

**September 2014**  
**Post Newsletter**  
WesternSpringsVFW.org

**Commander's Stuff**

**By Mike Winner**

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Fellow Veterans,

We are blessed to live each day in a free country. The freedom we share is constantly being paid by the sacrifices of ourselves and our fellow veterans from the past and present. It is with a heavy and very thankful heart that we said goodbye to fellow veteran Bob Bogash. He was not just another Veteran who passed away; he was this country's hero. He served honorably as he landed in Normandy and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Afterwards, he came home and raised a beautiful and loving family. He did what was right. He is what we refer to as the 'Greatest Generation.'

Bob, thank you for your service. I am thankful to have met you and your family. I will try to emulate your humbleness and devotion to the American dream.

Semper Fidelis!

Mike Winner

**Save the Dates**

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church  
Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> – Hospital Visit  
Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> – deadline for October newsletter  
Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

**Post Remembers Life Members**

**By Walt Bergenthal**

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Statement of funds as of 8/12/14:

Post General Fund	\$15,196.40
Post Relief Fund	5,544.33
Post Dues Reserve	11.25
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$20,751.98</b>

Our sympathy to the family of Life Member Robert Zimmermann who passed away last month. Bob served in the Navy as a Radarman 3c in the Pacific area in World War II from April 1945 through May 1946. He was a retired FBI agent.

Life Member Robert Bogash passed away in early August. Bob served with the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Borne in World War II earning five Battle Stars. His unit hit the beaches at Normandy, went inland in

northern France, then the Battle of the Bulge, crossed the Rhine and ended in central Germany. Bob was a corporal with the 299<sup>th</sup> engineers arriving in England in December 1943 and returned to the States in August 1945. He was the Post's longest serving Surgeon.

With the passing of Bob Bogash, Dr. Paul Thomas has stepped up to take his place as the Post's Surgeon. Thank you, Paul.

**Obama's Prisoner Exchange on Firm Historical Footing, Part II**  
**By Carol Anne O'Donnell**

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*The above titled article, which follows, is taken from the Chicago Tribune dated June 10, 2014, and was written by Michael J. Allen, an associate professor of history at Northwestern University and author of "Until the Last Man Comes Home: POWs, MIAs and the Unending Vietnam War:*

“So eager was Nixon to extricate U.S. forces from Vietnam without leaving POWs behind, he promised North Vietnam billions in ‘postwar reconstruction aid’ to secure the release of the men he had no military means of freeing.” (EDITOR’S NOTE: *The amount was \$4.5 billion. The Watergate Affair put an end to this effort, but to Nixon’s credit he was the only President who really tried to get all our POW/MIAs back.*) “While those funds were never paid and such deals may not make us proud, they remind us that there’s nothing new or particularly damning about Obama’s decision to trade Taliban captives for an American POW. Since the President announced his intent to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan to below 10,000 by the end

of 2014, this was, as one official professed, his ‘last chance’ to leave no soldier behind. It is not surprising that Obama seized it. Indeed, it would have been surprising had he not done so, given the fierce criticism Presidents faced after the Vietnam War for having failed to do everything in their power on behalf of Americans still missing.

Nor did Obama pay a particularly high price for Sgt. Bergdahl’s return. The ratio of communist to UN forces exchanged at the end of the Korean War was six to one. And when the Vietnam War ended, 591 American POWs returned to the U.S. and some 6,000 anti-communist South Vietnamese captives were released compared with some 36,000 communist captives, a ratio of more than five to one, in addition to the billions Nixon pledged in reconstruction aid.

In earlier wars, enemy combatants were understood to have legal rights under the laws of war and habeas corpus. In the war on terror, Presidents George W. Bush and Obama with the full complicity of their congressional critics, fashioned a legal black hole that presupposes indefinite detention without trial for captured foes. In the process they have not only broken international law and American legal traditions, they have also broken with a long practice of making peace by exchanging prisoners of war.

The cost of the Bergdahl exchange comes not in the ratio of prisoners exchanged nor in the form of compromised national security or lost national prestige, as Obama’s critics would have it, but rather in the form of continued human rights violations, abridged civil rights, tarnished international standing, and our ever more bitter domestic politics.” (EDITOR’S

*NOTE: Most importantly not keeping faith with those sent out to risk their lives defending us.)*

Please remember all our POWs and MIAs and their families in your prayers.

**YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN**

## **Veterans Benefits**

**By Chuck Bosko**

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*This is the third in a series about veteran benefits from the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs.*

**Disabled Hunting and Fishing Licenses** – These licenses are free of charge for veterans who are at least 10% disabled with a service connected disability or are in receipt of total disability pensions. The **eligibility requirements** are:

- Have an “Honorable” discharge
- Have a service-connected disability of at least 10% or a total VA disability pension
- Are in receipt of military disability retirement
- Have a VA letter verifying the disability.

The licenses are good for two years and may be obtained at any service office of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Disabled Camping and Admission Fee Exception** – The State of Illinois grants a fee exemption for camping and park fees at any state park administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The **eligibility requirements** are:

- An “Honorable” discharge
- Have a service connected permanent loss of or loss of use of a leg or both legs or an arm.
- Be a service connected disabled veteran who must use crutches
- Be in receipt of 100% service connected disability compensation or pension from the VA
- Be a former prisoner of war as identified by the VA or other U.S. Government agency

This exemption can be obtained at any IDVA filed office.

Should you have additional questions, seek clarification or wish to apply, please contact me at one of the above points. Now – are you glad you read this?

### **Re-Enactment News:**

On Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 6-7, at Dellwood Park in Lockport will be a WWII re-enactment with tanks and airplanes – American, British, Polish, Russian, German and Canadian. They’ll have a special sit down with veterans (wear your VFW covers). Entertainment includes the Andrew Sisters, a food court, and military displays and sales. The same event also will be held Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 20-21, at the Midway Village Park in Rockford.