

October 2020
Post Newsletter
WesternSpringsVFW.org

Commander's Stuff

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Tuesday 09/08

Here we go! We held another meeting with less people present, but we accomplished some things. Rich got a permit for poppy sales Sept. 21 to 26. That was the highlight of the month. Thanks, Rich, for the work.

Let's keep in mind our comrades who couldn't make it to the meeting by calling them to make sure all is OK.

Speaking of calls, you might receive a call from me or someone in the calling roster. We are testing the roster to see that we have the right phone numbers. Thanks to Mike Winters for putting the calling tree together.

Friday 09/11

The Rotary Club invited the Post to a Veteran Luncheon Appreciation at the Village Club. Thanks, Bruce, for passing the word around. The highlight of the event was Rep. Jim Durkin's eloquence in appreciation to public service, especially to veterans, who included his close family members.

Hearing Mr. Durkin's speech and those of the Rotary Club members in

Save the Dates

Oct. 13th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church
Oct. 16th – deadline for November newsletter

Nov. 10th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

Zoom or live give me pause to reflect about my own experiences on Sept 11, 2001. The following is a partial story of one of the many stories of that day. All events are annotated in European Universal Time Coordinate (UTC) +1.

Patriot Day: A Short Story

Sept. 11, 2001 – It's a clear and sunny afternoon in Northern Italy. The Southern European Command is doing its yearly qualification exercise in Germany, and I am standing on the floor of my building starting the second shift, on the "watch," 439 miles south in our home base.

An uneventful afternoon, but filled with anticipation. This is the night when troops practice dropping to ground in mass from C-130 cargo planes. Airborne troops, "Death From Above," the pride

of the U.S. Army Infantry, are going to “take a little trip,” and I have a front line ticket coordinating the assault South of the Alps, in what was my last exercise with the Command.

1503. I call my troops to attention and give out the instructions for the next eight hours. We are going to be busy, I needed “comms” to relay all information through my desk, so I can put the information in the board, and continuously brief my Colonel and HQ6 who are sitting at an undisclosed site in Germany.

The “watch” is a buzz, and I feel the dread of leaving. My military career was coming to an end and nothing will stop it. I was declared unfit for duty. Hard words from the Medical Command to a war-fighter who was vowed to God and Country, but I still had one more obligation to fulfill: get through the exercise and assert qualification and validation for the Command. The Southern European Command is the spearhead of Europe, and I am the Non-Commissioned in Charge of the Command Intelligence Section.

1530. Like clock work, the troops had made the first coffee bullet. I filled a cup and started making rounds. Intelligence in place, comms; check.

Counterintelligence in place, comms with HQ6 check, as the list goes on, everything is in place. All we need is to wait another two hours to start the assault and the airborne drop. Big screens are on and we are watching CNN. A military exercise is going on, but we still have to watch the world. It is early morning in the U.S. East Coast, and we are catching some news of home.

1550 UTC+1. I am standing in the middle of the floor surveying the stations when everything went silent. CNN shows an airplane crashing into Tower One of the World Trade Center. When I saw the screen, I asked aloud, “What do we have on the screen! What is that!” No answer. Soon the reporter announces that an airplane has collided with the Tower. We are all frozen, hearing the reporter going on narrative and trying to make sense of the scene.

1605 UTC+1. CNN shows a second airplane crashing into Tower Two of the World Trade Center. The “watch” got the message before anything else was said. We started working channels in preparation for deployment. I established comms with HQ6 and called a halt to the exercise. I told my Supervisor, “Sir you need to tell the Colonel to stop the exercise and return to base. The U.S. is under attack. We are at war.” His first words were to question my sanity. When I told him to put on CNN and watch the news, he said, “We have to corroborate the information...” I could sense the shock over his voice. I brought him back to reality; “Sir, we do not have to check. The information is on national TV. The Pentagon has been attacked as well as New York. Call the exercise. Let’s get ready in case we need to deploy quickly.”

The rest of the evening was of frantic work. We sent transportation for HQ6 and staff to get back to station after landing South of the Alps. Troops prepared gear for a deployment call, coordination started with the rest of the Armed Forces in Europe to form a Task Force+, as European American Forces grew angry from the attacks to our country. The long wait for deployment started.

As I mentioned, my military career was at a close. Soon after 9/11, on November 2001, I was let go from active duty. I stopped wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army, but the pain of seeing my home town hit, with such infamy, still burns inside of me.

I stayed in Europe and instead of fighting the war, I became a trainer to the war-fighter. The knowledge I accumulated while in uniform still had value and needed to continue its path to the next generation. With that act, I went from being a soldier to being a Patriot.

As a Patriot, I endure a career that still goes strong today. From training troops in Europe to safe-guarding the interest of our veterans in U.S. soil, every year I still relive the events of Sept. 11, 2001. To me it's a call to remember and a call to action: "I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same..."

As this day turns into night, it dawns on me that we also have the duty to support one another. Let's continue to support our fellow veterans, and our community in this time of need. Let's provide comfort and relief whenever we can. Let's remember our local heroes, who everyday put their lives on the line to support our needs and health.

Remember the fallen, tend a hand to those who fall but can stand. Our country is great because its people are great! We are the leaders of the people! We are Patriots!

Ad Maiora
SSG USA (Ret)

Quartermaster Report

By Mike Winner

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Statement of funds as of 9/8/20:

Post General Fund	\$5,240.03
Post Relief Fund	3,532.10
TOTAL:	\$9,504.13

Hospital Chairman Report

By Walt Bergenthal

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With the devastating coronavirus, keep in mind to wear a mask, keep your distance and hunker down.

The following figures are from Google on Aug. 5, 2020:

	<u>In Service</u>	<u>Still Alive</u>
WWII	16 million	389,000
Korea	5.7 million	2.25 million
Vietnam	2.7 million	774,000

Halloween Fun Facts

- During medieval times, young people in Scotland and Ireland dressed up in costumes and asked for food or money in exchange for songs, poems or other "tricks."
- When the Irish fled their country in 1840s due to the potato famine, they brought their Halloween traditions with them.
- Sugar rationing during World War II halted trick-or-treating.

Source: Good Housekeeping

