



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Post 3272

Avon, Connecticut

“On Target”

(Our Newsletter’s 10th Anniversary Year)

and

(The 65th Anniversary of Our Post – 1945–2010)

**March 2010
LETTER #101**

The Post met on Wednesday, **24 February 2010** at the Italian Club with *38 members* in attendance. The *Ladies Auxiliary* prepared another home-cooked meal with plenty of second helpings for our hungry troops and their guests.

Our *next meeting* will be held on **Wednesday, 24 March 2010** at the Italian Club.

Cocktails begin at 1800 hours with dinner at 1830 hours.

Please join our **Post Family** for another evening of **good food, stimulating conversation and great friendship**. Hope to see many of you there as we enjoy warmer weather!!

Commander Bill Newman opened the meeting at 1940 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 (13) this month include *Mike Battaglino, Mike Busha, Lew Capitani, Dr. Tim Curran, Mike Dlubac, Dick Harris, John Higgins, Josephine Hinman, Jim Katzung, Art Ostheimer, Ben Perelugoff 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 (675-9691)* know if you learn of any other Post members who are ill or hospitalized.

New Member

The Commander introduced a new member – *Mike Kaminsky*, an Army WWII Veteran of the European Theater, who served as an infantryman with Company G, 262nd Infantry Regiment, 66th Infantry Division and participated in the Northern France and Rhineland Campaigns. Mike was on active duty from 14Sep44 to 23Jul46 and served overseas from 3Feb45 to 12Jul46. His decorations include the American Campaign Medal, European Campaign Medal with 2 battle stars, WWII Victory Medal, Army Occupation Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge. Mike lives in Canton. Please welcome him to the Post at your earliest opportunity.

In lieu of the Service Officer's Report, Bob Hunt noted that he has received a number of requests from Post members to determine missing information on their discharge papers or DDForm214 and contact DoD on their behalf. Commander Newman commented that after preparing 65 Military Service Histories on our members, he found a significant number who were missing information – decorations, campaigns, etc.

Under Committee Reports, *Bill Newman* advised that the 2010 Poppy Drive would kick-off in mid-May and end on Memorial Day. He will be looking for volunteers to cover this period at our usual locations - *Wal-Mart, Stop N' Shop, Dunkin Donuts, St. Ann's, etc.* He will have sign-up sheets available at the March meeting and distribute poppies at the April meeting. Bill noted this will be a challenging year for us as Shaw's is closing and at the present we are limited to one door at Wal-Mart's. *Aldo* will be in contact with Wal-Mart regarding the Poppy Drive.

Bill also noted that the Post Nominating Committee will begin to consider nominees for Officers and Chairmen for the 2010 – 2011 year with the Nomination Slate presented by the Committee at the April meeting and the election to take place at our May meeting. The Committee will consist of Bill Newman, Roy Walton, Don Perreault, George England and Art Ostheimer. We will be looking for both a Senior Vice-Commander and a Junior Vice-Commander as well as other positions. Please let the committee members know if you would like to be considered for one of the officer or chairmanship positions.

Commander Newman advised the members that Bill Samol is undertaking the demanding job of Parade Marshal for his 10th straight year. Bill Samol confirmed that it is indeed his 10th year and outlined the preparations underway for our Annual Memorial Day Parade and Picnic. He noted that letters have been sent to the various participants and arrangements are being undertaken once again for the Senior Center to serve as an inclement weather location.

Regarding Communications, the Commander read thank you notes from Bill Huebner's daughters and Heidi Huebner regarding our participation and attendance at Bill's burial and memorial services. He also advised that Mrs. Huebner made a very generous donation in Bill's memory to the Post. The Commander also read a note from *Bob Campbell* who thanked the Post for our contribution to the American Warrior Project which flew *Rudy Cusson and he* to the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. Bob said that he never experienced such a welcome and suggested that other Post WWII members should also apply for this outstanding trip.

Bill Newman noted that he received a call from PFC Grant Hagedorn Jr in Iraq advising us that he had just received our care package and thanking us for sending this large package of snacks to him and his unit. He told me about his duties as a heavy vehicle operator and his conex-sized accommodations at *Camp Stryker* near the airport in Bagdad. I told him we would get another package out to him in March.

Under New Business, *Lacy Pack* suggested the Post purchase two boxes of Girl Scout Cookies for \$96.00 to be sent to our troops overseas as part of Cookies or Heroes – a project of the Girl Scouts and Brownie Troop 66145. Lacy's motion was seconded and approved by the members.

The Commander awarded Continuous Membership Pins to *Lou Capitani*, a WWII Veteran, for 50 Years as a member (to be delivered to him by Pete Salvatore) and also to *Adam Lazinsk*, a Gulf War Veteran, for 5 years as a member of the Post. Both were duly recognized by the members present for their membership and service.

Post Activities & Developments

Bill Coffey sent the following letter to us dated 10 February and asked that we inform our members of his appreciation for their support during his recovery:

To VFW Post 3272

I would appreciate it if you relay to our Post members my deep appreciation for their interest and support during my recent open heart surgery. I'm pleased to report that my recovery and rehab has gone well and I'm sure I will return to my normal life style soon. The expressions of my comrades made a great contribution in my post operation period. The many cards, telephone calls, home visits and I'm sure those prayers that were offered for my recovery will never be forgotten. The highlight of my home visits was from Chaplain Tom Chrosniak who delivered a wonderful fruit basket. It was a great basket with good selection of fruit and all ready to eat. It is action like this that brings the true meaning to our term "Comrade".

With My Deep Respect,
Comrade Bill Coffey

We were advised in a letter dated 19 February 2010 by *Kevin Witkos*, State Senator of the 8th District, that the Transportation Committee will not raise a bill this year naming the bridge over the Farmington River on Route 44 in Avon the "***Gildo T. Consolini Memorial Bridge***" since the committee only does the naming process in odd years. Senator Wilkos will submit our request for naming this bridge for Consolini next year and, hopefully, the bridge will be so named in 2011.

Harold St. Onge U.S. Army – WWII (Pacific)

It is with sadness that we report the passing on 21 February 2010 of Harold St. Onge (88) in Avon. Harold served with the U. S. Army in the Pacific Theater during WWII with Headquarters Battery, 531st Field Artillery Battalion (155mm) as a PFC and Wireman. He was inducted into the Army at Ft. Devens on 2Mar42 and was on active duty until 11Dec45 with overseas service from 9May42 to 15Jul45. He was wounded on Okinawa on 19May45 and discharged from the service from Lovell General Hospital at Ft. Devens on 11Dec45. Harold served in three (3) campaigns – Central Pacific, Southern Philippines and Ryukyus. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign with 3 bronze stars, WWII Victory Medal and the Philippines Liberation Medal with 1 bronze star. Funeral arrangements were provided by Ahern Funeral Home in Unionville with calling hours on Friday, 26 February from 5-7pm and Saturday, 27 February from 2-4pm. Burial was private and at the convenience of the family. May Harold and all our departed comrades find peace with the Eternal Father!

We received a membership update for 28 February 2010 from the Department of Connecticut showing that Post 3272 was in 1st place in Division 5 with 164 members or 103.80%. Quartermaster Don Perreault reports, however, that Post 8294 in N. Branford has recently moved up again into 1st place with 106.00%. We are hoping to stay up with them in order to maintain our All-State Designation for 2010. We need to recruit 3 or 4 additional members to stay competitive – so keep looking hard for eligible veterans. I'll keep you posted on this race which ends in mid-May!

New Member

We are pleased to report that M. Clyde Whirty, a transfer from the Hartford Post, has recently joined our Post. Clyde is a WWII Navy Veteran who served in both the European and Pacific Theaters. He enlisted in 1943, took Basic at Newport, RI and was trained as a diesel mechanic and heavy equipment operator. He was shipped overseas in January 1944 and trained in England with the 1st Infantry Division as a bulldozer operator in preparation for the Normandy Invasion. On the day before D-Day (5 June), the King and Queen of England came to the pier and the Queen gave our troops an American flag – one of which Clyde affixed to his bulldozer and it may have been the first American Flag on D-Day at Omaha Beach. Early on D-Day, he loaded his bulldozer aboard an LCM and headed for Omaha Beach. On Easy Red, he cleared obstacles and pushed small craft away to make room for the landing craft. During this operation, he lost three bulldozers, was blown off all of them and was also wounded. Clyde was on Omaha for 30 days helping to keep the beach open. After this he was shipped back to New York, given a 30 day leave and assigned to the Lagrange (APA 124) – an attack transport. The *Lagrange* departed San Diego 1Jan45 for the western Pacific. Following a month of preparations, *Lagrange* departed the Philippine Islands for the invasion of Okinawa. Arriving off Okinawa on 26 March, she remained for the next 30 days supporting operations on shore. She then left Okinawa for other duties and returned to Okinawa 29 July. Arriving Buckner Bay, *Lagrange* unloaded cargo in the final days of the war. While anchored there on 13 August, she came under enemy air attack and a kamikaze carrying a 500-pound bomb crashed into *Lagrange's* superstructure. A second suicide plane struck the top of a kingpost and splashed 20 yards from the ship. Considerable damage to the transport resulted and 21 men were killed and 89 wounded. *Lagrange* repaired the damage and finally arrived in San Francisco 21Sep45. Clyde's decorations include the Purple Heart with oak Leaf cluster, Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, American Campaign, Pacific Campaign w/ battle star, European Campaign w/ battle star, WWII Victory and the Croix de Guerre. Please welcome Clyde to our Post!

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Several members of our Post attended the "Blue and Gold" Ceremony and Dinner presented by Cub Scout Pack 122 at Avon High School on Saturday, 6 March 2010. This scouting event featured Cub Scouts receiving "Arrow of Light" awards, a Cross-Over ceremony, Tiger Beginnings presentations and leader recognitions. This was followed by a dinner in the school cafeteria. Post members who attended included *Bob Galiette, Bob Hunt, Bill Newman, Ed Simonds and Lee Wilson. Terri Wilson, President of the Avon Historical Society*, also attended the ceremony and dinner with us.

Jim Hutton sent a reminder on 9 March regarding the HBO ten-part miniseries – "The Pacific" which showed its 1st episode last Sunday evening (3/14). The program will be on each Sunday at 9pm and should be of considerable interest to veterans and their families. It is produced by the same crew that gave us the "Band of Brothers" a few years ago. You can get more information regarding this series at www.hbo.com/the-pacific.



The Valley Press included in its 11 March 2010 Issue a photo of our two Voice of Democracy and four Patriot Pen Winners from the Avon Public School System for 2009-2010 with their certificates which were presented to them by Avon VFW Post 3272. In addition to these six winners, four Avon Post Members are shown with the students. The photo and accompanying information was provided by *Carl Candels*.

Seated left to right – Abigail Inglis, Erin Gorham, Taylor Walton & Olivia Mayo

Standing – Students left to right – Cameron Nelson & Kyle Jackson

Standing – Avon VFW Members left to right – Bob Galiette, Art Ostheimer, Bill Newman & Roy Walton

Mike Miller, a senior at Avon High School, contacted me a few months ago and asked if I would serve as the Community Advisor for an Eagle Scout Project that he was undertaking to deliver packages to locally deployed troops. Obviously I was interested and agreed. We met at Carmon's Funeral Home in Avon and he outlined the details of the project and I shared our experience in sending care packages. Mike had identified 5 local servicemen who are currently deployed to the Middle East – 3 of which are Eagle Scouts – and wanted to send care packages to them and their units. He contacted them, obtained their mailing addresses and determined their needs. The Project went live in February as Mike and a host of volunteers set up shop at Wal-Mart on two weekends (4 days). He said the response from Wal-Mart's customers in terms of donations and suggested items was outstanding and exceeded all expectations. Mike and his crew raised over \$1,100.00 and filled 15 large cartons (18x18) of snacks, socks, DVDs, toothbrushes, etc. Last week they packed the boxes and sent them out to the following deployed servicemen – *Adam Carmon, Jack D'Agata, John Klause, Alex Mando and Andrew Vallario*. A great project and a great job by *Mike Miller* and his volunteers who logged 230 hours in this effort. I will, of course, send a letter and a new member application to each of these servicemen and invite them to our Post meeting upon their return.

Some of you have received an invitation from Eileen Hurst of the Veterans History Project at CCSU to spend a day aboard a restored Liberty Ship – the John W. Brown. The ship will make a port call and a "Living History Cruise" at Providence, RI on 25 September 2010. This cost is \$140.00 but group rates are available and Eileen is seeing if there is enough interest among veterans for this event. Some of us are interested in this cruise and tour – so let me know if you would like to visit this ship with a group from CCSU.

Past Post Commander Dick Petersen sent us a recent note that his nephew - Navy Lieutenant Shannon C. Petersen has been awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal as a Target Support Cell Director for a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Dick advises that this is Shannon's 3rd deployment and he is working with the Marine Corps Special Operations. Shannon is the youngest son of Dick's brother who was lost on the sinking of the USS Scorpion (SSN-589) on Memorial Day 1968. Congratulations, Lieutenant Petersen!!

The New Rules of Engagement – God Help Our Troops!

The recent battle in Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province was a key test case for new rules of engagement that emphasized protecting civilians rather than killing insurgents. The town was taken, but whether that was because of the new rules or despite them remains to be seen. The rules of engagement are probably the most restrictive ever seen for a war of this nature. NATO forces cannot fire on suspected Taliban fighters unless they are clearly visible, armed and posing a direct threat. Buildings suspected of containing insurgents cannot be targeted unless it is certain that civilians are not also present. Air strikes and night raids are limited, and prisoners have to be released or transferred within four days, making for a 96-hour catch-and-release program. In Marjah, the enemy quickly adapted to the rules, which led to bizarre circumstances such as Taliban fighters throwing down their weapons when they were out of ammunition and taunting coalition troops with impunity or walking in plain view with women behind them carrying their weapons like caddies. If World War II had been fought with similar rules, the battles would still be raging. Paradoxically, America's most successful post-conflict reconstructions were in Germany and Japan, where enemy-occupied towns like Marjah were flattened without a second thought. U.S. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the NATO commander, said, "The Afghan people are at the center of our mission. In reality, they are our mission." Yet protecting civilians is difficult in an unconventional conflict in which the battlefield has no front lines. As an anonymous Pentagon planner told Time magazine, "It's harder to separate the enemy from the people when they are the people." Helmand province is part of the Taliban's core area; they see the fight as homeland defense. The fact that the Taliban routinely torture and kill noncombatants as a matter of policy is not only lost in this debate, it is deemed irrelevant. The Taliban's excesses are discounted because the Taliban are the bad guys. Coalition troops are the good guys and are held to a higher standard. Unfortunately, the higher the United States raises the bar, the more difficult the fight becomes, and the more that is promised, the greater mistakes count. On Feb. 14, 12 people, six of them children, were killed when two U.S. rockets slammed into a home outside Marjah. On Feb. 22, an air strike in Uruzgan province killed at least 21 civilians. Both of these events have exacerbated tensions inside the country, and Gen. McChrystal made a televised apology for the Uruzgan incident. The fighting has wound down in Marjah, which may or may not validate the rules of engagement. Most of the local Taliban either melted away to the frontier or simply put down their weapons and are still there. The true test will come when NATO implements rules of disengagement. When coalition forces pull out, Marjah may well go back to being the Taliban stronghold it always has been, and those who cooperated with NATO and Afghan government authorities will be held to account. No level of good behavior on the part of American forces will validate a conflict in the eyes of those who oppose it. Some hearts and minds will never be changed." **"Ready, Aim, Hold Your Fire", Editorial, Washington Times, 3/6/10**

It's Not Your Father's Basic Training Anymore!

"It's off the running track and onto the yoga mat for new recruits in the U.S. Army, as the military revamps its fitness program for the first time in three decades. Grunts will no longer suffer through the tried-and-true standard: long-distance runs, bayonet drills and, of course, the "drop and give me 20" at the behest of their drill sergeant. Instead, they'll focus on calisthenics such as stretches, leg raises and abdominal workouts to improve core strength. Troops are also being trained in "rolling techniques" and in hands-on combat using improvised weaponry like pipes and wood planks. The logic behind the ab-crunching, plank-wielding fitness plan is twofold: Army instructors say they want to closely mimic the realities of modern combat, and also toughen up troops who've grown up lazier and more coddled than their predecessors. "Most of these soldiers have never been in a fistfight or any kind of a physical confrontation. They are stunned when they get smacked in the face," Capt. Scott Sewell, who oversees trainees, told The Associated Press. "We are trying to get them to act, to think like warriors." While some of these changes are sensible and no doubt reflect the changing nature of urban warfare and the associated physical demands, there is little doubt that the health crisis among America's youth played no small part in the changes. Last November, Curt Gilroy, the Pentagon's director of accessions, told Army Times that most American teens were obese, out of shape and plagued by illness because of "couch potato syndrome." **"Kids are just not able to do push-ups, and they can't do pull-ups, and they can't run,"** he said. Fortunately, the new Army workout plan doesn't ask them to. So what can Army grunts expect when they start their basic training? They'll be rolled along the ground to mimic falling from a Humvee. They'll also engage in alternating series of stretches, lunges and zigzag sprints, and lift decidedly warlike objects -- mannequins, ammunition cans -- over their heads. The new changes are sure to provoke spirited discussion within the military and especially among graduates of the boot camps and basic trainings of yesteryear. Hopefully these changes are more indicative of the evolving physical and mental demands of modern combat, rather than a silent acquiescence to the lowering of standards that pervades the rest of society and our institutions." **"Army Softens Training for Troops" Joseph Finlay, Am Thinker, 3/17/10**

Bill Newman