



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Post 3272

Avon, Connecticut

“On Target”

Our Newsletter's 10th Anniversary Year

The Post's 65th Anniversary Year (1945-2010)

December 2010

LETTER #108

The Post met on Wednesday, **17 November 2010** at the Italian Club with **53 members** in attendance. The *Ladies Auxiliary* prepared another wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings and plenty of second helpings.

Our ***next meeting*** will be held on **Wednesday, 15 December 2010** at the Italian Club.

Cocktails begin at 1730 hours with dinner at 1830 hours.

Join our **Post Family** for our **Annual Christmas Pizza Party** with the **Avon High School Santa Band** providing Holiday Cheer – they will begin about **1730 hours!**

Senior Vice-Commander Grant Hagedorn, pinch-hitting for Commander Walton, 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 Bob Galiette* offered the VFW Prayer and asked for a moment of silence in honor of our departed comrades and their families. *Fred Hudon* then provided the POW/MIA Prayer.

The minutes of the October Meeting were not available and *Vice-Commander Hagedorn* suggested that we refer to the October Newsletter as interim minutes and a motion to accept these as substitutes were approved by the members. No new bills were presented and a motion to accept the Quartermaster's Report, as presented, was also approved.

Senior Vice-Commander Hagedorn administered the **New Member Oath** to **Bob Forsythe** (Army – Vietnam) and **Tom Vorhees** (Navy – Occupation). *Membership Chairman Bill Newman* presented a brief outline of each new member's military service and *Chaplain Galiette* offered the VFW New Member Prayer.

Comrades in Distress this month include *Mike Battaglino, Mike Busha, Bob Campbell, Dr. Tim Curran, Dick Harris, Josephine Hinman, Jim Katzung, Harold Schaal, Ed Stepan, Norm Southergill and Clyde Whirly*. Please remember to keep them in your thoughts and prayers - and visit them if you are able. We ask that you also inform our *Chaplain Bob Galiette (860-673-9324)* should you learn of any other Post members who are ill or hospitalized. Names **underlined** are new this month.

Under committee reports, *Sr. Vice Cmdr Hagedorn* noted that we need a firm headcount for the upcoming 65th Anniversary Brunch at Farmington Woods Country Club on 20 November. He also advised that the 65th Anniversary Magazine would be available at that time. It was suggested that members wear their Blue & Grays with Overseas Cap to the Brunch.

Bill Newman reported that *Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy Winners* have been selected and their essays forwarded to District. He also reported on the feedback from our visits to Canton and Avon High Schools on 10 & 12 November respectively. We visited 18 classrooms in Canton and 20 in Avon which covered the entire school in Canton and approximately 550 students in Avon. Bill noted both school administrations were delighted with the response and the enthusiasm of the teachers and the students to the veterans visit to their classrooms this year. They considered these Veterans Week programs a great success and sincerely thanked us for participating and sharing our military experiences with their students.

Sr. Vice Cmdr Hagedorn reported that the *65th Anniversary Magazine* is in the process of being printed and *Bill Samol*, who had to leave earlier, considered it is a great tribute to the Post and an important keepsake for all our members and the greater Avon community. Grant advised that Bill Samol will provide a final accounting on this project at our January meeting.

Under unfinished business, Grant noted that the *Wal-Mart Veterans Project* is currently displaying a large number of local veterans – many of which are our members – in the lobby at the west entrance. Wal-Mart has extended the project and you can still participate according to *Aldo Vernesoni*. Bring your military photograph to the Photo Department and they will make you two 5X7 copies – the store displays one and you keep one.

Grant Hagedorn also recognized *Past Post Commander Dick Petersen* and his wife, Joy, who were present for the Thanksgiving Dinner and were in the area visiting their family. I was great to see “*Old Rattlesnake*” again and we were so pleased that he came to our dinner and meeting.

Sr Vice Cmdr Hagedorn reported that we are looking for volunteers to help prepare toilet kits as Christmas Gifts for the *Rocky Hill Veterans Home*. *Bill Newman* volunteered to oversee this effort and will coordinate our visit to the Veterans Home with *Cathy Cook*.

Post Membership Report

Under the Good of the Order, *Membership Chairman Bill Newman* advised that the latest data from the Department of Connecticut shows the Post having 152 paid members versus our membership base last year of 170. Accordingly, we are at this time 18 members short of our 100% target. As we have added 12 new members since the new membership year began (1Jul10), the shortfall is due primarily to members not paying their annual membership dues. So, please help us out and pay your dues (\$21.00) as soon as possible.

We are seeking to be an “*ALL-STATE POST*” again in 2010-2011 and to do so we need 100% membership plus at least 10 additional members to rank in the top two slots within our division of 17 VFW Posts and therefore qualify for the All-State designation. Last year (2009-2010) we were ranked #2 with 107.5% (+12 members) while in 2008-2009 we were ranked #1 with 104.00% (+6 members). The reason it takes more members for us to move up in ranking now is that as our membership base increases (*it jumped from 158 to 170 last year*) each new member becomes a smaller factor in the equation. I noticed that last year the Department of Connecticut moved both the Watertown & Waterbury Posts up into Division #4 from Division #5 when they reached 185 & 177 respectively. Accordingly, our membership objective this year not only to be All-State but also to reach at least the 180 level in membership and subsequently move into the Division #4 group

Post Activities & Developments

The Avon News in its 17 November issue featured a front page photo of *Peggy Roell, Doug Sutter and Bill Coffey* attending the Veterans Day program at the Avon Middle School. LTC Sutter, who just returned from Iraq a week earlier, was the keynote speaker at the school and noted the considerable progress that he witnessed compared to his earlier tour in 2005. His presentation was very well received by all in attendance. The photo was taken by *Carl Candels*.

On Saturday, 20 November, the Post sponsored a 65th Anniversary Brunch at the Farmington Woods Country Club with 70 members and their guests in attendance. The Brunch proved to be a memorable event with fine accommodations, excellent food and overall good value. *Commander Roy Waldon* acted as Master of Ceremonies and *Sr. Vice Cmdr Grant Hagedorn* assisted the Commander at this event. *Bill Samol* distributed copies of the Post's newly-minted 65th Anniversary Magazine to all attendees and it provided an ideal complement to the occasion. All were pleased to see *Al Simonelli* attend this event as a Charter Member who was present at the creation of the Post 65 years ago on 27 November 1945.

CT Veterans Hall of Fame Inductee **Bob Hunt**

On Monday, 22 November Bob Hunt, our Post Advocate & Historian, was inducted by Governor Rell into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame at the Legislative Office Building in downtown Hartford. Bob and 10 other veterans were honored as the Class of 2010 not only for their military service to our country but also for their ongoing commitment to their communities after their discharge from the service. Governor Rell noted this is what truly sets them apart and qualifies each of them for this special honor. Several members of our Post attended the induction ceremony. Avon News published an excellent article in their 1 December issue which featured Bob's many military and community accomplishments as well as a photograph of Bob with Governor Rell at the induction ceremony. We are very proud of Bob Hunt and offer him our heartfelt congratulations on his receiving this special recognition. We are indeed privileged as a Post to have three members – Bill Coffey, Bob Hunt and Dan McHale – who have now been inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame.

In their 24 November issue, The Avon News published an article by *Columnist Ben Colmen* entitled "Good Question: How do we honor our veterans?" The article focused on our Post here in Avon noting its long history, its mission, its incoming & outgoing Commanders, its community activities and its ongoing military history project. Ben ends the article wondering if the community could do more to support its veterans and suggests the property tax relief granted to veterans could be a good place to start.

On Friday, 10 December at 2pm we will deliver to the Avon Public Library an additional 20+ Military Service Histories on members of our Post. *Terri Wilson*, President of the Avon Historical Society and *Virginia Vocelli*, Library Director, will be on hand to accept these histories on behalf of the library. Carl Candels will be there to take photos. Several members of our Post will be present including – *George Caron, Frank Celentano, Joe Hatala, Jim Hutton, Gordon Roch, Bob Skeels, Al Simonelli, Ed Stepien and Lee Wilson* - who are submitting their histories at this time. We are of course submitting other histories but many of these Post veterans have passed away. All Post veterans are cordially invited to attend this event.

Post members will also be at Wal-Mart on Saturday, 11 December from 8am to 6pm “*Ringing the Bell*” again this Christmas Season for the Salvation Army. Members who are participating in this fundraising for the Salvation Army include *George England & Dick Hill* at 8 to 10am; *George Caron & Mike Fyler* at 10 to 12noon; *Marty Brighenti & Lew Affelder* at 12pm to 2pm; *Art Ostheimer & Nick Lavnikovich* at 2 to 4pm and finally *Rich Ecke & Lee Wilson* at 4 to 6pm. All members are invited to stop by and contribute for this good cause.

New Post Members

We are pleased to report the following three (3) veterans have joined our Post recently and ask our members to extend a warm welcome to these new members at your earliest opportunity:

Bob Forsyth is a *Vietnam Veteran* who served on active duty with the Army from 20Aug68 to 19Aug70. Drafted in 1968, he went to Ft Jackson and then to Ft. Sill. Sent to Vietnam 21Jan69, he was assigned to the, 1/8th Artillery (105mm), 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi in II Corps as an SP5 artilleryman and was attached to the 2nd/27th Wolfhounds. In March '69 he was wounded by an RPG and grenade at the Parrot's Beak in Cambodia and was medivaced to Saigon where he was hospitalized for a month. Upon his return to his unit, he was assigned as the battery clerk and also served with a Cav Recon unit (3/4th). He was injured again in a Huey crash in July '69, departed Vietnam 20Jan70 and discharged in Aug '70 at Ft Benning. His decorations include the Bronze Star w/V Device & 1 cluster, Purple Heart, Air Medal w/4 clusters, Commendation Medal, Nat Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign Medal, CIB and Marksman Badge (M-14 & M-16). Bob lives in East Hartland, CT and was introduced to by *Brian O'Donnell*.

George Holewik, an immigrant from Poland, is a *Vietnam Veteran* who enlisted after high school and served on active duty with the U.S. Army from 3/Jul/69 to 10/Feb/71. He was in Vietnam for 15 months with 815th Engineer Brigade in Pleiku as a wheeled-vehicle mechanic (SP5) but was “*requested*” to serve as a mine-sweeper with road building crews. After a year in Pleiku, the Brigade moved to Dalat and George served there as a mail clerk and ¾ ton driver leading small convoys to get mail & supplies. One of his convoys was ambushed and a truck in the convoy was hit with RPGs & small arms fire – killing one man and wounding 2 others. For his actions on 22Oct70 in rescuing the wounded under heavy fire, he was awarded the Silver Star. His other decorations include the Nat Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Medal. George lives in Canton and was introduced by *Mike Kaminsky* – a neighbor.

Dave McKay is a *Vietnam Veteran* who served in the U. S. Army from 19May69 to 30Apr71. He also served in Germany as an enlisted man from 11Mar68 to 24Oct68, went to OCS in 1969 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Infantry. After airborne training, he joined the Special Forces and served a year in Vietnam (30Jan70 – 1Feb71) as a Special Forces Officer (1st Lieutenant). He was discharged from active duty on 30Apr71 at Ft. Devens, MA. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Nat Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Airborne Badge and CIB. Dave lives in Simsbury and joined the Post due to his friendship with *Brian O'Donnell*.

Richard D. Harris
WWII Torpedoman – Navy Submarine Service

It is with deep sadness that we report the lost of a dear comrade – **Dick Harris** (85) passed away at New Britain Hospital on Tuesday, 7 December 2010 after a short illness. Born in New Britain, Dick lived in Avon for the last 46 years. A veteran of WWII, he joined the Navy on his 17th birthday and, after basic training, volunteered for submarine duty. Dick served on active duty from Dec42 to Feb46 as a torpedoman on the USS (S-12) and the USS Medregal (SS-480) which undertook patrol duties in the Atlantic and Air-Sea rescues in the Pacific during the war. Although he enjoyed submarine duty, once he was safe at home after the war he realized that submarine duty was in fact the most dangerous branch of the service by far – one man in five who volunteered for submarine duty perished during WWII. His military decorations include the Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European Campaign Medal, Pacific Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal and the Submariner's Dolphin Badge. Dick joined our Post in 1997 and was an active member – distributing poppies, ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, volunteering for our golf fundraiser, visiting the schools and attending our many activities. He was a regular at our monthly meetings and weekly coffees – and he will be missed by all of us. Funeral Arrangements are being handled by Carmon's in Avon and calling hours will be on Friday, 10 December from 4 to 7pm with VFW Post 3272 conducting its final salute ceremony at 6:30pm. A funeral service will be held at the Carmon Funeral Home on Saturday, 11 December at 10am followed by burial at the Village Cemetery in Collinsville. May Dick and all our departed Comrades rest in the peace of the Eternal Father!

Noteworthy Quotes

Being Opposed to Dumb Wars

"We catch hundreds of enemy combatants — then let them go so they can kill more U.S. troops and Afghan civilians. One of Barack Obama's most resonant applause lines before becoming president was his explanation for opposing the liberation of Iraq: "I am not opposed to all wars; I'm opposed to dumb wars." No offense to masterful Gen. David Petraeus but U.S. war policy in Afghanistan is getting dumber and dumber in some big ways. The Washington Examiner's Sara Carter reports that more than 500 suspected Taliban militants have been released from U.S. custody this year. And there are dozens of detainees at other facilities all over Afghanistan who've been let go. Afghan President Hamid Karzai, whose confidence in the U.S. war effort is shaky, is believed to be hedging his bets with the Taliban. He's tried to free as many as 700 of their operatives since July viewing them as bargaining chips. Hundreds of thousands of Nazi soldiers captured by the allies were kept as prisoners for as long as three years after Germany's surrender in May 1945. In Britain, German POWs made up a quarter of the nation's farming work force as late as 1947. The global war on terror — of which the president has said Afghanistan is the central front — is just as much a war as World War II. Why are we in such a hurry to repatriate enemy POWs? The Petraeus counterinsurgency strategy, made famous by the Iraq surge, in which enemy areas are cleared and held, becomes kind of tough when the enemy forces you clear away are allowed to come back. A military official stationed in Afghanistan told the Examiner, "we've got to release the bad guys" because the Karzai government calls the shots. Would a Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher — or, for that matter, a George W. Bush — long accept that? Most Americans are as "opposed to dumb wars" as President Obama — especially when it's the U.S. being dumb." *"Dumb Warfare", Editorial, IBD, 12/7/10*

Our Best Defense – Missile Defense

"Gazing out into the unpredictable far future, humanity has but one reliable weapon available against nuclear attack: missile defense. Why is the president willing to negotiate away our only real hope? The Washington Times' Bill Gertz reports that there have been four secret meetings between the Obama administration and Moscow on ballistic missile defense, according to a "four-page document circulated on Capitol Hill." That means Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates were talking through their hats in June when they testified to Congress that a missile defense deal was not in the works. And to Vladimir Putin's Russia, only one kind of missile defense deal exists: no Western missile defense against Russian nukes — which is undoubtedly why a draft agreement presented to Russia in the spring was rejected. It's all part of the president's vision of a nuclear-free world. Columnist Charles Krauthammer points out an unpleasant truth: *"A world without nukes would be the ultimate nightmare. We voluntarily disarm while the world's rogues and psychopaths develop nukes in secret. An ostensibly nuclear-free world would place these weapons in the hands of radical regimes that would not hesitate to use them — against a civilized world that would have given up its deterrent."* Even Ronald Reagan hoped for "the day when nuclear arms have been banished from the face of this earth." But unlike President Obama, his method of reaching that destination was to make atomic weapons impossible to use by conventional means of delivery, like placed atop intercontinental missiles. How? Missile defense. The real lunacy is the belief that the pomp of grand summits will counter human nature and somehow bring out the humane in the world's evildoers. The Nixon-Carter detente of the 1970s led not to peace and security, but to Soviet expansion into Afghanistan and nuclear vulnerability for the West. The U.S. commitment to missile defense proved the key to winning the Cold War. A ballistic missile defense against nuclear rockets launched on the U.S. homeland, or Europe or Israel — or, for that matter, Muslim states that the Islamists revile, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia — would not be perfect. Al-Qaida or its ilk could still smuggle a device into London or Rome or Tel Aviv or New York. But consider that the Axis of Evil seems to be spinning at full speed in developing and distributing airborne vehicles with which nukes can be delivered to Western nations. The latest WikiLeaks dump tells us that the U.S. suspects North Korea gave Iran 19 BM-25 missiles, with a range that could reach Western Europe's capital cities. It's never been clearer that the Free World has a moral obligation to develop and deploy missile defenses — at home and abroad, far and wide. It's the world's great hope, but too audacious for President Obama and Secretary Clinton." **"Provide for the Missile Defense", Editorial, IBD, 12/3/1**

Suspect Missile Launch Off California Coast

"I am a retired U.S. Navy Fire Control Technician, who is platform certified in the gun and missile systems on board Adams class guided missile destroyers, I have also worked with the Navy's Harpoon, Tomahawk and ASROC missile systems. (Fire Control Techs operate, maintain and repair the computer, radar and peripheral systems used to launch and guide the various naval weapon systems, we are the guys who "PUSH THE BUTTON") Anyway, what I saw in the recent video concerning the object 30 miles off the coast of CA. Is blatantly a foreign made, Large Cruise or ICBM missile, being launched by a sub-surface aquatic platform. First I know it's a large missile because it did not exhibit the typical "corkscrewing" trajectory of a beam riding missile as it tries to acquire the targeting beam. This tells me it's a Big Boy with a complete guidance system installed in it, what is nicknamed a "fire and forget" missile, as once its launched its internal guidance system takes over and there is no real need for external guidance. Secondly, I'm fairly confident it's not one of ours, as the vapor trail appears "dirty" it looks brownish. I have personally been involved in (5) SM2 missile launches, and (2) ASROC missile launches, and have been on safety observation for at least 15 more launches of Harpoons, Tomahawks and other missiles. We put a lot of sweat and money into our "birds" and part of that are the fuel cells, they burn very clean, a whitish-blue in fact, not a dirty blackish brown. That missile had rather crude fuel cells, which tells me it's not one of ours. I bet the brass in Washington is freaked out big time, because of what I know of our "defenses" they should really have had a pretty good idea this thing was sitting there, and they should have been watching it, not only that the moment it broke the surface of the water and ignited our early warning Doppler should have picked it up, and relayed the info to NORAD, and the CAP units flying patrol over the country... Any high ranking expert who believes this is a condensation trail off of a commercial airliner is lying or stupid. I hope you hear from other Fire Control Techs who saw the same thing I did! I forgot something, as any Fire Control Tech or Gunners mate will verify, the protocols to launch a missile are so complex, there is no way this was an "accidental" launch. I do not want to share too much info, but there is no "one red button" to launch a missile, that's all Hollywood B.S. Yes two keys are turned to arm the system, but it takes at least three other things to occur in proper sequence to launch a bird, so that's at least 5 people all doing something at the right time. It's impossible to accidentally launch a missile! They were testing out defenses, which Obama has been quietly neutralizing ever since he took office. Their nuclear sub was inside our 200 mile safety zone. We should have destroyed their missile and the sub immediately. It is an act of war which Obama has ignored and made us look weak to the entire world. Only China or Russia are capable of launching such a missile. What is coming next?" FC2- ANDREW/ RET **"More on West Coast Missile Launch"**
Email from Bob Skeels, 12/1/10

We wish you and your family a Blessed & Merry Christmas and a Healthy & Happy New Year!

Bill Newman