



**LAKE ONTARIO POST 313**  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

**August 1, 2020**

**Dear Veterans, Auxiliary and Friends:**

**This will be a combined August-September newsletter and there will be no August meeting.**

**COMMANDER'S COLUMN:**

I hope all of you and your families are safe and managing thru this pandemic. I hope we are getting to the end of this thing. I don't have much for this month, but I was given an essay that was written by Steve Banko. For those who may not know Steve, he was the most decorated Vietnam Veteran from this area; some persons have disputed that. He has always been very active in many veteran related activities and has helped many veterans with their issues. I am going to post the complete email and essay in this newsletter. I think it was very well done. Here it is:

"I was recently notified that my essay on the moral wounds of war; inspired by my conversations with my friend Joe Brett, was judged best patriotic essay in the 2020 VA Creative Arts Competition. I share it with you and hope you share it with other veterans whose wounds aren't necessarily bleeding.

**PURPLE HEARTS AND PURPLE MINDS**

Participation in the wars of our nation constitutes a solemn pledge to offer our bodies and blood and our very lives in support of the national cause. When that pledge results in physical harm, when our men and women do, indeed, shed our blood for the nation, they get celebrated with a special medal just for that purpose. The Purple Heart medal is the nation's oldest combat award dating back to 1789. George Washington thought it necessary to provide special recognition to those who shed real blood. The Purple Heart is the medal no one wants to receive but everyone respects. The nation finds it honorable and heroic to offer one's blood in combat.

But what happens when the wound isn't visible, when we are wounded in mind and spirit? The reward is, at best, ignorance and at worst, scorn for being too weak to stand up to the rigors of combat. Afflicted with the moral injury soldiers and veterans are left to sort out those injuries for ourselves.

There are no Purple Hearts for those suffering with purple minds, battered and bruised taken in battle.

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You might wonder what constitutes “moral injury.” Just ask the artillery spotter who is reluctant to fly a mission with a certain pilot and is spared when he trades his flight with a spotter who perishes when the plane crashes. Or ask the point man who recognizes an impending ambush and steps aside when his courage is questioned and three men die as a result. Or ask the lieutenant who must select troops for a mission that results in death. Or ask the female soldier who is sexually abused. Bones and bodies can heal but what salve tends to the bruised soul? A popular series of books offers chicken soup for various hurts and injuries, but what heals a soldier coping with a battered conscience? What action can absolve one of the devastating results of one’s decisions? What adulation repairs the moral injury that cleaves the soul into before war and after? How do you switch the notion that kindness is weakness and brutality is a survival tool?

Civilian life involves choices between good and bad. The combat soldier must decide between bad and worst. The bad outcome is when someone else is injured or dies. The worst outcome is dying yourself. It is virtually impossible to make it through the cacophony and chaos of a battle without the exhilaration that comes from survival. It is impossible not to be overwhelmed with guilt when the adrenaline rush fades and your casualties are counted.

It is hard for the uninitiated to understand the concept of survivor guilt. Where once our wars involved the totality of our society, modern war asks nothing of most even while demanding everything from a few. It is easy to think that returning from war seemingly intact will put to rest the issue of survival. But how many returning soldiers and veterans answer the question of “when were you there?” with “last night.” How many of us wait for those intrusive thoughts to elbow their way into our dreams and our souls and are repeatedly defeated by the preordained outcomes? We made these choices between bad and worst and have come out on the other side forever seen and done and the dichotomy, so much so, that the individual is unable to be who he was, unable to connect with who he is, and over time, becomes unable to be unable anymore.

We care for our country and did our duty. We don’t need platitudes to help us deal with our demons, just the compassion and empathy of people who will never understand, but really want to help.”

Now that is a lot to think about!!

Ed Jackson

#### **AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER TRIVIA:**

The month of August was named to honor the first Roman Emperor (and grandnephew of Julius Casesar) Augustus Caesar. The flowers for the month are Gladiolus and Poppy, the birthstone is Peridot, which has historic “powers for healing and warding off nightmares,” and the Zodiac signs are Leo and Virgo.

September’s name comes from the Latin word Septum, meaning “seven” because this month had originally been the seventh month of the early Roman calendar. The flowers are Aster and Morning Glory, the birthstone is Sapphire, and the Zodiac Signs are Virgo and Libra.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

August 1 – International Hangover Day, 2 – Ice Cream Sandwich Day, 4 – U.S. Coast Guard Day, 8 – Sneak some zucchini onto your neighbors porch day, 10 – Lazy Day, 13 – Left Hander’s Day, 15 – V-J Day and Relaxation Day, 22 – National Tooth Fairy Day, 25 – National Banana Split Day, 30 – Toasted Marshmallow Day, and 31 – National Eat Outside Day.

September 7 – Labor Day, 11 – Patriot Day (National Day of Service and Remembrance), 12 – Chocolate Milkshake Day, 18 – Rice Krispy Treat Day, 21 – Miniature Golf Day, 24 – Punctuation Day, 25 – Comic Book Day, 26 – Astronomy Day, 28 – Ask a Stupid Question Day and Good Neighbor Day.

#### **POST HAPPENINGS AND EVENTS:**

At our July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting we caught up on developments (not much) from the last time we met in March, discussed upcoming Post activities, elected officers for 2020-21, sponsored a tee for the Youngstown Fire Company Golf Tournament, and cancelled the August meeting.

We were informed that Mike McLaine was recently hospitalized with a heart attack. Mike is at home recovering, and we offer prayers and best wishes for a speedy recovery. GET WELL SOON MIKE!!

The following members were elected as Post Officers for 2020-21.

Post Commander	Edward Jackson
Senior Vice Commander	Michael Williams
Junior Vice Commander	Marie Schumacher
Quartermaster	Lance Dickinson
Chaplain	Gerald Tubinis
1 Year Trustee	Walt Stevenson
2 Year Trustee	Gary Zanardi
3 Year Trustee	Martin Wojcik
Adjutant	William Hartley
Service Officer	Chris Sembert
Judge Advocate	Kurt Mieth
Surgeon General	William Vecsey

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Since we were not able to do Poppy Donations over Memorial Day, we will be doing them over Labor Day Weekend at Rite Aid and Old Fort Niagara from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. We are looking for two people per shift and need volunteers from 10:00 a.m. to noon and noon to 2:00 p.m. each day. Please call Lance at 585-771-0408 or email at [ladickins1022@yahoo.com](mailto:ladickins1022@yahoo.com) to volunteer.

August 10 – Regular Post Meeting Cancelled

September 5, 6, 7 – Poppy Donations, Rite Aid and Old Fort Niagara, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

September 14 – Regular Post Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

**TRIVIA TIME:** Did you know that the month of September has the most letters in any month on the calendar.

**Until next time: Stay healthy, Stay Safe, Good Days are coming.**

**LANCE DICKINSON, Co. Editor**

**JOHN H. MAC ARTHUR, Co-Editor.**