



Post 3272
Avon, Connecticut

“On Target”
The Post’s Monthly Newsletter

January 2011
LETTER #109

The Post met on Wednesday, **15 December 2010** at the Italian Club and celebrated our traditional Christmas gathering and pizza party. In addition to plenty of pizza, there were a variety of delicious desserts. We had 65 veterans and their guests on hand for a festive evening.

Our **next meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, 26 January 2011** at the Italian Club. Cocktails begin at 1800 hours with dinner at 1830 hours. Join our **Post Family** for another evening of **good food, good conversation and good comradeship**. Hope to see you there as we begin a New Year!

There was no meeting scheduled and *Commander Roy Walton* welcomed the members and their guests. Since the Avon High School Band has a performance scheduled that evening, they were unfortunately unable to provide their customary Holiday Music on this occasion. Nevertheless, it proved to be a wonderful evening with plenty of good tidings, comradeship and cheer.

Commander Walton noted that we generally do not conduct business on this occasion but the members need to consider at this time regarding three (3) pending expenditures. He called for a vote on the following: First, pay in advance the annual dues of 12 members who have not yet paid this year but who are in good standing and are expected to pay soon; Next, approve the payment \$349.00 for the 65th Anniversary Pins that were ordered; Lastly, reimburse the Avon Middle School for the postage spent (\$141.00) to send care packages to Shawn Crauss who is currently deployed. Each of these items were separately submitted as a motion, seconded and approved by the members present.

Post Membership Chairman Bill Newman took this opportunity to introduce three (3) new members to the Post Family. Each new member was warmly welcomed by the members present.

Janae Marotta is a Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn who has served in the National Guard since July 2001. She graduated from the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, MN in 2004 where she was commissioned through ROTC. Janae served as a Logistics Advisor on her deployment to Iraq during 2009-10 with the 143rd ASG's Logistics Military Advisory Team. While deployed in Iraq she worked in An Numaniyah, FOB Delta, Union III and Camp Taji. She is currently a Captain with the Connecticut Army National Guard working full-time as the Training Officer for 118th Multi-functional Medical Battalion. Her decorations include the Joint Forces Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Achievement Medal, Iraq Service Medal, War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Parachutist Badge. Janae lives in Burlington, CT and was introduced to the Post by *Doug Sutter*.

John Benefield enlisted in the Marine Corps on 12Jul65 and served in Vietnam as a Corporal E4 and Mortarman/Forward Observer with 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines from Sep66 to Oct67. After his tour, he returned to Camp Lejune, NC and extended to attend an Imagery Interpretation Course at the Intelligence School, Fort Holabird, MD. John was discharged from active duty on 24Jul70 as a Sergeant E5. His decorations include the Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Good Conduct Medal, Nat Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/1 star, Vietnam Campaign Medal and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. John lives in Unionville and was introduced by *Marty Brighenti*.

Nick Landi served with the U.S. Army and Army National Guard as an Infantryman and Motor Transport Driver (E4). He served in Korea in 2000 -01 with the 3rd Infantry Division and in Iraq from 27Sep06 to 25Sep07. His decorations include the Good Conduct Medal, Nat Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal w/ M device, Parachutist Badge & Driver Badge. Nick lives in Simsbury and was introduced to us by *Rich Ecke*.

Comrades in Distress this month include *Mike Battaglino, Mike Busha, Bob Campbell, Dr. Tim Curran, Bob Galiette, Josephine Hinman, Jim Katzung, Harold Schaal, Ed Stepien, 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 let our *Chaplain Bob Galiette* (673-9324) know if you learn of any other Post members who are ill or hospitalized. Names underlined are new this month.

Post Activities & Developments

We are pleased to inform you that three (3) of our young members who are actively serving were recently promoted – Army 2nd Lieutenant **James C. Flannery** (*Bob Galiette's Grandson*) who is serving as a Platoon Leader with Bravo Company, 1/187 Inf Bn, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Div in Afghanistan was promoted to 1st Lieutenant (See *Photo Page 5*). Army 1st Lieutenant **Mark Ballantyne** (*who served a tour in Iraq 2004-05*) was promoted to Captain in November and is currently serving as a Contingency Contracting Officer in Bagram, Afghanistan. His twin brother, **John** who also served a tour in Iraq (*Jan'09 – Feb'10*) as a Chinook Pilot, was also promoted to Captain in October and is now the CO of the Connecticut Detachment of the 2/104th Gen Support Aviation Bn at Bradley Airport. Our congratulations to these fine Army Officers on their promotions!

Marine Sergeant Adam Carmon (son of John Carmon & a Member of our Post) has requested that we pray for the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines and their families. He notes that they are heavily engaged in combat with the Taliban in Afghanistan and the 3rd Battalion has recently lost nine (9) Marines in 4 days. John served with the Marines in Afghanistan, returned home in September 2010 and is currently stationed at Camp Lejune. Sergeant Carmon was recently awarded the Combat Distinguishing Device ("V" Device) to his Navy Achievement Medal for his actions as a Squad Leader of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 2D Marines, Regimental Combat Team, 1st Marine Division Forward from March to June 2010 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He supervised more than 35 Combat Patrols consisting of 15 vehicle patrols, 10 key leader engagements and 15 firefights with the enemy. His citation reads in part...*"He consistently placed himself at the point of friction and in the line of enemy fire in order to maintain complete control of every situation, demonstrating the fighter – leader concept for his Marines to follow. Sergeant Carmon's initiative, perseverance and total dedication to duty reflected credit upon him and were in the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service"*. Our Congratulations, Sergeant Carmon!

On Friday, 10 December, we presented the Avon Historical Society at the Public Library with 22 new Military Service Histories from our Post. This 2nd installment of Avon VFW Post 3272 Histories has increased our Veterans History Collection at the Avon Library now to 81. We expect to have 100 histories available there later this year. The veteran histories which were submitted to the library on this occasion included the following: **Stan Barnett** (WWII - Pacific); **Frank Briganti** (Vietnam); **John Brighenti** (WWII - Pacific); **Robert Brighenti** (WWII- Europe); **Marty Brighenti** (Korea); **George Caron** (WWII – Pacific); **Frank Celentano** (WWII – Europe); **Michael Gerstner** (WWII – Pacific); **Joseph Hatala** (WWII – Europe); **Jim Hutton** (Vietnam); **John Kostrisak** (WWII – Europe); **Lenny LaMonica** (WWII – Pacific); **Sanford Lindy** (WWII – Pacific); **Bernie Morgan** (WWII – Europe); **Gordon Roch** (WWII – Europe); **Pete Salvatore** (WWII – Europe); **Al Simonelli** (WWII – Europe); **Bob Skeels** (Vietnam); **Ed Stepien** (WWII – Pacific); **Don Studley** (Occupation Forces– Germany); **Lee Wilson** (Gulf War); and **Ed Zionce** (WWII – Europe). In attendance for this presentation was *Terri Wilson*, President of the Avon Historical Society, and *Virginia Vocelli*, Director of the Avon Public Library. Ten Post members, who were submitting their histories, were also on hand for this presentation - including left to right standing *Joe Hatala*, *Gordon Roch*, *Al Simonelli*, *Ed Stepien*, *George Caron*, *John Kostrisak* and *Bob Steels* – kneeling left to right *Frank Celentano*, *Lee Wilson*, *Bill Newman* and *Jim Hutton*.



**Ten Post Veterans presented their Military Histories to the Avon Library on 10 Dec 2010
Bill Newman holds the Avon Post Veterans History Collection**

On 17 December, *Bill Newman* and *Don Perreault* delivered 4 boxes of toiletries, kits and hats from our Post to the Connecticut Veterans Home at Rocky Hill as gifts for the Holiday Season. In addition, we handed Catherine Cook, Director of Community Affairs & Volunteer Services, a \$1500.00 check from our Relief Fund for Christmas Gift Cards for veterans domiciled there. We have received personal thank you letters from Catherine Cook and Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz regarding these gifts. Commissioner Schwartz notes in her letter to us that because of the *“current stressful economic conditions they have been experiencing a significant increase from homeless and indigent veterans, including recently returned veterans seeking admission to the*

State Veterans Home. We do not turn any eligible veteran away, but as you can imagine, this is putting a considerable strain on our resources. Your charitable contribution is critical to the success of our mission. Please accept my sincere appreciation for your continuing support of our veterans”.

Commander Roy Walton, who also serves as the Chairman of the Voice of Democracy & Patriot Pen Essay Contests, has announced our Post winners for the 2010-11 year. Our Congratulations to the following Avon Public School Students for their participation and excellent essays.

Voice of Democracy & Patriot Pen Winners

Nicholas Tan
Kate Howley (Kate was also a winner at District – forwarded to Dept of CT)
Riley Hope Mayne
William Kostal
Grace Meador

We are pleased to report that the Department of Connecticut membership standings as of 31 December 2010 show our Post in 1st place among the 17 VFW Posts in Division 5 with 101.76%. This report credits us with 173 members or +3 over our base last year of 170 members. The 2nd place Post (No. Branford) shows a 96.18% with a -6 members versus last year. Due on this membership report, Commander Roy Walton is honored as the Division 5 Commander for the month and we will work to insure our Commander and our Post stays in the top ranking between now and final accounting in May. Our objective is to be an All-State Post and have an All-State Commander again this year. To reach this objective it is estimated we will need at least 7 more new members. We sincerely thank all our members who recruited new members to the Post this year and helped insure that we maintain our status as one of the premier Posts in Connecticut.

Each year at this time we honor those Post members who become eligible in this New Year for Continuous Membership Pins. The *Post Commander* will award Lapel Pins to these members at our January meeting. Our records show the following members as being Continuous Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the period indicated:

55 years – Steve Baily

50 years – Bill Gresh

25 years – Ben Nascembini; Al Newberg

20 years – Phil Schenck

15 years – Jim Burns; Don Griswold; Wade Horsey; Brian Studley; Bill Newman

10 years – Charlie Castle; Dick Petersen

5 years – Bernie Driscoll; Vince Keeney; Frank Kirbus; Lacy Pack; Nick Phillips

Outstanding Post Veteran for 2010

It is once again time to select one of our members as “The Milton (Mike) Anstey Outstanding Veteran Award for 2010”. We will be distributing nomination forms at our January meeting & at the Thursday Coffees and ask all our members to participate in this key selection process. Since this is our most prestigious award, please help select a member who has a strong commitment to the Post and participates in its many activities and achievements. Please return your nomination by the February Meeting as we want to announce the Outstanding Veteran at our March Meeting. You can also return your form, call or email your choice to the following Officers:

Quartermaster Don Perreault
Phone: (860)673-0552
Email: BCEAGLE66@hotmail.net

Trustee Bill Newman
Phone: (860)676-0037
Email: wjnewman@sbcglobal.net

THE MILTON (MIKE) ANSTEY **OUTSTANDING VETERAN AWARD** **AVON POST 3272**

Since 2002, our members has voted to recognize annually one of our veterans who best demonstrates the *outstanding leadership, commitment and service* to the Post of *Milton (Mike) Anstey* who served as our Post Quartermaster for 19 years. The selection process takes into consideration the *following criteria*:

1. ***Leadership Responsibilities*** (i.e. Post Officer Assignments, Chairmanship Duties, organizing projects, new initiatives, recruiting new members, etc.)
2. ***Participation in Post Activities*** (i.e. Honor Guard, Color Guard, Poppy Volunteer, fund-raising, community activities, ceremonies, meetings, etc.)

Each year members receive ballots and nominate a Post Member who is their choice to receive this award. No winner can be nominated again for this award.

Avon Post Outstanding Veterans

2002	Art Neriani	WWII (Europe)
2003	Don Studley	WWII Occupation
2004	Ray Zacchera	WWII (Pacific)
2005	Bill Newman	Vietnam
2006	Don Perreault	Vietnam
2007	George England	WWII (Pacific)
2008	Charlie Kilgore	WWII (Europe)
2009	Bob Hunt	WWII (Europe)



Platoon Leader James Flannery leads His Patrol in the Sabari District of Afghanistan

**1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment,
patrols Sabari District
January 4, 2011**

Task Force Rakkasan



Khowst Province, Afghanistan – Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, maneuver through Sabari District during patrols to disrupt insurgent activity in the area December 30th.

This is a photo of **1/LT James Flannery** on patrol with his platoon. He is the Platoon Leader for the 2nd Platoon, B Company. His Company has been operating in Paktika, Kandahar, and Khost Provinces. They are due back to Fort Campbell in February and we hope to see him when he comes home on leave. Please keep him, his men & their families in your thoughts & prayers! *(Photo & Article sent to us by his mother – Claudia Galiette Flannery (Bob Galiette's Daughter)*

On 12 January Jim Hutton has sent us by email the following article that many of you will find both interesting and relevant as it underscores our ongoing effort to encourage and develop Military Service Histories on WWII Veterans - as well as all our veterans.

“The Admiral Nimitz Foundation would like to announce the creation of the Society of Sons & Daughters of World War II Veterans. The organization just started accepting applications January 1, 2011. It’s goal is to preserve the stories of sacrifice and achievement of America’s “greatest generation”—those who fought and won WWII. It will also enable individuals to prove family ancestry from an American veteran of World War II. The Society of Sons & Daughters of World War II Veterans will also be an asset for educators and students as it will create a public database of military records from WWII veterans that will be accessible to historians, authors and students. Membership is open to relatives by birth, adoption, or marriage of all men and women who served in the United States military in World War II. A Memorial membership is also available for friends of a qualifying veteran who claims no relation. All memberships require proof of service of a veteran between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946. To sign up, and for more information, please visit the SonsandDaughtersofWW2Veterans.com or NimitzFoundation.org/SonsandDaughters.”

The Relief Fund Committee is looking for contribute to additional worthy and well-managed veteran and active service charities. Please forward any recommendations or ideas you may have in this regard to *Commander Roy Walton, Bill Newman, Don Perreault, Bob Galiette, George Slack or Art Ostheimer*. Thanks for your help in this important undertaking.

Noteworthy Quotes

Metal of Honor Recipient – SSGT Salvatore Giunta

"In our nine-year war in Afghanistan and Iraq, this is only the eighth Medal of Honor. Even more rare, the man who has earned it is the first from this war to live to see the president place it around his neck. The soldier is Army Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta. On Oct. 25, 2007, then-Specialist Giunta and his team were on a mountain ridge in Afghanistan's violent Korengal Valley when they were ambushed by the Taliban. He took a bullet stopped by a protective vest as he helped pull one soldier to safety. Then he went forward to help the sergeant, Joshua Brennan, who had been walking point. Two Taliban were carrying Sgt. Brennan away. Spec. Giunta shot the Taliban and brought Sgt. Brennan back. Here we are reminded that in war there are few storybook endings: Sgt. Brennan would soon die of his wounds. As a speechwriter for George W. Bush, it was my privilege to write speeches for some of these Medal of Honor ceremonies. Words, however, cannot capture what it's like to watch the surviving moms, dads, brothers, wives and sisters standing up there with a president, hearts bursting with pride over their loved one's achievement, aching with a loss that will never be filled. Because he has lived, Sgt. Giunta's ceremony will be a happier occasion. Not that he's ready to be called a hero. "I'm not at peace with that at all," he said on "60 Minutes" Sunday night. "And coming and talking about it and people wanting to shake my hand because of it, it hurts me because it's not what I want. And to be with so many people doing so much stuff and then to be singled out . . ." Sgt. Giunta's words, of course, remind us that he does not need this ceremony. The ceremony is for the rest of us. It reminds us of the sacrifices made so we can sleep easy at night—and of the kind of fighting man our society has produced. What kind of man is that? When we think of military heroism, we may think of Rambos decorated for great damage inflicted on the enemy. In fact, the opposite is true. Every Medal of Honor from these wars has been for an effort to save life. Even more telling, each specifically recognizes bravery that cannot be commanded. Of the eight who have earned it, three—Army Pfc. Ross McGinniss, Navy Petty Officer Michael Monsoor, Marine Cpl. Jason Dunham—threw themselves on grenades to protect their comrades. Navy Lt. Michael Murphy knowingly exposed himself to enemy fire so he could call in help for his team. Army Staff Sgt. Jared Monti died trying to rescue a fellow soldier. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller was killed while diverting gunfire from Taliban forces so his team could carry their commander to safety. Army Sgt. First Class Paul Ray Smith—the first from these wars to earn the Medal—took on an overwhelming Iraqi force from a machine gun atop a disabled armored personnel carrier, allowing the safe withdrawal of many wounded American soldiers. On that ridge in Afghanistan, Salvatore Giunta could not save his sergeant. But he did deprive the enemy of its victory—and death of some of its sting. In that same "60 Minutes" segment, a fellow soldier (who earned a Silver Star in the same firefight) put it this way. "The last thing Brennan ever saw was us," says Sgt. Erick Gallardo. "You know, he saw us fighting for him. . . . We fought for him and he's home with his family now because of that." It's a soldier's gift. Because of Sgt. Giunta, the family of Josh Brennan know that when their loved one breathed his last, he did so knowing he was among friends willing to put their own lives at risk for him. There was a day when our highest military distinction would be understood for both the rarity and the honor that it is. It no longer seems to work that way. Maybe it's the price of an all-volunteer professional force. When more of us served, we knew what a Medal of Honor meant—and we knew about Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Crosses, and Bronze Stars too... For a brief, national moment, a warrior is held up to the American people as an example to his fellows—and the embodiment of our highest ideals." "The Newest Medal of Honor", William McGurn, WSJ, 11/16/10

The Disarming of America

"From the president on down through his secretary of defense, the service secretaries, and a cast of generals whose decorations would choke an alpine meadow with color, we are told that further reductions in American military power are warranted and unavoidable. This view is supported by the left, the right that unwisely fears accounting more than war, by most of the press, the academy, and perhaps a majority of Americans, and it is demonstrably and dangerously wrong. Based upon nothing and ignoring the cautionary example of World War II, we are told that we will never face two major enemies at once. Despite the orders of battle of our potential adversaries and the fact that our response to insurgency has been primarily conventional, we are told that the era of conventional warfare is over. And we are told that we can rest easy because military spending is an accurate index of military power, and we spend as much as the next however many nations combined. But this takes no account of the nature of our commitments, the fading contributions of our allies, geography, this nation's size and that of its economy, conscription or its absence, purchasing power parity, exchange rate distortions, the military trajectories of our rivals individually or in combination, and the masking effects of off-budget outlays and unreported expenditures. Though military spending comparisons are of lesser utility than assessing actual capabilities, they are useful nonetheless for determining a country's progress relative to itself. Doing so reveals that from 1940 to 2000, average annual American defense expenditure was 8.5% of GDP; in war and mobilization years 13.3%; and, most significantly, in the years of peace 5.7%. Today we spend just 4.6% of GDP—

minus purely operational war costs, 3.8%. That is, 66% of the traditional peacetime outlays. We have been, and we are, steadily disarming even as we are at war. As in the 1930s, the economy is the supposedly humanitarian excuse for reducing the military, although the endless miseries of the world will not be alleviated if due to an imbalance of power great and little wars rage across it. At West Point this summer, the president said, "At no time in human history has a nation of diminished economic vitality maintained its military and political primacy." Except of course the United States, the very country which despite the most severe diminution of economic vitality in its history (12 years, the economy cut in half) became the arsenal of democracy, sustained Britain and Russia, swept the seas clear of opposition, freed most of Europe, and conquered Japan—in the greatest war ever known. The president's point was that despite whatever dangers we may face, the military must wait for the economy. But this is not so. Rather than dragging the economy down, putting the country on a war footing in 1940 revived it. Rearmament was a super-potent organizing principle and engine of production. Between 1931 and 1940 average GDP was \$77.5 billion, and average unemployment 19%. By 1944, GDP had increased 271%, to \$210 billion, unemployment had dropped to 1.2%, and real personal income had more than doubled. All this despite the fact that by 1945 the country was spending just under 40% of GDP, and 86% of the federal budget, on defense, at a time when a much greater proportion of income was devoted to necessities. And subsequently the war debt was retired with relative ease even as we enabled the rebuilding of Europe and defended it for half a century. What does this tell us about defense spending? It tells us not only that it is not a poison, it can be an elixir. It tells us that it should proceed, therefore, not according to an ahistorical false premise, but in line with what is actually required to defend the United States. It tells us that, entirely independent of economic considerations, although not a dime should be appropriated to the military if it is not necessary, not a dime should be withheld if it is. The proof of this, so often and so tragically forgotten, is that the costs of providing an undauntable defense, whatever they may be, pale before blood and defeat. As for gauging necessity, we will have to deal with the rise of China, the growing power of Russia, and the nuclearization of fanatic regimes. The strange, suicidal conviction now fashionable among the elite is that the customary vast reserves of power with which America maneuvers in the international system and, in extremis, wields in its defense, have become irrelevant to security and detrimental to the economy.. What argument, what savings, what economy can possibly offset the costs and heartbreak of a war undeterred or a war lost?" "America's Dangerous Rush To Shrink Its Military Power" Mark Halprin, Opinion, WSJ, 12/27/10

Helping Our Wounded Warriors

"Men and women of courage stand watch for us today in dangerous places across the globe. The world is blessed that, in each generation, Americans of conviction and duty rise to defend our country and liberty's cause. It is right that we should honor their sacrifice in personal and practical ways, especially at this time of the year. A way to do so is by supporting one of the many wonderful organizations that help wounded warriors and their families. One such group, Ride 2 Recovery, provides specially constructed bicycles to men and women who have suffered traumatic head wounds or lost limbs—and sometimes hope—in terrible explosions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The brainchild of Californian John Wordin, Ride 2 Recovery draws from the powerful insight that challenging soldiers physically and mentally aids tremendously in their healing. By creating a team atmosphere for rehab, cycling builds confidence, helps restore body and mind, and speeds up recovery. Since 2008, Ride 2 Recovery has built hundreds of specialty bikes for wounded veterans, including cycles for single, double, triple and quadruple amputees. These gifts have provided life-changing experiences by fostering what the group calls "a sense of normalcy, accomplishment, pride, and camaraderie." The group's work has been underwritten by major gifts from United Healthcare, the American Legion Family Support Network and USO, as well as by small donations from thousands of Americans. It also depends on the many volunteer civilian cyclists whose participation in the group's rides is vital. Last month, the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., announced that every veteran who goes through rehabilitation at the new Walter Reed Hospital would be given a bike from Ride 2 Recovery, and the opportunity to participate in its rides. If this effort goes well, Ride 2 Recovery hopes to expand to every other major military rehab facility, including Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, and the Naval Medical Centers in San Diego, Calif., and Portsmouth, Va. Last year, I had lunch with a group of Ride 2 Recovery cyclists at my home in Washington, D.C. Their stories of service to our country were inspiring. Also powerful was their evident courage and determination to restore their health and set a new course in life.... Like so many other organizations and programs that help those wounded in combat and the families of those who lost a loved one—including Fisher House and the Navy SEAL Foundation—Ride 2 Recovery is quintessentially American. Government didn't start it. Caring, compassionate people did. It is rooted in the belief that comradeship, a sense of community, and a demanding physical challenge will hasten healing. It seeks to strengthen the spirits of both the individual wounded and his family. Those so inclined might visit ride2recovery.com to contribute. And if not to this estimable charity, then to others like it. It is the least we can do for the courageous souls who don the uniform of our nation."

"Giving Back to Those Who Gave So Much", Karl Rove, Opinion, WSJ, 12/23/10

Bill Newman