

# THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 21-1, First Half 2021

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## Commander's Column - Spring 2021

The year 2020 has been a strange and difficult time. All of you are aware of the "normal" activities that were canceled, postponed, or eliminated. Even though almost all meetings are still being held virtually, essential work is still being accomplished and plans made for the time when we can hopefully resume functioning face to face in a group setting.

With almost everything having been restricted or prohibited there is very little fresh and new to relate to you. As I write this, the Michigan State Department of the American Legion is still making plans to hold the annual convention in Sault Ste. Marie in July. From what I am able to learn, our local Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades are still in question.

One thing that we need to do this year is hold elections of post officers. We will be electing:

**Post Commander**

**First Vice (alternate) Commander**

**Second Vice Commander**

**Adjutant**

**Finance Officer**

**Chaplain**

**Sergeant-at Arms**

**Historian**

**Judge Advocate**

**3-year Trustee**

We are exploring ways to facilitate the election under the current restrictions and intend to have a system in place by the end of March to allow for April and May nominations. The election and swearing in of the new officers will occur in May as well.

Keep conducting Buddy Checks when you have the opportunity.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

**Dave Sytsma, Post Commander**

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**Phone: 269-370-2125**

*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.*

## ADJUTANT'S CORNER- TEAMWORK

**WE ARE OPEN** and the Post needs your help. We have continued to function through the difficult conditions that the pandemic and our politicians have put us through. Our host VFW unit used the mandatory shutdowns and earlier restrictions to make improvements in the Canteen area and necessary repairs to the building. We helped with a donation to help pay the ongoing bills while the building was getting no revenue from club rentals and Canteen operations.

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP** and the dues that you pay continue to be an essential part of the funding of our core mission. To help Veterans in distress, promote Americanism and national Security, and sponsor programs for Children and Youth in the community. **VOLUNTEER** to help with the programs.

**Reminder:** The 2020 membership year is over. To vote in our meetings or use the Canteen, you must be a current 2021 member. For your convenience, you may pay your 2021 dues at the Canteen, or line, or by mailing it in.

**Veteran Visitation:** As senior citizen apartments, rest homes, and hospice care facilities in our area begin to open their doors for limited visitation, we must be there to brighten up their lonely days. Form a team and be ready.

**Elections:** All members are reminded that we must elect our Post Leadership by the end of May. If you are interested in running for an officer position, contact either Commander Sytsma, or Adjutant Saur. Nominations will begin at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. If the April and/or May meeting(s) cannot be held, a virtual meeting on ZOOM will be conducted with directions posted on our Facebook page or emailed.

THANK YOU. - Adjutant Jim Saur

## 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.

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

PAUL V. CUSANO, SR.- Paul was born January 3, 1927 in Kalamazoo, the son of Angelo and Constance (Smith) Cusano. He was a U.S. Army veteran serving in WW II. On January 14, 1950 in Kalamazoo Paul was united in marriage to the former Evelyn M. Howell who preceded him in death on April 10, 2014. Paul is survived by two children, five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandson. Graveside services will be held 11 AM, Saturday April 17, 2021 at Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

DELBERT LAMSON- Del was a veteran of the US Air Force serving during the Korean War. He worked for Michigan Bell Telephone Company for his entire career. Del was a lifelong University of Michigan fan who enjoyed camping, gardening, sitting around a bonfire with friends, and rock collecting. Del had four children, Lynn who died in infancy, Mark, Kim and Charles, along with grandchildren, Josie and Luke.

THOMAS BERNHARDT- Tom was born May 2, 1933 in Northville, MI the son of the late Frederick W. and Clara M. (Lietzau) Bernhardt. Tom left the farm to serve in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He earned his B.A. from Michigan State University and his Master of Social Work from Wayne State. Tom retired after 24 years as a Social Worker for Portage Public Schools. Tom is survived by his wife Mary, children Justin and Rachel Bernhardt, Sarah and Christian Petersen; and 3 grandchildren: Sylvia & Jonas Petersen, and Elliot Bernhardt.

WALTER J. JONES III - Walter was born on July 6, 1945 in Reed City/Baldwin, Michigan to Walter Jr. and Alma (Brooks) Jones. Walter's sense of duty led him to join the US Army in 1965 where he volunteered for 2 tours in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne. He received the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star for Valor, and the CIB. His exposure to Agent Orange precipitated many health challenges. Prior to joining the Army, Walter married Marian Carter, who preceded him in death. He is survived by his parents, children Jennifer (Dennis), Jacqueline, Atiba (Cherise), Antwan (Erica), Iyeshia, Shondraya and Shaquan, 11 grandchildren, one great granddaughter.

DAVID MIMS- David was born on August 11, 1934 in James, Georgia to Ebb Mims and Mattie Lee Wolkorf. Following graduation, he joined the US Army and spent his working years serving his country where he achieved the rank of Sergeant Major. In 1978, while still in the service, he earned his Associates of Arts in Organizational Behavior from Park College, Fort Bliss before retiring in 1989. David went on to work at the post office where He worked as a mail handler. He was an active member of the DAV, the R.A.T.S. And several other organizations. He is survived by his wife Martha, son Ronald, stepdaughters Brenda Austin and Katreka Goins-Williams, stepson Henry Goins Jr., 8 grandchildren, and 19 Great Grandchildren.



**COMING EVENTS**

- Fri. 3/19 Trivia Night at the Post every Friday at 6pm
- Thurs. 3/18 ~~Monthly Meeting~~ - cancelled
- Thurs. 4/15 Monthly Meeting – Officer nominations 7-8 pm
- Sun. 5/2 3<sup>rd</sup> District Mtg. – Portage Post 207
- Thurs. 5/20 Monthly Meeting – Post Elections 7pm
- Mon. 5/31 Memorial Day. Never Forget!

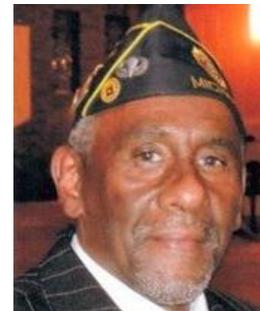
***"May we never forget our fallen comrades. Freedom isn't free."***



Delbert Lamson



Tom Bernhardt



Walter Jones



David Mims

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW Post at **1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Portage**