



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

**Post 3272**

**Avon, Connecticut**

**“On Target”**

**(Our Newsletter’s 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year)**

**February 2010  
LETTER #100**

The Post met on Wednesday, **27 January 2010** at the Italian Club with 47 members in attendance. The *Ladies Auxiliary* prepared once again another wonderful, home-cooked meal with plenty of second helpings for our hungry troops and their guests. We thank the Ladies for their time, energy and dedication.

Our **next meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, 24 February 2010** at the Italian Club.  
Cocktails begin at 1800 hours with dinner at 1830 hours.

Join our **Post Family** for another evening of **good food, stimulating conversation and great friendship**. We hope to see you there!!!

We honored at our January meeting **Wendy Zacchera** for being selected by the Department of Connecticut for the VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year Award for K-5. The Post had nominated her for this award in conjunction with *Roaring Brook Principal – Dr. Cristanne Colgan*. *Commander Newman* presented her with a Certificate which rightfully reads:

*“For Meritorious and Distinguished Service  
In Furthering the Aims and Ideals of  
The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States”*

The Commander noted that she is the embodiment of all the VFW stands for and we thank her for all she has done over so many years to foster in her students America’s noblest traditions and highest ideals. She is a great credit to her profession, her community and her country. Her father, Ray Zacchera, a Chartered Member of our Post, host of our Post Picnic for many years and the Post’s Outstanding Veteran in 2004 would be very proud for her – as are all of us!!!!

**Commander Bill Newman** opened the meeting at 1945 hours. The *Officer of the Day* Mike Gould led the members in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance. *Chaplain Tom Chrosniak* offered the VFW Prayer and *Fred Hudon* provided the POW/MIA Prayer. The minutes of the last meeting and the financial report were available on the tables for the members to review courtesy of *Adjutant Aldo Vernesoni* and *Quartermaster Don Perreault*. Regarding pending bills, the Quartermaster noted the pro-rated cost (\$171.00) of the 22Nov09 event at the Avon Senior Center which we co-sponsored with the Avon Historical Society and asked for a motion which was made, seconded and approved.

The Commander asked for a moment of silence in honor and memory of two of our members who passed away since our last meeting – Bob August (A Navy WWII Veteran) joined the Post in 1946 while Bill Huebner (An Army WWII & Korean Veteran) joined us in 2002 – although he was a member of the VFW since 1954.

**Comrades in Distress** this month include *Mike Battaglino, Bob Campbell, Bill Coffey, Dr. Tim Curran, Mike Dlubac, Dick Harris, John Higgins, Josephine Hinman, Jim Katzung, Ben Pereslugoff, Harold Schaal and Ed Stepan*. Please remember to keep them in your thoughts and prayers - and visit them if you are able. We ask that you also let our Chaplain Tom Chrosniak (860-676-9691) know if you learn of any other Post members who are ill or hospitalized.

We are indeed proud to introduce 2 New Members to our Post and ask that you welcome them at your earliest opportunity:

Bob Manchester, a resident of Winsted, served in the U.S. Navy from 28May64 to 27May68 as an aircraft mechanic. He served two tours of duty in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War on aircraft carriers – one in 1964 aboard the USS Constellation (CV-64) and the other in 1967 aboard the USS Forrestal (CV-59) with 2 years and 11 months of sea duty. Bob was aboard the USS Forrestal on “Yankee Station” on 29Jul67 when it suffered a devastating fire and series of chain-reaction explosions which killed 134 sailors and injured 161. Bob’s decorations include the Navy Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w bronze star and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

John Mooney, a transfer from Washington, DC, served in the U. S. Army as an Artillery Officer from 26Jun03 to 26Jun07. He served as a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 94<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. John was then deployed to Northern Iraq where he served during 2005-2006. In 2007 he left active duty and took command of Alpha Battery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 110<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery with the Maryland National Guard (29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Div) for 2 years. Captain Mooney’s decorations include the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Nat Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (2<sup>nd</sup> award) and Parachutist Badge

Commander Newman next administered the New Member Oath to Bob Manchester (Navy – Vietnam) and Rebecca Wareing (Army – Bosnia), presented them with VFW lapel pins and recognized them as new Post members. The members present then warmly welcomed both of them to the Post.

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the passing of **Bob August** (88) on 22 January 2010 after a long illness. Bob served in the U. S. Navy during WWII in the Pacific Theater as an Engineer and Lieutenant, Jg. aboard a Landing Craft Infantry (LCI 504) which was the only ship he was assigned to during his time in the navy. After completing Midshipman School at Northwestern University and a Naval Engineering Course at Cornell, he was sent to Solomons Amphibious Base in Maryland and assigned to LCI 504. His ship was then sent to Norfolk Navy Yard for “retro-fitting” to become a communications vessel and a flag ship for LSTs. The vessel then was then sent to San Diego, on to Pearl Harbor and island-hopping in the Pacific. His LCI then left for the Philippines to join the fleet preparing for the invasion of Japan when the Japanese surrendered in September 1945. He then spent several months in Sasebo, Japan. Bob served with the Navy from 1942 to 1946. His decorations include the American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal and the Navy Occupation Medal (Japan). Vincent Funeral Home in Simsbury provided the funeral arrangements and a memorial service was held at the Avon Congregational Church on 30 January 2010 with several members of our Post in attendance, Burial service were private and interment was a Curtiss Cemetery in Simsbury. May Bob and all our departed comrades find rest with the Eternal Father!

As our *Service Officer Bill Coffey* was recuperating from recent surgery and had been involved in this military records issue, *Bob Hunt* asked for this time to discuss an issue which may be of interest to many of our members. Bob told how he had tried to determine if he was entitled to some military decorations which were missing from his military records and has been waiting for an answer for more than a year now. He distributed a handout which outlined the letters and contacts which ensued over the last year and provided a copy the most recent letter he sent to Senator Lieberman's office regarding this ongoing issue. Bob noted that missing data and awards on military documents is not limited to his issue but, he has learned, is symptomatic of many veteran discharges and DDForm214. As the Post Advocate, he is interested in being the spokesperson for the Post on this issue and would like to hear from Post Veterans who think their military records may be missing decorations or key information.

*Commander Newman* advised the members regarding the Post Relief Fund Committee which consists of the *Commander, Quartermaster, Tom Chrosniak, Bob Galiette, Art Ostheimer and George Slack*. As a Committee, they are responsible for collecting requests for charities from members, evaluating these requests and making recommendations as to the distribution of the Relief Fund monies.

Regarding the Relief Fund, the above committee met on Thursday, 21 January and approved the following expenditures and charities at that time: Give2theTroops, Soldiers Angels, VFW's Operation Uplink and the USO – each of these organizations we have given to in the past. We approved one new organization – the Blinded Veterans Association in recognition of their many services for blinded veterans and their visit with us at the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Old Farms Rehabilitation Hospital where they were founded. It was suggested by the committee that each organization receive \$500.00 from the Relief Fund. A separate motion was made by the members for each expenditure, each was seconded and each approved by the membership. The Committee also recommended that we maintain a reserve of \$15,000 to insure sufficient funds for ongoing expenditures and in view of the need to add an additional stone (\$10,000 estimate) to the Avon Veterans Memorial for the "War on Terrorism".

Under the "Good of the Order", the Commander awarded Continuous Membership Pin to *Don Perreault* for 25 years, *Pete Salvatore* for 20 yrs, *Brian O'Donnell and Aldo Vernesoni* for 15 yrs, *Lew Affelder and Bill Samol* for 10 yrs and *Art Ostheimer* for 5 yrs. We will distribute membership pins again at the next meeting for those who were present but pins were on order but not received and those who were unable to be here on this occasion.

The *Commander* also reminded the members that we are still seeking nominations for the Outstanding Post Veteran for 2009 and requested that members submit their selections to Bill Newman or Don Perreault as soon as possible. Remember you can fill out the form, call in or email your selection for this very special award which honors a member who had made an outstanding contribution to our Post over the years.

*Commander Newman* also provided on each table copies of a Post Newsletter Survey and asked that as many members as possible fill it out in order to provide feedback to the editor. The newsletter has been published for 10 years now and it's indeed time for our members to comment formally on its content and make suggestions for improving it. We hope your comments will be frank, constructive and assist us in making this newsletter both pertinent and informative.

On page five (5) of this newsletter, we present the VFW Mission Statement and our Post Guidelines which have been published several times and have served as the compass for this newsletter over the past 10 years.

## Post Activities & Developments

The Department of Connecticut reported that our Post shows as of 31 January 2010 a membership standing in Division 5 of 102.53% with 4 additional members or 162 over our 2009 membership base of 158. This puts us in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in membership behind North Branford (144 members) which shows also an additional 4 members and 102.78%. There are 15 posts included in Division 5 which cover posts between 100 & 200 members (the lowest is 116 & the highest is 162 or namely us). Our objective in 2010 is to lead Division 5 and qualify once again for an All-State Designation. To accomplish this we need to bring in more members between now and mid-May – so keep looking and finding new members. This is a high priority for all posts again this year as all VFW posts are in transition and experiencing membership declines – two Posts have been lost over the last year in this area alone due to declining membership – *Canton and Granby!* To continue to be a vibrant and leading Post we need a strong and growing membership – we all need to be good recruiters!!

Grant Hagedorn, a member of our Post, has a son who last month was deployed to Iraq. PFC Grant Hagedorn, Jr. is assigned to the 250<sup>th</sup> Engineers at APO 09322. We sent him and his unit on 16 February a care package (45lbs) of various snacks (i.e. nuts, protein bars, beef jerky, chips, etc) – as our assumption is young troops are always hungry and need munchies of all kinds to keep them going. Grant, Sr. will keep us informed of his duties and whereabouts – and we look forward to his son joining the Post at his earliest opportunity.

We have provided the *Secretary of State, Susan Bysiewicz*, with a list of WWII Veterans who reside in Avon and her office will be sending letters to these individuals (approximately 100) in the next month or so. *Caroline Lamonica* developed the list from the town records and we are indebted to her for this effort. The Secretary of State's office will be planning a ceremony sometime in April to recognize and honor the contributions of these veterans. Many cities and towns in Connecticut have already participated in such a ceremony and we will coordinate with her office as to time, date and location. Stay tuned!

On 23 February there will be a Veterans Day at the Legislative Office Building in Room 2A in Hartford. All veterans and veteran organizations are invited to attend is event and meet the legislators. There will be briefings on pending legislation veterans bills by the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs. The meeting will begin at 0900 and continue to 1300.

This is our last call for nominations for the Post Outstanding Veteran for 2009. To date we have had 25 members provide their nominees. We need about 40 or more for a decent turnout and broad participation. Please transmit your selection to Bill Newman or Don Perreault as soon as possible. We want to announce the winner at our March Meeting!

Our coffee kitsch at Friendly's Restaurant in Avon continues to be a weekly gathering place for our veterans. On Thursday, 28 January we set another new record for attendance with 28 members coming together and enjoying the comradeship. Remember we meet rain, snow or shine each Thursday morning at 1000 hours. Come and join us whenever you can – it's a great way to get to know our members. Also, bring a veteran along – we have had many veterans join the Post as a direct result of this weekly gathering. On page 6 of this letter is Bob Hunt's "A Unique Gathering" which he wrote in 2006 to describe the draw and cohesiveness of this broad group of veterans.

## **Now Hear This!**

Since this is our *100<sup>th</sup> issue of the Post Newsletter*, it seems timely and proper to once again provide the purpose and philosophy behind this monthly publication. The Post Newsletter strives to align with and uphold the goal and mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as contained in the following Proclamation which was established at its founding in 1899 and remains an integral part of its charter today:

**“The purpose of this corporation shall be *fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational*; to *preserve and strengthen comradeship* among its members; to *assist worthy comrades*; to *perpetuate the memory* and history of our dead and to *assist their widows and orphans*; to *maintain true allegiance* to the Government of the United States of America and *fidelity to its Constitution and Laws*; to *foster true patriotism*; to *maintain and extend* the institutions of *American Freedom* and to *preserve and defend* the United States from *all her enemies, whomsoever.*”**

This *mission statement* should serve as a guide for all of us and especially so **during this time of war**. This country has **many enemies**— both foreign and domestic – and we, as members of the VFW, **must be steadfast** in our defense of our country. In the last few years we have seen and heard **outrageous accusations** by some of our countrymen – including members of Congress – which have encouraged our enemies and cost the lives of our soldiers. This is an especially **dangerous time** in our history and many of our citizens do not understand the threat to our way of life that this asymmetrical war with its dangerous rules of engagement and flagrant political correctness represents. **This Newsletter** has a **conservative, traditional, pro-military and pro-American bias** and it intends to maintain that profile! There is a **large degree of conservatism** in the VFW mission statement, its magazine, its resolutions and its membership! In **January 2001** we outlined **three primary objectives** of this monthly newsletter and these remain as **our guidelines**:

- To provide **timely information** regarding the Post, its activities and its members.
- To **promote the ideals** of the VFW in our community – by fostering pride in our military, encouraging patriotism and supporting veterans’ causes.
- To inform our members of **current military issues** deemed vital to Veterans, the Armed Forces and the Security of the United States.

As our 10<sup>th</sup> year unfolds, it seems worthwhile to emphasize the purpose and process of the **second part** of the newsletter. Whereas the **first part** reports on our monthly meetings and post activities, the second part presents a broad array of issues and opinions under the headings of **“Now Here This”, “Sounding Off” and “Noteworthy Quotes”**. All these issues are meant to be **thought-provoking** and offer **an interesting perspective**. They are considered to be an informed opinion and should serve as points for **reflection, critical thinking** and **further inquiry**. **Articles selected** for the Newsletter are taken from a **variety of publications** including The Wall Street Journal, Investors Business Daily, National Review, Army Magazine, Army Times, VFW Magazine, American Legion Magazine, Vietnam Magazine, Parameters, Proceedings, Military Review, and many other magazines, letters and websites. We are always interested and searching for new sources as well.

The newsletter is moreover the **history of our Post** over the last 10 years as it provides stories from our veterans, new member profiles, reunions, key events, letters, obituaries, book reviews, speeches, poems, prayers, quotes, humor, photos and cartoons. It is **our fondest wish** that you will continue to find this section and the entire newsletter both **informative and useful**. We are, of course, always interested in your feedback!!

## Noteworthy Quotes

### *A Unique Gathering*

Without call to do so, they came together at ten o' clock this morning for an hour or so, as they have done for numberless Thursdays past, in the rear dining area of a restaurant in a Connecticut municipality, courtesy of a well-known New England chain. Fifteen to twenty in number usually. Today seventeen. None related by blood or marriage. Usually all male but not always. Many retired but some still working. It is not the meeting of any organization. There is no agenda, no assigned seating at the long table consisting of individual tables pulled together, no attendance taken, no one presides, no dues exacted and no prohibition on addressing the assemblage if one is so inclined, with respectful attention if one does.

They converse in changing small enclaves principally about family, children and grandchildren are favorites, about the doings of government, foreign, federal, state and local, about world events, about daily regimens, about friends and concerns for friends ailing, about travel and hobbies, about subjects miscellaneous, but rarely about the common denominator that draws these individuals together week after week.

They are not alumni of a single high school for they received their education in such diverse locales as Waterbury, CT, Clearfield, PA, West Hartford, CT, New York City, Southington, CT, Canton, CT, Sunnyburn, PA, Hartford, CT, Stamford, CT, Utica, NY, Farmington, CT, Pawtucket, RI, Watertown, CT and Simsbury, CT. Nor is the common thread the equally diverse secondary institutions attended with Penn State, University of Hartford, Boston College, John Carroll University, Dartmouth College, University of Rhode Island, New Britain Hospital of Nursing, Marlboro College, Suffolk University and the University of Connecticut in the mix.

There is no commonality in their life's vocations of sales engineer, proprietor/service business, builder, salesman/food industry, proprietor/retail store, insurance, investment management/proprietor, lawyer, newspaperman, lobbyist, nurse, proprietor/beauty salon and utility/management that can account for their presence this morning, or any Thursday morning.

These are persons who mostly never met one another until well into their adult or even senior years and did not know until then the heritage they possessed in common. There is no noticeable sign or aura proclaiming a mutual bond amongst them - even to the most observant. Those possessing the heritage do not broadcast it. Nor do they tend to regard it uncommon. It is quite possible a stranger seated by happenstance in that dining area on a Thursday morning would surmise those gathered were ordinary persons, just as those there gathered regard themselves. The stranger would be right in the assumption and would never know these ordinary people had performed extraordinary - perhaps even heroic by common standards - deeds in younger years, thereby gaining admission to the group's membership.

The first step toward acquiring that heritage consisted of all raising their right hands, swearing to protect and defend their country and the Constitution and, as they uttered the last word of that oath, becoming members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Subsequently, when called upon to walk in harm's way in the observance of that pledge, they did so with honor and distinction despite the great trepidation and uncertainties then besetting them. Some suffered harm. Wheelchairs are the telltales of two of a number who did. On some the consequences of the harm are not so obvious. Others escaped physical harm - some by the slimmest of margins - only to see a near at hand comrade die. All spent months if not years in theretofore unknown, unanticipated and highly inhospitable places - at times undertaking previously unimaginable acts far from the shores of this country and knowing at the time they might not view those shores again.

That they survived all they encountered in the conflicts each participated in as a member of our country's military was the final step in completing the molding of the legacy that brings them weekly together. They are quietly proud of that heritage. Understandably, it is a heritage that few - who have not achieved it as they did - can fully fathom and appreciate. Try as they might, and they do try from time to time, occasionally in public but mostly in the bosom of family and friends, it doesn't seem to them they are able to imbue a broad spectrum of succeeding generations with the importance they, with the heritage, place on each citizen being willing to similarly protect the freedoms unique to America whenever those freedoms are endangered by despots or worse - to include walking in harm's way.

The members joined in that heritage are dwindling in this community - as they are everywhere. Eventually the rear dining room of the restaurant will no longer host this unusual Thursday morning gathering. Quiet will likely reign then for that hour. While the attendees at these gatherings have not sought and do not seek any tribute the silence would be a worthy - but only a next best - tribute succeeding generations could pay to the group and to its counterparts across our nation. The best tribute? The exhibition by each succeeding generation, ad infinitum, of a sincere and enduring commitment to maintain all that was achieved by members of the military of the United States of America from 1775 down to each day in the life of each member of these successive generations - coupled with a vow to preserve unaltered the hard-won freedoms those generations have been gifted with, have enjoyed and are then enjoying!

**ROBERT C. HUNT, Jr.**  
(Nov 2006)

Bill Newman