montreal. Lars is survived by his wife Sharon; 4 children and 7 grandchildren

DAVID L. RHODA - David was born in Schoolcraft, MI, on May 6, 1939. After graduating from Schoolcraft High School, he proudly served our country in the Marines Corps until being honorably discharged in 1960. He returned to make Schoolcraft his home and was proud of his community. David is survived by five children, twelve grandchildren, and Gayla Sager, a friend and companion with whom he spent the last ten years. David was laid to rest at Schoolcraft Cemetery.

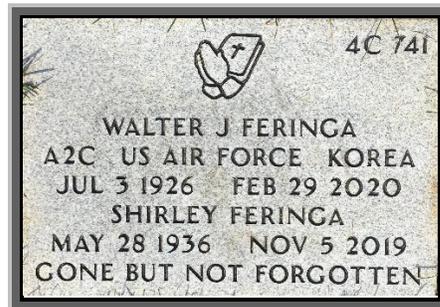
RONALD R. RABB - Ron was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on November 22, 1951. He served in the United States Army for 3 years and in the Army Reserves for another 16 years. He loved his country and was very patriotic. Ron was employed for 37 years for the United States Postal Service. On December 31, 2004, he married Sandra L. (Koning) Rabb who survives. He is also survived by his children, grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.

MORDEN P. SCHUUR - Morden was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan on November 12, 1920. He graduated from Albion College in 1942 and was then drafted into the US Army. He was sent to Myitkyina, Burma, serving as a Captain in the Military Police. In Burma he met his future wife, Edna, a Captain in the Army Nurse Corps. He returned to the US in 1946 and was married shortly thereafter. Morden attended the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago, and after graduation, the couple returned to Kalamazoo. He practiced law for over 50 years. He is survived by his 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

PAUL Y. MICHAEL - Paul was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When he was 10 his family moved to Bloomington, Indiana. He graduated from University High School in 1965. Paul served in the US Army, including a tour in Vietnam. Upon his return, Paul graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Business Administration. Paul married Jeanine Burns in 1983. In 1989, Paul accepted a job with Gilmore's in Kalamazoo where they settled with their young family. Paul is survived by his beloved daughters Claire and Ally Michael, and their mother Jeanine. As Paul would say, he is "relaxing at his new address."

WALTER J. FERINGA- Walter Feringa was born July 4, 1926. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. In 1990 Walter married his wife Shirley, who preceded him in death.

Note- Unfortunately, there is no obituary available for Walt Feringa



Blue Star Mothers Care Packages - 2020

The local Chapter of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., is seeking the community's help in supporting our troops and spreading holiday cheer to deployed men and women in the United States Armed Forces. The Greater Kalamazoo MI Chapter of BSMA will be hosting its annual Support the Troops "Operation Holiday Cheer" November 14, 2020. We are hoping to send care packages to our deployed service members; however, we need your assistance. Won't you please help by:

- Contributing a monetary donation
- Providing APO addresses for deployed service members

Whatever you can contribute would be greatly appreciated! If you would like a care package sent, please email your overseas APO address to: GreaterKalamazooBSM@gmail.com or iMessage us with your loved ones address.

We hope we can count on your to support our troops and 2020 Operation Holiday Cheer. Please make donations payable to Blue Star Mothers Kalamazoo MI Chapter #186, P.O. Box 20252, Kalamazoo, MI 49019. For tax purposes our EIN number is 300-593-785. BSMA is a non-profit, 501©3 organization.

The Greater Kalamazoo Michigan Chapter #186 of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., is a group of local area moms whose children are serving or have served in the U.S. Military. BSMA also has associate members who are people who support the BSMA mission. We meet at the VFW Red Arrow Post #1527 the 2nd Tues of the month to support our troops, veterans, each other.

Thank you for your generosity & willingness to help. For more information please contact. Bluestarmothersmi186@gmail.com
Marianna Gáncs Humphrey, President, 269.420.7607

PARTNERSHIP

One of the advantages of belonging to our Post is the partnerships we enjoy with the other organizations that call the VFW Red Arrow Club home. The facilities and staff offer a wide range of options that your membership in our Post entitles you to explore. The meeting rooms, kitchen, outside pavilion, and picnic grounds are yours to use at a very small fee for the use of the facilities.

Our partnership with the other organizations at the Red Arrow enables the owning organization to maintain and improve the facilities and services. We need to use them to make sure that they can remain available and in good condition. The facilities offer a great venue for family events like anniversaries, reunions, parties, large picnics, and/or club events.

The current pandemic has created a need for safe outdoors activities. We at the Red Arrow should encourage our members and other to plan their summer and fall events there.

Adjutant Jim Saur

VETERAN ASSISTANCE -

VA Benefits Beyond the Basic Programs

By Cajun Comeau, Dept. of NC - August 6, 2015

Q: Are there VA benefits that I may not know about?

A: Many veterans know about the basic healthcare and education benefits available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but the following are other ancillary benefit programs.

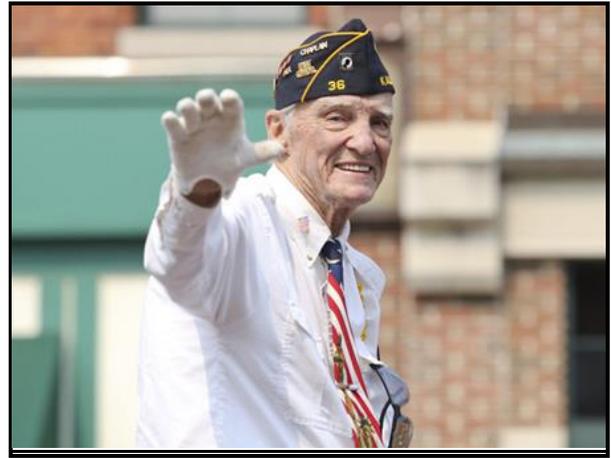
Aid and Attendance: Veterans may be eligible to receive money to cover the cost of nursing homes, assisted living programs and other long-term care options. Couples may receive up to \$25,000 and surviving spouses up to \$13,560 a year to cover their long-term care costs.

Burial benefits: A U.S. flag may be requested to drape over a veteran's casket and families may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate to honor the deceased loved one's service. VA also provides a free headstone or grave marker.

GI Bill: The GI Bill offers up to \$2,000 to help cover the cost of certification courses or vocational training programs. This benefit works well for veterans who wish to pursue a career path that does not require a college degree. Unused credits through the GI Bill may be transferred to spouses and dependents of veterans, although there are service limits required to transfer the benefits.

Life insurance: Veterans may receive up to \$400,000 in life insurance through Veterans' Group Life Ins. program, at competitive premium rates.

Housing assistance: Veterans having trouble making their mortgage payments are eligible for repayment assistance through the VA. Options for help include special repayment plans, loan forbearance and loan modification programs. Additional benefits are available for homeless veterans and veterans with VA loans. The VA maintains a list of homes serviced by VA loans that have gone into foreclosures, and veterans have the ability to search the list of VA-acquired properties and purchase homes at a discount.



MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- Jack Post

Jack Post has been serving the American Legion for over 40 years. He was our Post 36 commander in 1989 and 1990, later he served as our chaplain for many years. Jack always championed our participation in local parades. He helped maintain and re-decorate our floats every spring, and he would always be found singing to the crowds from our float- he was the voice of Post 36.

Jack served as a military policeman in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He later worked at Gibson Guitar. Jack is a lifelong entertainer. He loves to sing and do impressions. He was the host of a local entertainment group, who performed at local events and area nursing homes. Jack is now a resident at the Veterans H.O.P.E, Home of Peace and Empowerment.

NEED A RIDE TO A MEETING OR POST EVENT?

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

The American Legion's success depends entirely on active members, participation and volunteers. The organization belongs to the people it serves and the communities in which it thrives.

The Four Pillars of the American Legion

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



THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218

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