



Commanders Comments.



Another year has gone by and most of us are probably sitting here thinking, where did it go? Memorial Day, summer concerts, Community Day, and suddenly, the holiday season is upon us, and that goes by just as fast. In the blink of an eye, 365 days pass us by, and we become one year older.

As we age, often times we wake up, crawl out of bed and a series of “oohs, aahs” and maybe even a few expletives fly out of our mouths. Why? Hopefully not because we are so unhappy to wake up, but because it hurts. Creaks and cracks in our joints, stiffness in our muscles, or maybe even a sore head from too much time in the



canteen the night before. Regardless of the reason, we wake up to the life that has been granted to us. The life we created over the numerous decades that preceded this morning of aches and pains. Frequently, as a pain shoots through our body, we are reminded of the reason that pain exists. For some Veterans, maybe it's from a piece of shrapnel, or a screaming bullet that hit us in the jungles of Vietnam, on Omaha Beach, or in the sands of the Arabian Desert. For others, it may be from a sports injury, an accident, or maybe some surgery from an unwanted illness. Regardless of what the source of those aches may have been, they are there as a constant reminder of our past. A past sometimes filled with pleasure, sometimes pain or sorrow, but yet it is the life God granted us, and we must capitalize each day on the blessings we have been given.

As I often reflect on my life, I think about the good times far more frequently than the difficult times. Life is not always easy, it's not always fair, yet most of us push on, even in the most difficult times. When times are good, we share the goodness with our family and friends. When times are tough, hopefully we can rely on that same family and friends to help us along the way. One of the most difficult things to deal with is the loss of a loved one. Whether sickness, old age, or tragedy takes someone away from us, it's never easy to deal with.

Being a member of an organization such as the VFW, we are very fortunate to be blessed with the acquaintance and friendship of so many wonderful people. The sad part though, is often these friends are in the twilight of their lives, and sometimes they pass on before we are ready to accept it. Whether these friendships have been going on for decades, or just a few short years, these people have touched our lives in ways we could never have imagined. We've learned from them, we've laughed with them, and maybe even shed a tear or two with them. Regardless of what we shared, they were family, and they were friends.

As time goes on, we constantly think about our friends and family members who have departed their earthly lives. We often use the phrase “loss of a loved one”, but as I think about this, I ask “have we really lost them, or have they just transitioned to a different means of being with us?” Their physical presence may have ceased, but they will never, ever be lost. They will always be a part of us in one form or another. Although there are far too many to mention, I will just bring up a few. The term “fruit salad” was introduced to me by Charlie Clark, Sr and to this day, when we share a little blackberry brandy in the canteen, there is a part of Charlie with us. I am a spiritual person, and frequently I used the phrase “God Bless You”, but now the meaning of that has become even deeper since the passing of Eddie Liggett, because there wasn’t a single time I saw Eddie, that he didn’t ask God to bless me.

We see all types of signs of our family and friends who have passed. I see my father in me time and time again. When I look at my hands, I see his. When I look in the mirror, I catch a glimpse of a facial expression, or sometimes I hear his voice, but mostly he visits with me in a way I could never have imagined.

Several years ago, my mother and father came out to visit us in Ohio. When his health was good, they would make multiple trips each year to spend time with us. Many times, they would bring something for my kids. Whether it was some little trinket, or some homemade bakery, they would always bring something. Originally, my favorite treat was when he would bring me some form of smoked meat. My father worked in a meat processing plant his entire life where he stuffed sausage, smoked hams, made ring bologna, etc. I loved when he brought me something he made. God knows he was not a cook, but he sure could make an awesome batch of smoked kielbasa!

Well, this particular trip, he brought me something that I had no idea would eventually lead to a sign of his presence. He brought me a set of wind chimes and he hung them on the small sand cherry tree that sits next to my patio. The set was nothing elaborate, just something he probably picked up at a craft show or a farmer’s market. It was a wired framed, glass cardinal with maybe a half dozen tubular chimes. He hung these on that branch approximately 8 years ago, and I never took them down. Although the tree grew, and all of the chimes eventually broke free, the small chain is now embedded into the limb that holds that cardinal in place, and the red glass is still as vibrant as it was the day he placed it there.

At the time, I didn’t think much of it, other than it was nice, and I thanked him. Well after he passed away 2+ years ago, I started to notice a male & female cardinal hanging around my patio. I live in a fairly new area of Strongsville, and it is scarcely wooded, so wherever this cardinal couple makes its home is beyond me. All I know is they started to visit me on a daily basis. I have a hot tub in my back yard, and I use it just about every day. Most of the time, I start my day out there with a cup of coffee, and I mentally put together my daily plan of action. Where I sit in the hot tub, I have a direct view of the tree, and since the leaves have fallen, I can see the glass cardinal. It really didn’t hit me until recently, but I began to notice a pattern. Each day I am out there, at exactly 7:30 AM, the male cardinal lands in that tree. If I am not paying attention, the cardinal will chirp, and I will look up. The female doesn’t land in that tree as she always goes to one of the other shrubs. They don’t stay long, but always long enough to catch my attention and say “hello!” In return, I say “hi dad”, and he then flies away.

That’s my sign, what is yours? Think about it! I am sure there are many.

On January 3rd, Bill Overton and I left for Washington DC to attend the swearing in of our friend, Anthony Gonzalez, who was elected to represent the 16th Congressional District of Ohio. Bill and I went to support Anthony, not because he is a Republican, but because his presence in DC is a direct interest to the work we do for our Veterans. Many members of our post volunteered countless hours during his campaign and supported him throughout the process. This support was given as individual voters, not as Post 3345, but we knew his election would be critical to our mission. Early on during the primary campaigning, I asked all of the candidates, both Democrat and Republican, to meet with me. I also asked them to come talk at our monthly membership meetings. Some of the candidates accepted the offer, some never gave me the time of day. Fortunately for me, that helped narrow things down on a personal level. Regardless though, Anthony succeeded, and is now representing us not only in the 16th District of Ohio, but in DC as well.

The experience we had in DC this past week was incredible. From having the opportunity to speak to other members of Congress, to walking the underground passageways that connect the House offices to the Capitol, it was perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Unfortunately, Bill was not feeling well on our last day, so he had to stay back at the hotel to get some rest while I got a private tour of the Capitol. To walk the hallways, to standing on the House Chambers floor, to planting my behind in the seats where the SCOTUS sits during the State of the Union, it was quite a lesson in history. I learned so much over that three days span and I look forward too many more trips there while Congressman Gonzalez is in office.

Finally completing the above novel, I will move on to post business!

This past year has been another great and successful year at Post 3345. In just a few months, I will be finishing my 6th consecutive year as Commander of such a wonderful post. As I told all of you time and time again, I could not be prouder of the home we share and the members who do so much to support our mission. God willing, I hope to continue to make you proud in the months ahead. In 2019, we will continue our mission of helping our Veteran brothers and sisters, we will continue to keep our post home the envy of all, and I personally will continue to make sure Post 3345 stands out in our community like it never has before. Our new slogan "Empowering Veterans While Strengthening Community" says it all. I want our post to be the beacon of light in and around our organization and community, and we, the officers and staff, will do everything we can to keep the momentum moving in a positive direction.

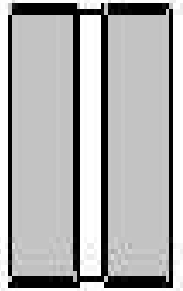
I wish all of you and very happy and blessed 2019, and as always "fair winds and following seas!"

Sincerely,

Commander Tim Zvoncheck



Sr. Vice Commander



*Have you ever been close to tragedy? Or been close to folks who
have?*

*Have you ever felt the pain so powerful, so heavy you collapse?
I've never had to knock on wood, but I know someone who has.
Which makes me wonder if I could.*

*It makes me wonder if I've never had to knock on wood.
And I'm glad I haven't yet because I'm sure it isn't good,
That's the impression that I get.*

*I'm not a coward, I've just never been tested
I'd like to think that if I was, I would pass
Look at the tested and think there but for the grace go
I might be a coward, I'm afraid of what I might find out
I've never had to knock on wood, but I know someone who has.
It makes me wonder if I could.*

*It makes me wonder if I've never had to knock on wood.
And I'm glad I haven't yet, because I'm sure it isn't good.
That's the impression that I get.*

***"The Impression That I Get" (Dicky Barrett, Joe Gittleman - The
Mighty, Mighty Bosstones)***

Life isn't easy. Of course, there was never a guarantee it would be. Perhaps that's why we come out of the womb crying – deep down, we know we had a simple, easy life before we started breathing air – no decisions to make and no consequences for our actions; but then, something changed, and we're forced to adapt right off the bat. From then on, we're faced with different challenges through the remainder of our lives. How we react and respond to them is guided mostly by our character, which we rely on our family, friends, society and our faith to help develop as we grow.

Certainly, not every challenge we face is a life-or-death situation. A lot of them are rather routine, and we handle them in stride. But those of our members here at the VFW who have been placed in harm's way during wars or hostilities overseas certainly are aware that sometimes, those challenges can be downright terrifying, and these "tests" make us reveal what our character says about us.

January 23, 1943 - the SS Dorchester, a passenger cruise ship converted to be a troop transport ship during World War II, left New York Harbor bound for Narsarsuaq in southern Greenland. On board, she carried 902 officers, servicemen and civilians. It was accompanied by two other merchant ships and three Coast Guard cutters, which collectively comprised convoy SG-19. Their route would take them directly through an area known for U-Boat activity and had the dubious nickname of "Torpedo Junction". As would be expected, tensions were high during the transit.

Four of the men being transported to Greenland were Army chaplains – Second Lieutenants all: George Fox, a Methodist Minister; Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Clark Poling, from the Dutch Reformed Church; and John Washington, a Catholic Priest. During the entire trip, they did their best to keep the men at ease by engaging them in conversations, helping serve crackers and drinks to them, and even trying to coordinate the staging of a talent show - anything to minister to them and keep their minds off the potential dangers they faced during the trip to Greenland.

February 2 - one of the cutters detected a submarine in the area but was unable to localize its position. The captain of the Dorchester, Merchant Marine Captain Hans Danielsen, made an announcement over the ship's public-address system that all hands were to sleep in their clothes with their life jackets on. He informed them that if they made it through the night, they would have air protection from the air base at their destination in Greenland until they reached port, which was only about 150 miles away.

The order to sleep with their clothes and life vests on went mainly unheeded by those sleeping well below decks near the engine room and associated machinery spaces, where temperatures were routinely above 100 degrees.

February 3 – at 00:55, the SS Dorchester was hit by one of three torpedoes fired by German U-boat U-223. The torpedo hit amidships on the starboard side, below the water line, knocking out the ship's electrical system. Nearly one third of the Dorchester's casualties from this attack occurred within the first moments – between the impact and explosion as well as the intrushing water that drowned many of the men below deck. In the pandemonium that ensued, men were running about in the darkened ship with no idea what to do. Those who had neglected to sleep in their clothes with their life jackets on were running around in a panic, trying to figure out how to get to the lifeboats or at least obtain a life jacket.

Those surviving the initial blast and flooding made their way topside, where the four chaplains had been handing out life jackets from a storage room and encouraging the men to be brave and stay calm. When the last remaining life jacket had been passed out, each of the four chaplains, seemingly in unison, removed their own and handed them to the next four men in line. "It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said survivor John Ladd.

As the ship went down, the four chaplains were seen and heard praying – each in the language of their faith: Hebrew, Latin and English – arms linked and braced against the slanting deck.

"As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets." Grady Clark, Survivor.

Of the 902 men aboard the SS Dorchester, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. Certainly, offering four life jackets to four other men did not greatly change the outcome of the attack of the Dorchester, but it shows the amazing courage and selflessness of these military men of faith when faced with the greatest test of character and love for your fellow man that a person could ever experience. Fortunately, these tests are few and far between, but it gives encouragement and joy to know that there are people in this world, which often seems so bleak and heartless, who rise to the challenges in the purest of ways. "I've never had to knock on wood, but I know (four men) who have."

"Valor is a gift, "Carl Sandburg once said. "Those having it never know for sure whether they have it until the test comes."

Tad Brown
Sr. Vice Commander



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Strongsville Post 3345
17900 Strongsville Blvd.
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November 11, 2017

Post Newsletter Advertising Application

1. **Ad sizes available:** Business Card single, 3 ½ X 1 ½ \$100.00 Yr.
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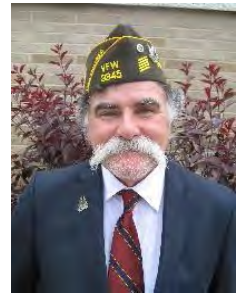
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Jr. Vice Commander

Dan Dallas



Greetings everyone,

I hope all had an enjoyable holiday season. We had some great events at the Post, I hope you had a chance to make it to them.

Upcoming events that I have planned are:

On Sunday, February 3rd we will be having a Super Bowl Party. Tickets are now on sale at the canteen for \$40.00; which includes a Square on the main board (Each Quarter pays out \$600), Buffet Style Food, Domestic draft / beer and well whiskey.

I may have one other event for this Winter but it's still in the works.

Be aware that during fish fry season the Queen of Hearts drawing hours will most likely be adjusted.

See you at the Post,

Dan Dallas
Jr. Vice Commander

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Honor Guard

Don Kennett



After the myriad of events in November for Veterans Day to include the ceremonies at our local schools where they always make our veteran team feel appreciated with their support, and a tour of duty two days after Christmas, the Honor Guard activities have slowed a bit which has allowed us all time to spend the Christmas season with family and friends.

Calendar for: January—February—March:

Jan 5th – Honor Guard Meeting
 Feb 2nd – Honor Guard Meeting
 Feb 14th - Tour of Duty at Rittman
 Mar 2nd - Honor Guard Meeting
 Mar 29th – National Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Day (Observed)

Respectfully Submitted,
 Don Kennett, Honor Guard Commander

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Taps



October 2018: Martin Conroy, Stephen Parry,
Terrence Harp

November 2018: None

December 2018: Ben DiStefano

New Members: October 2018

Louis Aiman

New Members: November 2018

Adam Haseley

Steven Dahl

New Members: December 2018

Therester Cox

Jonah Cox

David White

Donations: October 2018

VFW National Home For Children	\$ 250
Honor Flight Cleveland	\$ 750
Ohio Western Reserve Cemetery Advisory Committee	\$ 250
U.S. Naval Sea Cadets	\$ 500
City of Strongsville (Christmas Display)	\$ 500
Gifts for Yanks	\$1,000

Donations: November 2018

VFW National Home For Children	\$ 250
Strongsville Chamber of Commerce (Scholarship Dance)	\$ 500
Bay Village Post 9693 Christmas Raffle	\$ 40
2/337th Christmas Party and Gifts for Kids	\$ 600
Southwest Hospice Luminaria	\$ 150
VA Voluntary Services	\$ 500

Donations: December 2018

VFW National Home For Children	\$ 250
Arts in Strongsville	\$ 250
Altenheim Senior Living	\$ 150
Semper Fi Fund	\$ 250
Homeless Stand Down	\$ 300
Veterans Relief Organization	\$ 500
Combs, Comedy, Bentfield Cancer Fund	\$2,500
City of Olmsted Falls Vietnam Memorial	\$ 300



Service Officer Bill Overton

***Army 1st Cavalry
1967-1968 Vietnam***



Wm. B. Overton 2/2/1968 Vietnam Tet fight day 2.
Exhausted, no ammo, no water, no food.

Hi everyone, I hope you had a great Christmas and New Year's.

As of this writing I am a little under the weather so my article will be a little shorter than normal.

First, I would like to thank everyone who had brought candy to the post so I could take it to the homeless. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Commander Tim and I had the honor of attending the swearing in ceremony of Congressman Anthony Gonzalez in Washington, DC. Anthony is committed to helping our veterans and our country. Congratulations Anthony!!

While in Washington, DC, we also visited the Vietnam Memorial. I encourage anyone who has the opportunity, to take a trip to DC and visit the memorials; you won't regret it.

If I receive any benefit information of importance, I will ask for an email blast to be sent out.

Wishing everyone a healthy 2019.

Bill Overton
Service Officer



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Canteen Manager

Bill Sopko



Welcome to 2019. Reminiscing a little, the Marine Corps birthday bash, Veterans Day and the Army/Navy events seem to be getting bigger and better every year. Thanks to all those who attended these events and all those behind the scene helpers that make these so successful.

2019 is the Chinese year of the Pig, I think I got a head start this past Thanksgiving. It was very fulfilling around our house assuming yours was the same. Hope you all got what you wished for this Christmas and hopefully survived ringing in the New Year. I know my wife Jan was ecstatic when she saw what Santa brought her, hear this, 2 sparkling new snow shovels, ear muffs and babushka, insulated snow suit and those trendy yellow high top rubber boots ,like the city workers wear. She can't wait till it snows to shovel the drive allowing me to get the car out of the garage and meander up to the canteen for a cold one (or two). Santa got off pretty cheap too; he got all those gifts at Cindy's garage sale.

It's that time of year again, your post tries it's best to keep the sidewalks and parking lot clear and salted but sometimes Mother Nature throws you a curve. Please be extra careful whenever you go out this winter. Let's also remember rule #1, please watch your language, most think it's offensive and irritating, again we want to retain our members and recruit new ones, not turn them off. Thanks.

Remember to pray for our veterans and their families, all our members and those going through some less fortunate times. GOD Bless the U.S.A.

Happy New Year, till spring

Dave and Bill

Country songs being re-released by the great artist Skid Marks

1 - I just couldn't leave her behind----alone

2 - I used to kiss her on the lips but now it's all over



HOUSE COMMITTEE

Brent Newton



Greetings from the Housing Committee.

First, I would like to thank all of the dedicated workers that volunteered their Saturdays and other times to help with supporting the post and in keeping our post looking so clean; we have had a lot of compliments from guests on how clean our post is.

As a reminder:

If you have flags for proper disposal, please bring them to the post and place them in the red, white and blue mailbox located on the west side of the building.

The work parties are the second and fourth Saturday of every month, starts at 0800.

Check the calendars for Auxiliary clean days

The housing committee would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2019.

The Housing Committee



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Auxiliary

Bob DeHart



Greetings from the Auxiliary and Happy New Year!! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year celebration with family and friends.

The Auxiliary had a lot of great events during the holiday season.

I want to give a special thank you to Rosalie Bruno for again volunteering to take charge of our Christmas cookie sale this year, and to our bakers and packers for volunteering their time making and packing the delicious cookies. You all did a great job! All the cookies were sold out this year, and a lot of money was raised for our auxiliary to donate to our future endeavors.

I would also like to send out another big thank you to Denise Klusker and all her helpers. Aside from all the work she's done and the time she puts in as Treasurer (which is more than anyone can ever imagine), Denise "volunteered" again to take over the children's Christmas party this year. Denise and her crew took care of all the shopping, wrapping, and food to put on another great event for the kids. And, of course, Santa, Mrs. Clause and Evette the Elf showed up with gifts for all the kids who were signed up. I'll say it again, I think this really is one of the best auxiliaries in the state of Ohio – We are never short on people stepping up and offering to help.

Thanks to all who attended our auxiliary Christmas dinner and a big thank you goes out to Mike Zullo who took the day off from work and Jeritt Zavatchen for preparing the food. Everyone that attended again got to enjoy a feast, and there was plenty to feed everyone at the post that night, and for plenty of people to bring home leftovers.

There were other events that the Auxiliary helped in, such as Chili Cook-off, Army\Navy game, the Canteen Christmas party and our New Year's Eve bash to name a few. Thank you to everyone who helped out with these as well as all the others not personally mentioned here. Your help and support is greatly appreciated.

This year we are planning on putting on our annual "Soup"er Bowl or Soup-a-thon – we have it scheduled for Sunday, January 27th at 1:00pm (one week prior to Super Bowl Sunday). The event has always been well attended and has been something to look forward to. Watch for more news on this in the canteen and email blasts, and there is a sign-up sheet in the canteen.

We have tried to contact everyone who did not have their annual dues paid by the middle of December, either by mail, email or phone. I am hoping that everyone got their dues paid and processed by the end of the year. If not, get them in now to remain a member in good standing. If you're not already a life member, please consider becoming one – the rates are more than reasonable.

Please remember to keep your address, phone and email updated with the Auxiliary. You can either log into Malta and do this yourself or provide your updated information to our Secretary, Kathlene Lukasik or Treasurer, Denise Klusker. In order to receive email blasts from the Auxiliary, please provide your email information to Linda Tobel who sends out all Auxiliary email blasts; this is a great way to keep updated on Auxiliary business.

If you would like to receive the Scuttlebutt Newsletter and post email blasts, please provide your email information to Mary Ann Almashie who sends out post related email blasts and who is the editor of the Post newsletter. If you would like your birthday published in the post calendar, please provide your birth month and day to Mary Ann (there is also a birthday book behind the bar at the canteen to place this information – see one of the bartenders).

On behalf of me and all of my auxiliary officers, I would like to wish a healthy and happy 2019 to all of you and your families. We wouldn't be the kind of post we are without all the good and supportive people that are here. Thank you all for your support of our post, and all that you do around here to make it the best post around. I am proud to be a part of it.

As always, please continue to keep our troops in your thoughts and prayers.....

Bob DeHart
President Auxiliary



Our Members. Our Friends. Our Heroes. **Roger Kvasager**

Interviewed By Linda Burger



“There was a job that needed to be done and it was my job to do it.”

With that sense of responsibility and dedication, Roger Kvasager answered his “Greetings from Uncle Sam” from the United States Army, which arrived just after his birthday.

Growing up on a farm in North Dakota, Roger learned early both the need for and value of hard work and doing a good job. “We raised cattle, which had to be milked twice a day, and had crops of red potatoes, wheat, barley, flax, alfalfa, soy beans and others,” he recalled. “By the time I was 5 years old, I could drive a tractor!” he added with a note of pride.

While in the 5th Grade, Roger’s Dad suffered a back injury, which meant he had to take over the majority of the role in running the farm, in addition to keeping up with his school work. He obviously did a good job at both since he later attended college, majoring in Finance, while still working the farm.

But doing both meant taking summers off from college, which meant he lost his student deferment. Again, upon being drafted, Roger’s attitude was “what are you going to do but go and do the job.”

From the start, his leadership abilities were recognized as he was appointed Leader for his group by the Draft Board. This involved supervising the 30 fellow recruits on the train from Fargo to the Induction Center, ensuring all arrived on time and ready to go.

From there Roger was assigned to Fort Lewis where he achieved an even greater honor, becoming a member of the prestigious 400 Club. This elite group was composed of recruits who met or exceeded a score of 400 on the Physical Combat Proficiency Test that involved multiple challenges in obstacle courses, weaponry and other tests to determine the level of physical fitness.

Based on this, and other evaluations, Roger was assigned to AIT (Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill, with his MOS as 13A10 – Artillery Gunner. Following training, he was shipped to Vietnam, arriving in Cameron Bay with orders for the 6th Battalion 29th Artillery in Pleiku, then convoyed to Dak To.

“Since I was trained on a 105 Howitzer, I became a surveyor,” explained Roger. “It was the surveyor’s responsibility to position the 6 guns to determine the battery center. We had to take 3 sun shots in 15 seconds, and it could only be done between 8 and 10 a.m. and 2 and 4 pm”

“It was March of 1968 and there were lots of hills, which meant lots of sighting and positioning,” he added.



His “job” took a rather radical turn when his NCO recognized that his troops needed more than just food and ammo. “Things had gotten kind of quiet after the Tet Offensive and counter Tet, our Sergeant Major decided we should have a Club,” recalled Roger. “He asked if I would run it – and I readily accepted!”

The Club was built in an underground bunker, as were the living quarters for the soldiers, constructed from the wooden ammo crates. Offering beer and pop and the contents of the SP pack (cigarettes, toiletries, playing cards, etc.), there was also a lot of poker – and other games of chance!

“Every three weeks I would fly back to Pleiku to order beer, 80 cases in a pallet. We built up the quality of the product until we were getting Budweiser!” he added with a laugh. “I then rode back in a convoy, to protect it – and us!”

Thanks to Roger’s negotiating skills, members of the Air Force delivered 300 lbs. of ice to the Club every day!

But it wasn’t all fun and games, not by any means. “We were located near the highway that the North Vietnamese used for supplies, and just 5 ‘clicks’ from the Cambodian border,” he recalled. “When we had incoming rockets and mortars if you heard it, you were happy. It was the ones you didn’t hear that you had to worry about.”

Their ammo dump was hit more than once and they lost their Major, who had gone out to inspect a crater. Plus there was the red mud and the weather – six months of monsoon, with rain that came down sideways and six months of blistering heat.

Following R&R in Sydney, Australia, Roger was assigned to an Advance Party, which was unusual since by then he was a short timer, with less than 60 days to go. Because of his M60 expertise, he had to go to Black Hawk Valley. “We spent about three weeks setting up tents, digging fox holes and serving two on/two off guard duty,” he explained. “Then, when diving for one of those fox holes, I sprained my ankle, pulling tendons and ligaments. I was evacuated to Pleiku and after three weeks of crutches, I got out of Vietnam the first of March, 1969.”



Since he still had time left to serve, he was assigned to Fort Sill but in August was granted early release, in order to work the farm.



“When I got out, I forgot about that place,” explained Roger. “You had to grow up pretty fast over there but basically it was just another job you had to get done.”

“Good” memories of Vietnam – Thanksgiving 1968 when he had milk for the first time since arriving and sitting on the runway at Cameron Bay grateful to “get the hell out of there without getting hit!”

Another fond recollection, buying a 1969 Dodge Super B while on leave – an automotive treasure he still owns!

Once home, Roger went back to both working the farm and attending college, however, switching his major to Mechanical Engineering. Following graduation, he began a long and fulfilling career with Morrison and Knudsen that started with building ABM sites as part of the Cold War and lasted more than 42 years, traveling and living in numerous states and countries around the world. He rose to the position of Vice President of Construction for the Power Division and still acts as a consultant for the company.

“The work was very satisfying and the traveling interesting but it did take its toll,” said Roger. “One time, I calculated I was home only 94 days that year,” he added, with a touch of regret. “I was able to provide a very good living for my family, but I also missed out on quite a lot of special moments.”

His family includes a daughter, Brittany, who works at the Cleveland Clinic, and two sons, Curt and Eric, both of whom are married, each with two kids.



Roger met his current wife, Gretchen, the “new-fashioned way” – online! Since their marriage in 2006, and his retirement in 2010, they’ve taken to the road – visiting 48 states in their motor home – Washington and Oregon are the only states they haven’t yet seen.

They’ve also attended annual family reunions in North Dakota, where Roger still owns property, as well as several reunions from his Vietnam unit. “I still stay in touch with several of my buddies and I’m already looking forward to the next get together, in Washington, D.C.” he said.

A lifetime member of the VFW, Roger recalled how his local Post “grabbed him as soon as he got off the airplane from serving – come on, they said, we need to sign you up as a member,” he said with a laugh.

At Post 3345, Roger was on the House Committee for a number of years, one as head of the Committee, and takes well-deserved pride in the achievements of his group. “We added on to the cooler area, completed some electrical work and got new convection ovens,” he said. “We also added electrical and water to the Pavilion.”

He is especially proud of the hours of hard work it took to get the floors back in shape, noting that the first impression when you walk into a place is often a lasting one. Roger credits the excellent people on his committee as well as the many volunteers, for these achievements.

Roger, for your service in Vietnam and for bringing a touch of home to your fellow soldiers while there. And for the work you have done to maintain and improve our Post, we at Strongsville VFW Post 3345 salute you and are honored to have you as a Member.

For a little extra reading: Below is a little something I received in the post email address that I maintain. Instead of sending to 12 people as stated below, I decided to share with all of you.

As I came out of the supermarket that sunny day, pushing my cart of groceries towards my car, I saw an old man with the hood of his car up and a lady sitting inside the car, with the door open.

The old man was looking at the engine.

I put my groceries away in my car, and continued to watch the old gentleman from about twenty five feet away.

I saw a young man in his early twenties with a grocery bag in his arm walking towards the old man. The old gentleman saw him coming too, and took a few steps towards him.

I saw the old gentleman point to his open hood and say something. The young man put his grocery bag into what looked like a brand new Cadillac Escalade. He then turned back to the old man. I heard him yell at the old gentleman saying: "You shouldn't even be allowed to drive a car at your age." And then with a wave of his hand, he got in his car and peeled rubber out of the parking lot.

I saw the old gentleman pull out his handkerchief, and mop his brow as he went back to his car and again looked at the engine. He then went to his wife and spoke with her; he appeared to tell her it would be okay.

I had seen enough, and I approached the old man.

He saw me coming and stood straight, and as I got near him I said, 'Looks like you're having a problem.'

He smiled sheepishly, and quietly nodded his head.

I looked under the hood myself, and knew that

whatever the problem was, it was beyond me.

Looking around, I saw a gas station up the road, and I told the old man that I would be right back. I drove to the station and I went inside. I saw three attendants working on cars. I approached one of them, and related the problem the old man had with his car. I offered to pay them if they could follow me back down and help him.

The old man had pushed the heavy car under the shade of a tree and appeared to be comforting his wife. When he saw us he straightened up and thanked me for my help. As the mechanics diagnosed the problem (overheated engine), I spoke with the old gentleman.

When I shook hands with him earlier, he had noticed my Marine Corps ring and had commented about it, telling me that he had been a Marine too. I nodded and asked the usual question, 'What outfit did you serve with?'

He had mentioned that he served with the first Marine Division at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal ..

He had hit all the big ones and retired from the Corps after the war was over. As we talked we heard the car engine come on and saw the mechanics lower the hood. They came over to us as the old man reached for his wallet, but was stopped by me. I told him I would just put the bill on my AAA card.

He still reached for the wallet and handed me a card that I assumed had his name and address on it and I stuck it in my pocket. We shook hands all around again, and I said my goodbye's to his wife.

I then told the two mechanics that I would follow them back up to the station. Once at the station, I told them that they had interrupted their own jobs to come along with me and help the old man. I said I wanted to pay for the help, but they refused to charge me.

One of them pulled out a card from his pocket, looking exactly like the card the old man had given to me. Both of the men told me then that they were Marine Corps Reserves. Once again we shook hands all around and as I was leaving, one of them told me I should look at the card the old man had given to me. I said I would and drove off.

For some reason I had gone about two blocks, when I pulled over and took the card out of my pocket and looked at it for a long, long time. The name of the old gentleman was on the card in golden leaf and under his name was written: 'Congressional Medal of Honor Society.'

I sat there motionless, looking at the card and reading it over and over. I looked up from the card and smiled to no one but myself and marveled that on this day, four Marines had all come together because one of us needed help. He was an old man all right, but it felt good to have stood next to greatness and courage, and an honor to have been in his presence.

Remember, OLD men like him gave our FREEDOM for America . Thanks to those who served and still serve, and to all of those who supported them, and who continue to support them.

America is not at war. The U.S. Military is at war. America is at the Mall. If you don't stand behind our troops, PLEASE feel free to stand in front of them!

Remember, Freedom IS NOT free. Thousands have paid the price, so you can enjoy what you have today.

LET'S DO THIS - JUST 19 WORDS:

GOD OUR FATHER, WALK THROUGH MY HOUSE AND TAKE AWAY ALL MY WORRIES; AND PLEASE WATCH OVER AND HEAL MY FAMILY; AND PLEASE PROTECT OUR FREEDOMS, AND WATCH OVER OUR TROOPS, WHO ARE DEFENDING THOSE FREEDOMS. AMEN.

Pass this prayer to 12 people, including me.

IN GOD WE TRUST,

Thanks to Barb Overton for sharing this.



The below was shared to me by Dennis Pilny: Thank you Dennis

The below was put together by the Ladies Aux back in 2010 when they were preparing for the Post 75th birthday celebration. We are only 16 years away from being 100 years as a Post.

Lets add on where the Ladies Aux left off. If anyone has information to add, please let me know. I think this would be great to add on the post website.

STRONGSVILLE POST 3345

75 YEAR HISTORY 1935 to 2010...

- ***JUNE 22, 1935 ESTABLISHED IN A STORE FRONT IN PARMA, OHIO WITH 3 CHARTER MEMBERS***
- ***RELOCATED IN THE 1940'S TO A QUONSET HUT ON W 130TH & BROOKPARK RD., BROOKPARK OHIO***
- ***RELOCATED IN THE 1950'S TO NORTH ROCKY RIVER DRIVE IN BEREA, OHIO***
- ***LADIES AUXILIARY CHARTERED OCTOBER 1952 WITH 25 CHARTER MEMBERS***
- ***RELOCATED IN MARCH OF 1961 TO OUR PRESENT LOCATION ON STRONGSVILLE BLVD., STRONGSVILLE, OHIO***
- ***MAY 1962 FIRST INSTALLATION, DON ROLBES POST COMMANDER, MARIAN (CESARE) ROLBES PRESIDENT OF LADIES AUXILIARY. CANTEEN WAS OPERATED WITH A CIGAR BOX AND A BOTTLE, WHEN BOTTLE WAS EMPTY OFF TO THE LIQUOR STORE TO REPLACE IT.***
- ***1963 HELD DEPARTMENT COMMANDER DICK RESS'S HOME COMING AT THE POST AND NATIONAL COMMANDER JOE LOARDO ATTENDED.***
- ***1968 BEGAN THE TRADITION OF FRIDAY FISH FRIES. (SOLD 30)***
- ***1977-78 POST COMMANDER DON ROLBES AND CANTEEN MANAGER MIKE ZULLO SR. HELD SEVERAL FUND RAISERS TO PAY FOR TWO LOTS BEHIND THE POST-WE ARE STANDING ON THEM NOW.***
- ***1950'S/1980'S SPONSORED THE RANGERETTES AND WRANGLER DRILL TEAMS WHO WON SEVERAL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS.***
- ***MID 1990'S EXPANDED THE CANTEEN***
- ***LATE 1990'S ABSORBED PARMA HTS. POST #8620***
- ***2002/2003 ADDED THE PATIO LOUNGE***
- ***2004 NEW OUTSIDE PATIO***
- ***2005 GARAGE ADDED***

AND NOW ON TO THE NEXT 75.....

**Thank you for your support and donations to the
Toys for Children for the Strongsville Food Bank**



Congratulations

**Anthony Gonzalez
Ohio's Newest Congressman**

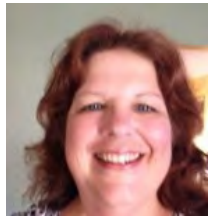
Thank you for being very active in helping our veterans and our country



**Commander Tim Zvoncheck
&
Service Officer Bill Overton
at the
Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC**



Scuttlebutt publishing!



Newsletter publication: As a reminder, the Scuttlebutt newsletter and calendars have been switched to a quarterly electronic delivery – either as an email attachment we send to you, or by visiting the Post's website, www.vfw3345.com . Pictures from some events have been uploaded to the Post Website, check out the fun. I am still uploading pictures from various events held throughout the year so check them out and join in on the fun (Web and Mobile access).

Please send your electronic contact information, and any updates to your home address if something has changed, to svcdr.vfw3345@wowway.biz and we will make sure our email distribution list gets you added to it!

NOTE: if you include your birth month and day, we will also get you added to the birthday list. There is also a birthday book behind the bar at the canteen in order to add your birthday information.

I would like to thank Tom Teti, Tracey Damian and Linda Tobel for providing the pictures that I have posted on the website.

I would also like to thank Linda Burger for doing such an outstanding job in the "Our Members, Our Friends, Our Heroes" articles. What a great way to honor our veterans.

See ya at the post

Support our Troops!!!

Mary Ann Almashie



January 4, 2018

1. VFW-SVA 2019 Legislative Fellowship Class: The VFW and Student Veterans of America (SVA) announced the names of 10 VFW members and student veteran leaders who will comprise the fifth VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship class. Announced during the 11th annual SVA National Conference, the program continues efforts by both organizations to train grassroots advocates. The semester-long program includes policy research and six days in Washington, D.C., for the VFW's Legislative Conference.

The 10 selected fellows for 2019 are:

- Chad Baer, Army veteran, University of Pennsylvania
- Tammy Barlet, Coast Guard veteran, George Washington University
- Matthew Deller, Army veteran, The American University of Paris
- Christopher Lamy, Air Force veteran, Louisiana State University
- Alcides Lugo, Army veteran, Auburn University
- Angela Peacock, Army veteran, Washington University - St. Louis
- Chanel Powell, Army veteran, University at Buffalo
- Lobsang Salaka, Army veteran, Northeastern University
- Amy Sleath, Army veteran, Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Tom Wike, Marine veteran, Ohio State University

2. VFW 2019 Priority Goals: This week marked the beginning of the 116th Congress. The VFW looks forward to working with the new and returning members of Congress to improve care and benefits for veterans, service members, and their families. Read the VFW's 2019 Priority Goals.

3. Veterans in 116th Congress: A total of 96 military veterans were sworn in yesterday as members of the 116th Congress. According to an Army Times article, 19 are serving in the Senate and 77 in the House, for an overall veteran percentage of 17.9 percent. Four decades ago the percentage of military veterans in Congress exceeded 70 percent. Of the 96 veterans, only 44 are eligible for VFW membership, with 28 currently being members in good standing. Other demographics:

- 48 served in the military after the year 2000;
- 30 are Democrats and 66 are Republicans;
- 19 are first-time lawmakers; and
- 7 are women

4. 2019 Military Pay Rates Released: On Jan. 1, DOD released the monthly basic pay rates for 2019. The 2.6 percent raise is the largest since the 3.4 percent increase in 2010, and 0.3 percent larger than last year's raise. In terms of direct impacts on service members, junior officers and senior enlisted can expect to see about \$1,300 more a year, junior enlisted can expect to see about \$670 more a year, and senior officers with more than 12 years of service will receive approximately \$2,300 more per year. The increase is based on a yearly federal calculation that is designed to keep military pay rates on par with private sector wages; however, the VFW has long advocated for a more realistic calculation.