

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 16-04

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COMMANDER'S POST- Strong, Active and Relevant

The American Legion and your Post are making an impact on the nation and our community. Our national leadership led the cry to fix and improve the Veteran Administration (VA) medical facilities and service. As the largest wartime veterans organization we were heard by the VA leadership and the politicians that determine VA funding when our leaders blew the whistle on VA mismanagement and fraud.

As reported in past issues, we are active locally in each of the pillars of The Legion. You can be proud that your membership dues and the funds that we raised are being used to support local youth sports, day camp for kids, veterans in distress, patriotic programs and parades.

To stay relevant and active at the national and state levels, our leaders need our continued support. The many Legion programs that are offered to our members and families are paid for in part by member dues and legacy funds. Costs for these programs have risen while our dues have been constant for a number of years. Reluctantly, member dues were increased \$5.00 by majority vote at the 2015 National Convention. At this year's state convention, the Michigan portion of your dues was also raised by \$5.00 effective 1 January 2017. This means that after the first of next year, the annual dues will be \$45.00.

We must vote to approve this last change. I sincerely hope that you will consider the impact of your dues as we continue to serve America and approve the increase.

For God and Country, Jim Saur



Post 36 August meeting at the South Haven American Legion Hall.

Monthly Trivia- Name the first Commander of American Legion Post 36 and the year he was elected. Extra credit for naming the first Post 36 Auxiliary President.

-The first person to give the correct answer at a Post meeting wins a prize. Sorry, you can only win once per year.

© Congratulations to Stan Rop, who correctly answered the 16-3 Newsletter trivia question – The American Legion has over 2.3 million members and has influenced Congress to win hundreds of benefits for veterans and their families. Yeah Stan- that was a gimme! ©

ADJUTANT'S CORNER- A Few Good Tradesmen

Here I am, asking for your help again. This time it's the Post building itself that needs our attention. Our building is OLD and it's starting to show its age. This summer we have had several service calls to get the air conditioning repaired, refrigerator and coolers repaired and a couple of plumber visits. All of this is expensive and we are finding that too often, good help is hard to find. We aren't asking for your money, we want your skills or referrals. We have nearly 300 members, add to them the VFW's and DAV's many members, we are hoping to get some skilled trades people we can depend on for repairs and upgrades, without breaking the bank. Dependable quality work, at an affordable rate is all we are asking for.

If you have a skill, own a shop, or know someone who is good, dependable and affordable, please have them contact the Post. We aren't asking for handouts, just a helping hand to keep the place running.

Soon we will be having some fundraisers to help pay for major projects and expenses. One of the expenses is a new air conditioner and it will cost around \$4000. Please try to take some time and attend these fundraisers, and bring friends. Let's work together to keep the Post running. We would rather spend our time and money on local events, charities, and helping our fellow veterans.

Thank you all, Don Gillespie



American Legion Post 36 members and family enjoying a ball game at the 2016 Kalamazoo Growlers Military Appreciation game.

SPECIAL THANKS TO- MEIJER STORES

The Meijer store on West Main has been very generous in supporting our parade appearances in the Kalamazoo area. Their support has enabled our Post to delight the many families along our parade route with individually wrapped candy for several years. THANK YOU MEIJER STORES!

AMERICANISM- Kalamazoo's Past War Efforts-

Throughout history, when wars are fought, the people and communities at home are affected. When the war is fought on distant lands, the people at home can influence the course of the war, though their war efforts. Kalamazoo is no exception. The following is a summary of the war effort of one Kalamazoo company and its employees, during World War II. The pharmaceutical manufacturer, the Upjohn Company, had a significant role in turning out war products during World War II. The following information is from the booklet "Now That the Full Story Can Be Told", published by the Upjohn Company.

Beginning in June 1941 with an order for 4,000 pints of extract of Cascara Sagrada, until after V-J Day, a significant percentage of Upjohn production capacity was used for the war effort. In 1941 alone, 87 different items were produced for our fighting forces. One order was received for 131,668,992 Sulfadiazine tablets. It took 15 months to complete that order, which was filled on time.

A very important product, sulfadiazine was produced as "wound tablets". Millions of these 7.7 grain tablets were made by Upjohn during the war. It was necessary to run the lines for 24 hours a day to meet demand. A plastic container was designed so a wounded person could slide the top off with one hand. Wound tablets saved thousands of lives by preventing infection.



Upjohn scientists participated in the basic research work in Penicillin in cooperation with other pharmaceutical and government scientists. Penicillin was ready for production in 1943 and Upjohn was one of the first facilities that was able to make and deliver satisfactory material in significant amounts. More than 7.7 million flasks of penicillin were grown at the facility. The contents of 12 flasks were required to make one vial of penicillin and one patient may require up to 20 vials, so it can be seen how large of a production effort was needed.

Upjohn also developed Gelfoam during World War II. Made from beef bone gelatin, Gelfoam is sponge-like material which, when used during surgery, absorbs many times its volume in fluid and is then absorbed by body tissues.

Among the chemical products made in Kalamazoo was "chemical pellets". Over 800,000 pounds of them were made. The pellets were used in ordinance to help eliminate the flash of guns after dark. Upjohn machine shops even turned out precision airplane parts on sub-contracts.

In recognition of the important role Upjohn played in war production, the War Department conferred the Army-Navy Production Award upon the employees of Upjohn.

We can all take pride in the contributions our local employers made in fighting the good fight.



2016 Student Trooper Report – by Cadet Peter Arnett

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the American Legion Post for sponsoring me at the Michigan State Police 2016 Youth Career Academy. I found this program to be a valuable tool for pursuing my law enforcement career. During the week with both classroom instruction and hands-on activities I learned many facets of what it takes to be an officer. From the first day to graduating day of this program, I excelled in many areas. Teamwork, integrity, physical endurance, and mental awareness are at the forefront of the program.

The different divisions of law enforcement offered by the MSP were shown. That was very helpful to the cadets so they could focus on where they would like to serve. Throughout the week each cadet faced many challenges, but as a team we faced and learned how to overcome those obstacles. I would like to say thank you to the MSP staff for teaching us the true path of what it takes to be an officer. I am glad to have graduated the American Legion Career Class and hope many more future officers take consideration in being part of this academy.



Plainwell High School student, Peter Arnett, was our 2016 Student Trooper candidate to the Michigan State Police Youth Academy.



Peter was selected by his classmates to give the Michigan State Police Youth Academy Class of 2016 graduation speech.

MEET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS- LeRoy R. Crane

Roy was raised in and graduated from High School in Mt. Pleasant, MI. He then graduated from Michigan State in 1951 where he received a 2/Lt Commission in the Air Force ROTC and served as the football team captain. He was soon called to active duty where he attended fighter pilot training and received his pilot's wings in 1953 and served in Korea. After being discharged from the Air Force in 1961 he joined the Air National Guard in Battle Creek, Michigan, where he subsequently became the Commander. In 1987 he was assigned as Commander, Headquarters Mich. Air National Guard and promoted to Brig Gen where he served until retirement in 1989.



Blue Star Service Banners-

Supporting veterans and their families is one of the pillars of the American Legion. One way we show our support is by presenting Blue Star Service Banners to the families of local service men and women to honor their service and sacrifice.

If you know of a family in the Kalamazoo area who have a son or daughter serving in the military, please let one of the Post Officers know, so we can arrange a banner presentation to the family and a welcome home. Let's show our local veteran families that we stand with them. If you are interested in helping with the presentations, we could use your help.



Let's Re-establish Post 36 American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion and Auxiliary were designed to serve together, to have the support and inclusion of their spouse and family members. Unfortunately, the Post 36 Auxiliary disbanded several years ago, due to low membership and participation.

If you or your spouse or eligible family member is interested in becoming a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, or if you are the spouse, mother or daughter of a war era veteran, please contact a Post Officer. Annual membership dues would be approximately \$20 - \$25 per year. An Auxiliary membership would make a nice gift for your spouse or daughter. We welcome more spouse and family member involvement at the Post.

Please join us in welcoming these new or transferred American Legion members to Post 36. Welcome and thank you for Still Serving.

Brian Stults, Sr. - U.S. Army, Vietnam War
James Ellinger - U.S. Army, Korean War
Kim Gerow - U.S. Army, Vietnam War
Donald Bohan - U.S. Air Force, Vietnam War
Russell Barr - U.S. Navy, Vietnam War
Oscar Poston - U.S. Army, Vietnam War
Dennis Ruiter - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War
Marvin Kreis - U.S. Air Force and Army, Vietnam War and Gulf War
Victor Yost III - U.S.M.C., Vietnam War



Commander Jim Saur presents a donation to Cpt. Jason Mageo, for the S.W. Michigan Family Resources Group.



PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR POST-

Please feel free to contact your Post officers about health or benefits issues. You are important to us and the American Legion can assist you and help with questions you may have concerning the VA Hospital, your veteran benefits, funerals, or we can make nursing home visits. If you have questions, please call one of your officers from the top of the front page.

It takes strength to ask for help- but we can't help you if we don't know there is a problem

TAPS- The members of American Legion Post 36 extend their deepest sympathies to the loved ones of these fallen members.

HANK LEMMEN- Hank was born August 9, 1922 in Kalamazoo. He served in the U.S. Air Force, as a bomber pilot during World War II, an instructor during the Korean War and was honorably discharged as a Lt. Colonel. Hank worked for over 40 years as an accountant at Allied Paper. He is survived by his wife Marian.

JAMES SYTSMA- James was born on August 9, 1922 in Kalamazoo. He was drafted into the US Army in 1942 and was one of the first servicemen stationed at Los Alamos, NM, assisting on the Manhattan Project until 1945. Upon returning home, James worked as the 4th generation baker at Sytsma's Bakery in Kalamazoo. James is survived by his wife Florence, and their family. James was the last member of the American Legion Post 36 WWII Last Mans Club.

MERRILL BRINK- Merrill was born on October 5, 1923 in Kalamazoo. He served in the U.S. Navy in WW II, the Korean War and during the Vietnam War. He retired as a Lt. Commander. Merrill worked at National Water Lift and as a real estate agent for many years until his retirement. He is survived by his wife Sandy, and their family.

*Adjutants Note- Every time we lose a member it is a sad day. All of our members have served our Nation and their fellow veterans. However, I want to recognize the many years of service these 3 men gave to the American Legion. Hank was a member for 57 years, James for 69 years and Merrill for 46 years, for a total of 172 years membership. Thank you.
-Both Hank and James were born on 8/9/1922 in Kalamazoo!-*



COMING EVENTS

- Tue. 10/4 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Thurs. 10/20 Monthly Meeting Note 6:30 start – 8pm
Presentation on Veteran Estate Planning.
- Tue. 11/1 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Fri. 11/11 Veterans Day- many local events.
- Thurs. 11/17 Monthly Meeting 7 – 8pm
- Tue. 12/6 Red Arrow House Meeting 6 – 7pm
- Sat. 12/10 All Post Christmas Pot luck. Bring a dish to pass and have fun. – 4pm
(ARMY/NAVY game starts at 3pm)
- Thurs. 12/15 Monthly Meeting (tentative) 7 - 8pm

CAN WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Each newsletter we can email saves us postage costs.
That's money we could spend on helping veterans.

We also need your change of address when you move.

VA Medical News & Numbers- The Battle Creek Toll Free number for appointments and information is 1-888-214-1247. The local number is (269) 966-5600, and for afterhours triage is 1-888-838-6466. Phone extensions are- for triage ext. 35053, prescriptions ext. 35500, and customer service ext. 31990 or at ext. 31980. For further VA questions you can also go to this website- <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel>
For assistance obtaining discharge records, visit- www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS OR POST EVENTS?

If you need a ride, please contact us. Lack of transportation should not stop anyone from participating in our Post events.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS- PLEASE READ THIS-

First, as my Company Commander used to say- "You guys are a bunch of studs!" (that includes you gals too). Our membership is at 299 and we already have 187 members renewed for 2017. Let's keep it up!! If you haven't renewed, please consider renewing on-line. It's fast, efficient and saves time and money in postage and printing.

Now for the **BIG NEWS**. In January, the Dept. of Michigan is increasing the amount they are charging us from your dues, by \$5. So beginning January 1, 2017, dues will go up that \$5 to \$45 per year. ***Please try to renew before mid-December*** so we can beat this price increase. We are debating whether we will pass this \$5 dues increase along to our members in 2018. There is a ballot included with this newsletter. It is important we hear your voice on this. Please return it to cast your vote.

Let's keep growing! If you know a qualified veteran who might want to join or transfer, call Don Gillespie or Jake Rickli. Anyone who recruits 3 or more new members (not transfers) to the Legion will be eligible for a recruiters pin.

Thank you for your membership

The Four Pillars of the American Legion



1. Strong National Security
2. Taking Care of Veterans
3. Mentoring Youth
4. Patriotism & Honor (Americanism)

THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218

Post 36 meetings are held every 3rd Thursday from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW Post at 1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Portage