



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Post 3272

Avon, Connecticut

“On Target”

The Post’s Monthly Newsletter

(The Newsletter’s 10th Anniversary Year)

SEPTEMBER 2009

LETTER #95

The Post met on Wednesday, **24 June 2009** at the Italian Club with 35 members in attendance. The *Ladies Auxiliary* prepared another delicious, home-cooked meal with plenty of second helpings for the “troops” and their guests.

Our ***next meeting*** will be held on **Wednesday, 23 September 2009** 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**. Join us for the beginning of our 2009 – 2010 Post Season!

We had entertainment and a speaker for our June Post Meeting. *Dave Will*, an accomplished accordionist, played a variety of patriotic songs and marches on his accordion and introduced many of these American favorites with a commentary of their history. His presentation was enjoyed by all and greatly appreciated. We thank *Auxiliary President Elinor Salvetti* for recommending him to us and arranging his visit. *Bob Galiette* next introduced his Grandson – 2/Lt *James Flannery* who graduated from West Point Military Academy in May. Jim spoke about his 4 years at West Point and noted its 24/7 military culture. His presentation elicited much interest and was very well received by the members. Many thanks, Jim, for sharing with us your experiences at West Point. All of us wish you the very best in the future as an Army Officer.

Commander Newman asked *Tim Curran, Dick Ecke, Jim Hutton, Ray Poirier, Ed Simonds and Lee Wilson* to come forward and take the new member oath. After administering the oath to these six new members, the Commander presented each veteran with a VFW Lapel Pin to signify their membership status. These veterans were then warmly welcomed to our Post Family by the members present.

The Commander opened the meeting at 1950 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*. Motions were made to accept the minutes and financial report as provided, seconded and approved by the members present.

Comrades in Distress this month include *Bob August, Lew Capitani, Josephine Hinman, Bill Huebner, Jim Katzung, Sanford Lindy and Harold Schaal*. 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* (675-9196) know if you learn of any other Post members who are ill or hospitalized.

The Post Service Officer *Bill Coffey* noted that new members should see him to apply for the Connecticut Wartime Service Medal and also suggested that WWII Veterans who have not visited the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. should apply for the *American Warrior Project* which provides them with a free 1st round-trip ticket to see the Memorial which was built in their honor.

Under Committee Reports, *Bill Newman* thanks the Poppy Drive Volunteers for another record year in which we netted \$14, 411 for our Relief Fund. This was, he noted, an extraordinary accomplishment in a very weak economy and a testimony to a super effort on the part of our 27 volunteers as well as the generosity and support of the Avon Community.

Regarding our upcoming Golf Fundraiser this Saturday, the 27th at Blue Fox Run, Bill distributed a sign-up sheet and noted we still need 2 more volunteers to cover the day. He thanked *Tim Curran* for undertaking this important fundraiser for the General Fund.

Regarding Unfinished Business, the Commander suggested we donate from our Relief Fund once again to the Fisher House, Rocky Hill Veterans Home and deployed Connecticut soldiers. Separate motions were made to give \$1000 to the Boston Fisher House, \$500 to Rocky Hill Veterans Home for its upcoming Stand-Down and up to \$300 per month of the 2/104th Aviation Company now serving in Iraq in care of *John Ballantyne* (twin brother of Mark Ballantyne of our Post). All three motions were seconded and approved by the members present.

Under New Business, *Bill Newman* noted that the Italian Club will renovate the upstairs of the club this summer which will clearly benefit our Post. He suggested we contribute to this upcoming renovation by donating funds in honor of our many Post Members who were also members of the Italian Club. A motion was made to contribute \$1000 from our Relief Fund to the Italian Club to help with the cost of these renovations. This motion was seconded and approved by the members present.

Bill also advised that we will have a Flag Retirement Ceremony at Carmon's Funeral Home in Avon tomorrow, Thursday 25 June, at 1200 hours. Please bring any unserviceable flags to Carmon's for their proper disposal. All members are invited to attend and the dress will be Blue & Grays with Overseas Cap. We are most appreciative to John Carmon for providing us his facility so that we might properly and respectfully retire these worn and soiled American Flags.

Under the Good of the Order, the Commander was pleased to announce that Post 3272 was honored at the Department of Connecticut Convention at the Marriot in Rocky Hill this year as an ALL-STATE POST for its division leading membership; awarded 1st PLACE in the State for its Post Newsletter; Awarded 2nd PLACE in the State for its Poppy Sales; Don Perreault received the George S. French Award Quartermaster Award; and Bill Newman was named Honor Commander. The Commander thanked all the members whose support and assistance was instrumental in the Post receiving these important Department of Connecticut Awards.

Bill Newman reminded the members that our annual Ray Zacchera Memorial Picnic will be held on Wednesday, 22 July at the Zacchera Compound on 15 West Ridge Drive in Avon beginning at 1800 hours. He hoped that many members would attend and bring their spouse or a friend.

Post activities & Developments

On 25 June the Post had a Flag Retirement Ceremony at Carmon's Funeral Home in Avon during which we disposed of unserviceable American Flags which had been collected from the public over the last year. Bill Newman conducted the service, Chaplain Tom Chrosniak offered the retirement prayer and Bill Coffey, Bob Galiette, Mike Gould, Nick Lavnikovich and George Slack participated in the ceremony. We are very grateful to John Carmon for offering his facility for this important Post duty and for properly disposing of these worn and soiled flags.

The Post's 1st Golf Fundraiser at Blue Fox Run on Saturday, 27 June netted our General Fund \$631.00. Tim Curran organized this event and the following members were instrumental in keeping the winnings of the golfers meager (\$24) – *Tim Curren, Bernie Driscoll, Dick Harris, Ben Nascimbeni, Bill Newman & Lee Wilson*. Great job, Guys!!!

The Post was honored at the Department of Connecticut – Council of Administration Meeting on 18 July at VFW Post 1724 in Willimantic as we received a *National Military Services Certificate* for our support of Operation Uplink and Unmet Needs. The Commander also received an *All-State Commander Hat* and *All-State Badge* for 2008-2009 from the *Past State Commander Alfred "Rusty" Meek*. The meeting was chaired by the new State Commander – *William Hornok*.

We enjoyed a well-attended Post Picnic on 22 July at the Zacchera Compound in Avon courtesy of the Zacchera Family. Our annual picnic, held in memory of Ray Zacchera who hosted this event at his home for many years, saw 42 veterans and 23 guests attend and enjoy a beautiful evening of good food and renewed friendships. We thank all who helped make it another great picnic including the cooking team of Bill Samol, Scott Thomas & Brian O'Donnell; Marty Brighenti who brought the beer and wine; Catherine & Roy Waldron who prepared the salads; Don Perreault who provided the baked beans; and the clean-up crew who included Bill Coffey, Marty Brighenti and others.

The Nobert Family was invited to Arlington National Cemetery on 22 July 2009 to attend a memorial service with full military honors for Major Craig R. Nobert, USAF of Avon who served with the 41st Tactical Recon Squadron at Takhli Air Base in Thailand was shot down over North Vietnam on 20 July 1966. Major Nobert, who served as an Electronic Warfare Officer, had been listed as MIA for 43 years despite some evidence he had died as a result of the crash. His marker at Arlington is in *Section MG, Site 30*. It is hoped that this memorial service will bring some peace and closure to the Nobert Family after all these years.

The Post sent small 27 packages from 27 July to 6 August to *1/LT John Ballantyne* who is deployed to Iraq with Company B, 2/104th AVN at Camp Adder. John, the twin brother of Mark Ballantyne of our Post, had requested golf balls as his aviation unit had set up a driving range for recreation in their area during downtime. We packed and shipped about 2000 golf balls to him.

On 11 August, I met with Barbara Zuras from the Avon Board of Education and Christine Walder of Avon Old Farms School regarding the 65th Anniversary of Old Farms Convalescent Hospital which served as a U. S. Army School for blinded veterans from WWII during the period 1944-47. We are being asked to participate in a program to celebrate this anniversary. Preliminary planning calls for the program at Avon Old Farms School to be held on Veterans Day, Wednesday 11 November beginning at 0745 hours and our WWII veterans to be introduced to the assembly in the Old Farms Auditorium. To include this program we would visit 2 of the Avon Public Schools on Tuesday, 10 November and 2 on Wednesday, 11 November. I will keep you advised of our Veterans Day activities as they develop.

It is with much sadness that we inform you of the passing of Stanley F. Barnett (84) on 1 August 2009 at McLean in Simsbury. Stan enlisted in the Marine Corps in April 1943 and served in the Pacific Theater during WWII from January 1944 to November 1945. He served as an Artillery Sergeant (105 Howitzers) with K Company of the 4th Marine Division and participated in the Marshall Islands, Tinian and Iwo Jima Campaigns. His decorations include the Combat Action Medal, Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 3 battle stars, WWII Victory Medal and the Sharpshooter Badge. Stan joined our Post in 1969 and earlier this year was awarded his 40 Year Continuous Membership Pin. Funeral arrangements were conducted by Carmon's Funeral Home in Avon with Calling Hours on Friday, 7 August and a Memorial Service held at Carmon's on Saturday, 8 August with full military honors. Post Members served as Honor Guards and shared that duty with members of the Avon Police Department where Stan served for 30 years. The Post also performed its Final Salute Ceremony. Stan will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery with military honors provided by the USMC on 14 September 2009. May he and all our departed comrades rest in the peace of the Eternal Father.

We received a note from *Tom Pellegrini*, President of the Prince Thomas of Savoy Club, thanking the Post and its members for the \$1000.00 contribution towards the renovation of the club's 2nd floor which was undertaken this summer. The contribution was made from our Relief Fund in honor of Post veterans who were also members of the Italian Club.

Mort Katz attended a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery on 5 August 2009 commemorating the sixty-fifth anniversary of Operation Dragoon, the Southern France Invasion ["The Forgotten Invasion"]. This was arranged by CPT C. Monika Stoy, US Army (ret.), President, Outpost Europe, Society of the 3rd Infantry Division. Along with John Devanie of Texas, Mort represented the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, which spearheaded the invasion as part of the First Airborne Task Force. Thirty-two veterans, including one Canadian, were present from all the U.S. units involved. Ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery included a deeply moving Missing Man tribute, placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, placing a rose at the grave of Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy [by the instructor who taught him to adjust artillery fire] and laying a wreath at the 3rd Infantry Division monument. Veterans attending were presented with Certificates of Appreciation from the U. S. Army Freedom Team and the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division. CPT Stoy gave each veteran the Medallion commemorating Operation Dragoon and LTC Lee Yarborough, son of LTG William P. Yarborough (dec'd) who commanded the 509th in the invasion, the Special Forces Medallion created in honor of LTG Yarborough who was responsible for the U. S. Army Special Operations Center at Fort Bragg.

On 8 August, we had our 2nd Golf Fundraiser at Blue Fox Run in Avon and netted \$425.00 after paying out winnings of \$32.00. Again, we thank our volunteers consisting of *Tom Chrosniak, Tim Curran, Bernie Driscoll, Ben Nascimbeni, Bill Newman, Don Perreault, George Slack and Lee Wilson*. Despite having a rather slow day, we managed a good return and another decent day of fundraising for the General Fund. *Tim Curran* oversaw this event and has secured a third and final day on *Saturday, 26 September* for our last Golf Fundraiser at Blue Fox Run this year.

We are pleased to introduce three (3) new members who have joined our Post this summer:

Phil Davidson - A Navy Veteran who served from 1944 to 1947 as an Ensign. He served aboard the USS Columbia (CL-56) in WWII as a Catapult, 2nd Division & Turret Officer from Sep '45 to Jun '46. The ship was the flag ship of Admiral Murray, CIC of the Pacific Fleet, and also participated in the surrender of the Japanese Forces at Truk Atoll in the Caroline Islands in 2 September 1945. Phil's decorations include the Navy Unit Citation, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, European Campaign Medal and WWII Victory Medal.

Jim Hutton – An Air Force Veteran who served on active duty from Mar '63 to Nov '67. After completing OTS (Officer Training School) at Lakeland AFB, he was assigned to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) at Pease AFB in New Hampshire for 2 years. Jim was sent to Vietnam in Nov '65 as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer (Captain) responsible of the Ground Equipment Group at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside Saigon. He returned home in November '66 and was assigned to 15th Air Force at March AFB in CA until his discharge in Nov '67. His decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Longevity Service Award Ribbon, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Julian Schroeder – A Navy Veteran of WWII who served in the Pacific Theater as a Motor Mechanic (Diesel) with the Submarine Service from Jun '44 to Jun '46. He underwent basic training and took diesel instruction at Groton Sub Base. Julian served on the USS Corporal (SS-346) and was on patrol in the Pacific when the Japanese surrendered. His decorations include the American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal and the Connecticut Wartime Service Medal.

Past Post Commander Dick Petersen dispatched a note advising us that Joy and he will be visiting our area around mid-September and will stop by to inspect us. They will be leaving from Quantico on 13Sep09 after attending his Force Recon Reunion (Recon 2009) there. If all goes as planned, he should join us at our coffee at Friendly's on 17Sep09 and, perhaps, be around for our Post Meeting on 23Sep. Dick advised that Force Recon loss 3 Marines in Afghanistan on 8 July in an IED attack and their association has started memorial funds for these men.

Our member, *John Caruso*, continues to be a full-time Judge in the Family Division of the Superior Court in Hartford. He is Chair of our Finance Committee and was last year's Poppy Drive Chairman. Prior to becoming a Judge in 1998, he practiced law in Greater Hartford for 33 years primarily in the areas of financial and business matters, estate planning and probate. He is also a Certified Public Accountant. If any Post member has a question concerning legal or financial matters John has offered to guide our members to a resolution of their concerns. His telephone number at work is 860-706-5173 or home 860-673-1672.

There are a number of local businesses who support our Post in a variety of ways from allowing us to distribute poppies to making contributions to providing special services. Here's a partial list of these businesses that we and our families should support in return whenever possible: *Bilwell's, Blue Fox Run, Carmon's Funeral Home, Dunkin Donuts, Dunstan Jewelers, Friendly's, Luke's Donuts, M & R Liquors, Papacelle Ristorante, Shaw's, Stop N' Shop and Wal-Mart's.*

Bill Coffey, our Service Officer, outlined at our coffee at Friendly's on 27 August an "*Aid and Attendance Program*" as an underutilized special monthly pension benefit offered by the VA for veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or live in nursing homes. To qualify, a veteran (includes the surviving spouse) must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which is during a period of war, and must be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The veteran's benefit is \$18,234 annually (paid monthly) and increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent. The surviving spouse alone is \$11,715 annually. For more information, call 1-800-827-1000 or visit <http://www.va.gov> (type "Aid and Attendance" in the search block or contact your local VA office.

Noteworthy Quotes

Iwo Jima Cemetery Dedication (1945)

"This is the grimmest, and surely the holiest task we have faced since D-Day. Here before us lie the bodies of comrades and friends. Men who until yesterday or last week laughed with us, joked with us, trained with us. Men who were on the same ships with us and went over the side with us as we prepared to hit the beaches of this island. It is not easy to do so. Some of us have buried our closest friends here. We saw these men killed before our very eyes. Any one of us might have died in their place. Indeed some of us are alive and breathing at this very moment only because men who lie beneath us had the courage and strength to give their lives for ours....No, our poor power of speech can add nothing to what these men and the other dead of our Division who are not here have already done. All we can even hope to do is follow their example. To show the same selfless courage in peace as they did in war. To swear by the grace of God and the stubborn strength and power of human will, their sons and ours will never suffer these pains again. These men have done their job well. They have paid the ghastly price of freedom....We dedicate ourselves, first, to live together in peace the way they fought and are buried in this war. Here lie men who loved America because their ancestors generations ago helped in her founding and other men who loved her with equal passion because they themselves or their own fathers escaped from oppression to her blessed shores. Here lie officers and men, negroes and whites, rich men and poor---together....Theirs is the highest and purest democracy. Any man among us, the living, who fails to understand that will thereby betray those who lie here dead. Whoever of us lifts hand in hate against a brother makes of this ceremony and of the bloody sacrifice it commemorates an empty, hollow mockery. To one thing more do we consecrate ourselves in memory of those who sleep beneath these crosses and stars. We shall not foolishly suppose, as did the last generation of American's fighting men, that victory on the battlefield will automatically guarantee the triumph of Democracy at home. This war with all its frightful heartache and suffering is but the beginning of our generations struggle for democracy....Thus do we memorialize those who, have ceased living with us, now live within us. Thus do we consecrate ourselves, the living, to carry on the struggle they began. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: This shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come --- we promise--- the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere." *(Remarks of Navy Chaplain (Rabbi) Roland B. Gittelsohn at the 5th Marine Division Cemetery Dedication on Iwo Jima (21 March 1945)*

Discussing Hiroshima*

"On this day 64 years ago, an American B-29 named the Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb over the city of Hiroshima. We know that as many as 80,000 Japanese died instantly. We know the city was pulverized, and we know that an estimated 100,000 additional people died later from radiation poisoning. We also are aware that the Hiroshima bomb, and the Nagasaki bomb dropped three days later, ushered in the atomic era. *At the time of the event, 85% of the American public favored dropping the atomic bombs*, according to a Gallup poll, but over the years, that attitude has changed. By 2005, Gallup found only 57% of Americans thought the bomb was necessary, while 38% disapproved. Most of those polled were born after the event. Those who believe the bombing was necessary point out that unlike Nazi Germany, which collapsed during its final days, the Japanese fought more ferociously as the Americans drew closer to the mainland. Almost all were willing to die for their emperor, having demonstrated this in each island invasion leading up to what would have been the largest amphibious landing of all time. Gen. George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, worried that Americans would not be able to sustain their commitment to the war if the invasion of Japan proved to be a long, costly battle. The Japanese were banking on this as well. At the time that the bombs were dropped, battle-hardened G.I.s were being rotated from Europe back to the U.S. and then sent on to staging areas in the Pacific. *The first wave of the invasion under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur was scheduled to land in November 1945*, with a second wave in March 1946. Hospitals were

being quickly built in the Mariana Islands to accommodate the thousands of expected wounded. What Americans eventually found in Japan after the surrender more than proved that Japan was preparing to repel the invasion, not just with its military but with civilian suicide squads as well. The fact that the quick end to the war allowed the U.S. to avoid a land invasion of the Japanese mainland, thus saving many more lives, is quickly tossed aside by some critics. They say there is no basis for the estimates of large numbers of casualties. But then there is the appalling number of Asians who were dying at the hands of the Japanese. Upwards of a quarter-of-a-million were dying each month. The fact that this orgy of death—17 million died in all—came to an abrupt halt when the Imperial Army was finally forced to go home is rarely mentioned. Perhaps the simplest and most compelling argument for the bombs is the main reason President Truman decided to drop them in the first place: He hoped it would rattle Japan enough to force it to surrender. That is exactly what happened. Today, Hiroshima has become a Rorschach test for Americans. We see the same pictures and we hear the same facts. But based on how we view our country, our government, and the world, we interpret these facts in very different ways. A former G.I., now 90, who survived the war in Europe and was about to be sent to the Pacific understands quite clearly that the bomb saved his life. His grandchildren may see this event in a very different way.” “The Hiroshima – Rorschach Test”. Walter Kozak, Opinion, WSJ, 8/6/09

Postscript: *At our coffee on 8/6/09 at Friendly’s 16 Posts Veterans – most WWII Survivors – discussed the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima. At that time all of them were in various stages of preparation for the invasion of Japan and expected the worst. The military estimated there would be over a million U. S. casualties. They noted that the ferocious battles for Okinawa and Iwo Jima in 1945 proved that the Japanese were prepared to die to the last man. Each one was elated when they heard the bomb was dropped and they were finally going home. We wondered if Truman had not been dropped the bomb how many of them around the table on this bright, sunny day in Avon would have survived and how many more Japanese would also have perished in an all-out battle on the mainland of Japan?!*

When Protests Were Patriotic

“Protest is patriotic!” “Dissent is the highest form of patriotism!” These battle-cries were heard often, in a simpler America of long ago -- that is, before last November. Back then, protests -- even if they were organized by the usual leftist apparatchik-groups like ANSWER or ACORN -- were seen - at least in the media - as proof of popular discontent. When lefties do it, it's called "community organizing." When conservatives and libertarians do it, it's "astroturf." But some people are noticing the truth. As someone who's been following the Tea Party campaign since the beginning, it seems to me to be the most genuine outbreak of grassroots popular involvement in my lifetime. Now that we're seeing *genuine* expressions of populist discontent, not put together by establishment packagers on behalf of an Officially Sanctioned Aggrieved Group, we're suddenly hearing complaints of "mob rule" and demands for civility. Civility is fine, but those who demand it should show it. The Obama administration -- and its corps of willing supporters in the press and the punditry -- has set the tone, and they are now in a poor position to complain. President Obama and his handlers need to accept that this is a free country, one where expressions of popular discontent take place outside the electoral process, and always have. What historians like Gordon Wood and Pauline Maier call "out-of-doors political activity" is an old American tradition, and in the past things have been far more "boisterous" than they are today.” “Remember When Protest Was Patriotic?”, Glenn Harlan Reynolds, Wash Examiner, 8/8/09

Terrorism & The Law

“Terrorists have had lots to celebrate recently as court rulings from Bangkok to Madrid wiped out years of work to stop them and raised doubts about treating the war on terror as a law-enforcement action. All these acts have one thing in common: They are legal rulings. All show sophistic logic, disregard for broader consequences and a weakening will to fight terror. Most specifically, they ignore the political aims and severity of each terror act. Such rulings might be appropriate in criminal settings. But for terrorism, they only encourage more of the same. They also disregard the work of thousands of lawmen and intelligence officers who risk their lives to bring these killers to justice. Delicate operations, transborder coordination, the odd flash of luck are all for naught in the hands of one bad judge. U.S. officials have hinted that the cases in Bangkok and Khartoum smell of bribery. The one in Lockerbie has the look of forgotten resolve. The cases in Washington and Madrid are too legalistic. All are infected with political bias. We doubt they'd cut sentences for actual terrorist triggermen. But the overlords of terror — moneymen, arms suppliers and clerics — are politically easier to go soft on. It all shows the problem of treating the war on terror as solely a law-enforcement matter. It's already showing in a weaker will to fight terrorism.” “A Weakening Will To Crush Terrorism”, Opinion, IBD, 8/13/09

A World Without Nuclear Weapons?

In his Prague speech this spring, the president spoke of "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" - ignoring the fact that before 1945 we lived in such a world and it was neither peaceful nor secure. We recently observed the anniversaries of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, actions that brought an abrupt end to the carnage of World War II and arguably have prevented the wars since from escalating to another worldwide conflict. Nuclear weapons in the right hands are instruments of peace. The argument that the world is threatened by nuclear weapons falls flat when you consider Britain and France have them and that neither we nor anyone else is threatened by them in any way. We are threatened only by nukes in the hands of maniacal thugs in Iran and North Korea. There is no treaty that will reduce that threat. We continue to let our nuclear deterrent atrophy in pursuit of this goal, while the Russians and other potential adversaries do not. As Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy, points out, Moscow is on track toward upgrading 80% of its strategic forces. Leading by example to rid the world of nuclear weapons, we may have only succeeded in making our own ineffective. A report released in May by the Perry-Schlesinger Commission warned that we must increase funding for, and improve the effectiveness of, our deteriorating nuclear arsenal. Nuclear weapons are not like bullets. Their mechanisms age and their fissile materials decay over time. An older nuclear weapon, if it does detonate, may not detonate at its designed yield. If a potential enemy knows you have not maintained your arsenal, its deterrence value decreases rapidly. A world without nuclear weapons would be nice. A world without thugs willing to use them against us would be better. Until then, we can at least ensure that the weapons we have still work." "Our Aging Deterrent" Editorial, IBD, 8/12/09

Soft Power & the CIA

"The appointment of a prosecutor guarantees that unless the United States is again devastated by a terrorist attack—on a scale greater than 9/11—CIA operatives will certainly decline any future order by a Republican president to interrogate roughly a jihadist. Langley's junior officers may still receive survival and escape training, which is the baptismal font for the agency's enhanced interrogation techniques. But members of al Qaeda will not similarly get to enjoy the experience. Constrained by new rules and hostile lawyers, can the CIA in the future successfully interrogate uncooperative jihadists? The Obama White House has been enamored of the possibilities of soft power; jihadists, too, are now supposed to yield to the psychological prowess of interrogators who play by the rules of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Will Langley be able to develop and retain interrogators culturally and linguistically qualified under the administration's new plans, which will have the White House and the FBI overseeing all counterterrorist interrogations? Such outside control is, among other things, meant to ensure that the CIA, which originally generated the idea of enhanced interrogation, will never again be a font of such unpleasant creativity. Regardless of whether one believes CIA-inflicted waterboarding, sleep deprivation or severe psychological coercion constitute torture, such actions may have produced an intelligence bonanza and saved thousands of lives. And one has to wonder about the better agents at the FBI, which still hasn't happily made the transition into a counterterrorist organization. Who would want to join an interrogation outfit that sounds so politically correct and sensitive? Throughout the 1990s, FBI offices grew rapidly overseas. In some places, the bureau's men actually took over the offices of CIA station chiefs, pushing the bureaucratic equivalent of four-star generals into much smaller digs. Returning rapidly to a pre-9/11 world, the Obama administration seems poised to give the FBI overwhelming responsibility for counterterrorism at home and abroad. The CIA is no longer the pre-eminent agency in the fight against Islamic militancy. Being "virtuous" may not look so good looking back."

"On Interrogating the CIA", Reuel Marc Gerecht, WSJ, 8/29/09

Remembering 9/11

As we begin our 10th Year of editing the Post Newsletter, it is timely to recall the trigger event during this tumultuous period – the 9/11 attack. All of us remember where we were that fateful day. My investment firm had just received market research calls from 2 firms high up in the North Tower just 10 minutes before the 1st plane hit. Since we always had CNBC on during market hours, we heard the news minutes after the fireball and thought it was a bomb. We called the firms back but the lines were dead. I went to NYC to visit a client a week later and remember the hundreds of postings (with photographs) all around Grand Central asking if anyone had seen or know anything about missing individuals. It was so sad! I took a taxi to where the Towers had been and from a makeshift platform all you could see was just twisted steel, debris and smoldering ruins. It was unreal and riding home on the Metro-North I was just numb. I'll never forget it!!! I wrote in the Post Newsletter of Sep'01 in part..."This is all-out war – bloody, dangerous, costly and prone to escalate. Americans are rightly outraged over the worst massacre in our history but will we continue our resolve when the battle proves difficult and dirty and long? Our enemies are counting on our growing weary of the struggle...As Veterans of Foreign Wars we must do all we can to support our Country, our President and our Armed Forces in this barbarian attack against our citizens, our freedom and our way of life..."

Bill Newman