

January 2018
Post Newsletter
WesternSpringsVFW.org

Commander's Stuff

By Joe Barker

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As we move into the New Year, we have much to look forward to as our Post continues a long tradition of service to all. This month, our Voice of Democracy winners are recognized along with the other Posts' winners. It is always inspiring to hear their recitations. Their thoughtful essays help underscore their bright future.

Before you know it, we'll be in full Poppy Day and Memorial Day parade mode. Any ideas on how we can further your already impressive efforts are always welcome.

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season, and the festivities continue for you and your families.

Healthy New Year's Resolutions

Be a little nicer to yourself.

Aim to stay more in the present rather than racing through to-do lists.

Take a walk after one meal a day.

Source: Real Simple

Save the Dates

Jan. 9th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

Jan. 11th – Hospital Visit

Jan. 12th – deadline for February newsletter

Feb. 13th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

Quartermaster Report

By Mike Winner

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Statement of funds as of 12/12/17:

Post General Fund	\$17,912.01
Post Relief Fund	3,237.14
TOTAL:	\$21,379.15

We've donated \$625 in gifts to the Hines veterans last month, and we continue to fund the Wakerly Scholarship Fund. Thanks for all you do!

Happy New Year!

SVC/Service Officer Stuff

By Chuck Bosko

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2018! One more time - 2018! Weren't we supposed to be on Mars by now, living like the Jetsons, and having a pill with water and calling it supper by now? Anyway, Happy New Year!

Seems to be a rather thin line at times as to what may constitute information from a service officer or a Senior Vice Commander, so until a designated service officer happens along, I will simply combine information.

When I read the following, I must have omitted the author unintentionally. Hence, I am not sure who penned the following, but do enjoy:

“Some people have been a bit offended that the actor, Lee Marvin, is buried in a grave alongside 3- and 4-star generals at Arlington National Cemetery. His marker gives his name, rank (PVT) and service (USMC). Nothing else. Here's a guy who was only a famous movie star who served his time, why the heck does he rate burial with these guys? Well, the following is the amazing answer: I always liked Lee Marvin, but didn't know the extent of his Marine Corps experiences. In a time when many Hollywood stars served their country in the armed forces often in rear echelon posts where they were carefully protected, only to be trotted out to perform for the cameras in war bond promotions, Lee Marvin was a genuine hero. He won the Navy Cross at Iwo Jima. There is only one higher Naval award - the Medal of Honor! If that is a surprising comment on the true character of the man, he credits his sergeant with an even greater show of bravery. Dialog

from "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson": His guest was Lee Marvin.

Johnny said, 'Lee, I'll bet a lot of people are unaware that you were a Marine in the initial landing at Iwo Jima and that during the course of that action you earned the Navy Cross and were severely wounded.'

'Yeah, yeah... I got shot square in the bottom and they gave me the cross for securing a hot spot about halfway up Suribachi. Bad thing about getting shot up on a mountain is guys getting shot hauling you down. But, Johnny, at Iwo, I served under the bravest man I ever knew. ... We both got the Cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap in comparison. That dumb guy actually stood up on Red beach and directed his troops to move forward and get the hell off the beach. Bullets flying by, with mortar rounds landing everywhere, and he stood there as the main target of gunfire so that he could get his men to safety. He did this on more than one occasion because his men's safety was more important than his own life. That Sergeant and I have been lifelong friends. When they brought me off Suribachi, we passed the Sergeant and he lit a smoke and passed it to me, lying on my belly on the litter and said, 'Where'd they get you Lee?' 'Well Bob.... if you make it home before me, tell Mom to tell the truth. Johnny, I'm not lying, Sergeant Keeshan was the bravest man I ever knew. The Sergeant's name is Bob Keeshan. You and the world know him as Captain Kangaroo.'

On another note, there was this wimpy little man on PBS, gentle and quiet. Mr. Rogers is another of those you would least suspect of being anything but what

he now portrays to our youth. But Mr. Rogers was a U.S. Navy Seal, combat-proven in Vietnam with over 25 confirmed kills to his name. He wore a long-sleeved sweater on TV to cover the many tattoos on his forearm and biceps. He was a master in small arms and hand-to-hand combat, able to disarm or kill in a heartbeat.

After the war, Mr. Rogers became an ordained Presbyterian minister and therefore, a pacifist. Vowing to never harm another human, he also dedicated the rest of his life to trying to help lead children on the right path in life. He hid away the tattoos and his past life, and won our hearts with his quiet wit and charm.

America's real heroes don't flaunt what they did. They quietly go about their day-to-day lives, doing what they do best. They earned our respect and the freedoms that we all enjoy. Look around and see if you can find one of those heroes in your midst. Often, they are the ones you'd least suspect, but would most like to have on your side if anything ever happened.

Take the time to thank anyone that has fought for our freedom. With encouragement, they could be the next Captain Kangaroo or Mr. Rogers. Pass this story around. Nothing will happen to you if you don't, but if you do, you will be awakening others to what makes a HERO."

Further, elsewhere in this newsletter is a new program from the VA. A national veterans card has been introduced. To be the first kid on your block to acquire one of this super duper cards, just follow the instructions on the info sheet. Mind you now, this card is not some secret decoder or provides you with X-ray vision. It is a card that basically has some of your DD

214 info on it. I applied and am interested in what the card will look like.

Still further, continuing the Medals feature. China is this month's entry. China? Yes sir/ma'am! China! I am familiar with the incidents following WW II, but not the period of 1937-1939. This is interesting reading. And remember, individuals serving in either period are eligible for the VFW.

Okay, here's one for all vets who served in Germany, especially in Berlin during the days of the wall: During the days of the wall, there was an older gent who crossed the checkpoint every week pushing his bicycle and carrying a heavy sack. The East German border guard suspected him of smuggling so would search the sack but never found anything worthwhile. After the wall came down, the guard saw the older gent and just had to ask him about those days: "Look, I know you were smuggling something all those years, but I could never prove it. Tell me what it was." The older gent looked the guard in the eyes, smiled and said, "Bicycles."

Hospital Chairman Report

By Walt Bergenthal

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In addition to our monthly bingo party at Hines Hospital Spinal Injury Ward where we give out \$150 in cash prizes, Bruce Harken, Seedy Ulrich and Walt Bergenthal distributed Christmas cards containing \$25 to each patient in this ward.

Speaking of Christmas cards, we will need some for next year, so if you have any to spare bring them to a Post meeting or drop them off at the back door of Walt's house. We also need paperback books for Hines.

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
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www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VA Announces Rollout and Application Process for New Veterans ID Card

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available for Veterans — yet another action honoring their service.

This has been mandated through legislation since 2015 to honor Veterans, and today's rollout of the ID card fulfills that overdue promise.

Only those Veterans with honorable service will be able to apply for the ID card, which will provide proof of military service, and may be accepted by retailers in lieu of the standard DD-214 form to obtain promotional discounts and other services where offered to Veterans.

"The new Veterans Identification Card provides a safer and more convenient and efficient way for most Veterans to show proof of service," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "With the card, Veterans with honorable service to our nation will no longer need to carry around their paper DD-214s to obtain Veteran discounts and other services."

The VIC provides a more portable and secure alternative for those who served the minimum obligated time in service, but did not meet the retirement or medical discharge threshold. Veterans who served in the armed forces, including the reserve components, and who have a discharge of honorable or general (under honorable conditions) can request a VIC.

To request a VIC, Veterans must visit vets.gov, click on "[Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card](#)" on the bottom left of the page and sign in or create an account.

Veterans who apply for a card should receive it within 60 days and can check delivery status of their cards at vets.gov. A digital version of the VIC will be available online by mid-December.

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TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR CHINA SERVICE MEDAL

THE CHINA SERVICE MEDAL COVERS TWO periods. The first was July 7, 1937, through Sept. 7, 1939, and applied to Navy and Marine Corps members who served in China and on vessels offshore.

During the extended period, the medal was awarded to “officers and enlisted men of the armed forces who participated in operations in China, including Formosa [Taiwan], between Sept. 2, 1945, and April 1, 1957,” according to the book *American War Medals and Decorations* by Evans E. Kerrigan.

The extended period incorporates three main actions: Marine ground operations in North China, Taiwan Strait sea patrols and Navy aviation reconnaissance.

The situation in North China following the Japanese surrender on Aug. 15, 1945, was chaotic. The struggle between Chinese Nationalist and Communist forces, which had been more or less dormant since 1937, flared anew after WWII. The Chinese Civil War would last until 1949.



Marines ashore at this time initially disarmed the Japanese, while the Navy transported Chinese Nationalists up the Yangtze River.

By May 1949, all remaining Marines had left China. Their combat casualties totaled 12 KIA and 42 WIA. The U.S. Navy reduced its forces off China as well, leaving a contingent of about a dozen cruisers and destroyers.

Quemoy, Matsu and the Tachens— islands off the mainland coast—soon became the focus of an intense rivalry between the Communists and Nationalists.

For the next decade, the U.S. Seventh Fleet became a permanent fixture in the Straits.

In January 1955, the Communists attacked the Tachen Islands. The Seventh Fleet evacuated some 42,000 Nationalist military personnel and civilians. The 18th Fighter Bomber Wing provided cover, and a carrier task force was deployed. A total of 50 U.S. ships were involved in the operation.

All told, between 1945-57, the extended period of the China Service Medal’s activation saw more than 1,000 ships’ crews qualify for the award.

USS Panay, etc. (Navy/Marines) July 7, 1937 - Sept. 7, 1939

Extended Period

Chinese Civil War, 1945-49 (All Services) Sept. 2, 1945 - April 1, 1957

China/Formosa, 1950-57 (All Services)

