

July 2014
Post Newsletter
WesternSpringsVFW.org

Commander's Stuff

By Mike Winner

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Fellow Veterans,

Let me start by saying thank you all for a wonderful year! The culmination was the Memorial Day Parade. I believe we gave our fallen brothers and sisters a respectful and sincere tribute. We kept the focus on Memorial.

Last week, we lost another member, Norm Kleppinger. He served honorably in Korea and he served his fellow veterans in our Post for many years. Our prayers go to his family and friends. God's speed!

I'm writing this newsletter article in the back of a Humvee as my unit positions ourselves for a morning Airborne Assault Package into a very hostile landing zone. It's all training. The enemy is not shooting back. My job is to coordinate the CH-46's, V-22's, AH-1's, F-18's and a drone into the LZ area while providing covering fire from the enemy air defenses and mechanized infantry. We are shooting 155mm howitzers, 81mm mortars, Hellfire rockets, 1000lb laser-guided bombs and 20mm guns.

Save the Dates

July 8th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church
July 10th – Hospital Visit
July 11th – deadline for August newsletter
Aug. 12th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

I'm surrounded by much younger Marines who are all very capable and seasoned veterans of 11 years of war. I am humbled and honored to be a veteran. Serving as your Commander is the least I can do for you

Semper Fidelis,
Mike Winner

Post Enjoys Successful Programs

By Walt Bergenthal

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Statement of funds as of 5/13/14:

Post General Fund	\$11,653.22
Post Relief Fund	5.90
Post Dues Reserve	110.68
TOTAL:	\$11,769.80

Wow! Another successful Poppy Day collection thanks to coordinator Jack Lund. The Top 10 Collectors were:

1. Jack Lund
2. Val Price
3. Dan Legan
4. Joe Episcopo
5. Rose Deptula
6. Al Jacobson
7. Ann Krug
8. Tom Higgins
9. John Palla
10. Sue Huml

We also want to thank Seedy Ulrich, John Flood and Fred Rodriguez for holding the fort, counting money and making runs to the bank with deposits. Thanks also to all of the unsung heroes who hit the streets with poppies for this very important cause – helping veterans in need.

Our Memorial Day Parade was another success with a huge turnout. We lucked out with the weather. It was good to see Len Caldeira again handling the sending off of the parade participants. Glad to have you back, Len.

Thanks to Emcees Chuck Bosko and Mike Winner and all of the Parade Committee for a job well done!

We had a well deserving Parade Marshall in Vietnam Vet Bruce Harken. Congratulations Bruce! Thanks for remembering our Post members who passed on this past year.

Our 2014-2015 installation dinner has come and gone. With Emcee/Commander Mike Winner handling the festivities we enjoyed good food (and plenty of it), good conversation and some good laughs. Now we look forward to another great year with continued great leadership.

Chaplain Sid Frazen must have been looking down upon us as he sent a

replacement chaplain in Rev. Robert Geaschel of Trinity Lutheran Church in Burr Ridge. Pastor Bob served in Iraq and has transferred from Chicago Post 8821 to our Post. He took over the Chaplain's duties during our installation dinner. We're elated to have him with us.

Our sympathy to the family of Norman R. Kleppinger who passed away on June 11. Norm served in the Army Infantry as a PFC in Korea from February 1952 to December 1952 earning the Korean Service Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge among other medals.

**Lab Charged with Identifying
Remains of Missing Servicemen
Being Rented Out as Movie Set &
Bleated Announcement of the
Release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl**

By Carol Anne O'Donnell

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The following information is taken from the Nov. 23, 2013, Bits 'N Pieces, the publication of the National Alliance of Families:

“This one left us shaking our heads in a combination of disbelief and disgust. Apparently, the laboratory charged with identifying the remains of missing servicemen at the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii recently rented out as a movie set. While POW/MIA families wait for remains identification, the lab closed for at least a day as Hollywood moved in. The stupidity of this decision put the lab's accreditation in jeopardy. Bill Dedman, an investigative reporter with NBC News, explains it all in an excellent article titled, ‘Pentagon Lab Slow to ID Human Remains Has Time to Shoot Bradley Cooper Movie.’”

“We excerpt the following from the Dedman article: ‘A unit of the U.S. Department of Defense, already under fire for faked public ceremonies and delays in identifying the remains of American servicemen and women, found time earlier this month to hand over part of its lab to Hollywood. The lab where human remains are usually examined was used to shoot a romantic adventure starring film heartthrobs Bradley Cooper and Rachel McAdams.

The movie company used Building 45 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Honolulu, shooting for one day in a secure lab where the remains of possible Americans killed in action are usually analyzed by the Central Identification Lab, a unit of the Pentagon’s Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, known as JPAC. The lab stores about 1,000 cardboard boxes of remains awaiting identification. Although the glass-walled room usually has skeletons and partial remains laid out on the tables, a Pentagon spokeswoman said that no human remains were shown on camera and prop bones used as training aids will be shown in the movie. The movie ‘had no negative impact in execution of the lab’s primary mission,’ said the spokeswoman, Cmdr. Amy Derrick-Frost. ‘One small area of the facility was used for the one-day shoot. JPAC scientists were fully capable of continuing their very important mission of identifying unaccounted for service members from our nation’s past conflicts.’

Most employees who work outside this secure lab, such as historians and other researchers, are not allowed entry to confer with lab personnel under the theory that the presence of untrained personnel could imperil the lab’s accreditation, according to JPAC e-mails

reviewed by NBC News. But the lab was made available to Hollywood cast and crew. Although two lab technicians appear in the movie with speaking roles, these government employees were off duty or on leave, the Pentagon spokeswoman said. The agency did not announce the use of the lab for the movie, but the Pentagon acknowledged it when questioned by NBC News.

Who authorized the filming? And even what date did the filming occur - though employees said it was Friday, Nov. 8.

Several agency employees told NBC News that lab work was indeed disrupted as forensic anthropologists, making more than \$90 an hour, waited to be in the movie as extras or watched the crew and actors. Moving the human remains out of camera view would have taken more man-hours, the employees said.

The Department of Defense has declined to make available for interviews the JPAC scientific director, anthropologist Thomas D. Holland, or JPAC’s commander, MG Kelly K. McKeague. The JPAC lab was used as a set at least once previously. An episode of ‘Hawaii Five-O,’ the remake of the original TV series was shot there in 2011.”

AT LAST BERGDAHL’S RELEASE

Please remember to pray for all our POW/MIAs and their families who wait to hear of their fate. Thank God for the release of SGT Bowe Bergdahl. The release of other U.S. hostages and POW/MIAs were negotiated throughout the Cold War years and beyond. Remember Gary Powers, the pilot who parachuted out of the U2 secret aircraft and was captured by the Russians. The three young soldiers captured in Yugoslavia as it disintegrated were released after negotiations conducted by

Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. and ex-Gov. Rod B. (They couldn't have done it without the OK of the President as it is illegal for citizens to undertake negotiations such as that otherwise.)

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

Veterans Benefits

By Chuck Bosko

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Many veterans have a rather “good” idea as to the array of veteran benefits available from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Yet, many veterans are not aware of the benefits from the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs, or IDVA.

I'll present a list of those benefits for this edition and followed by a monthly detail of each benefit. Here we go:

Veteran's Homes,
Hunting and Fishing Permits,
Camping and Admission Fees,
War Bonus,
Survivors Compensation,
Carthage and Erection Reimbursement,
Returning Veteran's Homestead Exemption,
Disabled Veteran's Standard Homestead Exemption,
Disabled Veteran's Tax Exemption for Specially Adapted Housing,
Tax Exemption for Mobile Home,
Disabled Veteran's Specially Adapted Housing (PH) Grant,
Disabled Veteran's Specially Adaptation (AH) Grant,
Illinois Veterans Grant,
Children's' Educational Opportunities,
and MIA-POW Scholarship.

Hey, wait? What about that “War Bonus?”

The State of Illinois grants a onetime grant for vets who have served in wartime conflicts. Those conflicts are: World War II (9/16/1940-9/3/1945), Korea (6/27/1950-7/27/1953 and received the Korean Service Medal), Viet Nam (1/1/1961-3/28/1973 & Frequent Wind 4/29-30/1975 and received the Viet Nam service medal or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal- Viet Nam Era), Desert Storm (8/2/1990- 11/30/1995), Global War on Terrorism, Operations Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn (9/11/2001 - ? and received the one of the following: Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal).

The DD 214 must indicate Honorable or Under Honorable Conditions. Okay, how does one get the “ball rolling?” A vet can call the IDVA at (800) 437-9824 or visit www.veterans.illinois.gov. And not to worry, if you apply and received the bonus many years ago, the IDVA will surely remind you. Oh by the way, the bonus is \$100 (enough for a full tank of gas!). However, if you served in a war zone, the bonus is waiting for ya!

Now – are you glad you read this? Airborne & Allons!



On June 4, State Service Officer Barry Walter, far right, installed the following officers of Western Springs VFW Post 10778: R to L, Mike Winner, Commander; Jim Boland, Sr. Vice Commander; Walt Bergenthal, Quartermaster; Bruce Harken, Adjutant; Seedy Ulrich, Judge Advocate; Pete Zika, Trustee; Val Price, Trustee (not shown) and Edmund Pilarski, Service Officer