



V.F.W. POST 702 PRESS

VOL. IX ISSUE IX April 2010

**POST 702 AND AUXILIARY MEETINGS
ARE HELD ON THE 1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY
MONTH AT 7:00 PM
AT THE POSTAL WORKERS UNION BLDG,
2554 BURLINGAME AVE SW, WYOMING, MI**

FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK

Comrades,

The election of officers for 2010-2011 was held at our last meeting and the results are listed below:

Post Commander - Larry Foster
Sr Vice - Commander-Ron Oakes
Jr Vice - Commander-Jim Norton
Quartermaster - Steve VanValkenburg
Chaplin - Jim Hekker
Trustee 1yr - John Veenendall
Trustee 2yr - Lon Emelander
Trustee 3yr - Doug Broek
Judge Advocate - Ron Oakes

I would like to take the time to thank all of the above comrades for their continued support of Post #702. We still have several committees that will need chairpersons and members.

On **July 3, 2010**, Vietnam War Veterans, their families and the public are invited to a special celebration at Fifth Third Ball Park in Grand Rapids. ***LZ Michigan, the welcoming home of the Michigan Vietnam Veterans*** is sponsored by West Michigan White Caps and WGVU public television. Visit their web site at <http://www.wgvu.org/lzmichigan/> for all the current information on all the planned activities. When you scan the list of partners, you will see VFW Post #702 and Auxiliary listed. We need volunteers for all kinds of tasks. If you can help please contact one of the committees listed or Ron Oakes (616-791-0316) or Sonya VanValkenburg (616-447-9978).

The next District 8 meeting will take place at 1:00 PM on May 1st at the Creston VFW post at 1535 Monroe Ave NW in Grand Rapids. All are welcome to attend.

The West Michigan Job Fair held at the Grand Valley Armory on April 21st resulted in 15 new members for the VFW Department of Michigan. Our post had 12 new members and we took applications for 3 others located outside our area. Those 3 applications will be sent to the posts receiving the new member.

The next scheduled **Texas Hold-ems** are scheduled for **August 5- 8, September 9-12, October 7-10**. Mark your calendars now. Our last **Texas Hold-em** resulted in a profit of about \$1,500 for the post. If you think volunteering for this event would be too difficult to participate in then think again. A-1 Bingo runs the event and all the post members do is sell chips in the beginning and cash them in at the end. A computer does all the calculating. They supply all other needs including "munchies". Each shift will have at least one person who has participated in the activity before to help train new volunteers. Anyone wishing to donate a few hours please contact one of the below listed officers to have your name added to the schedule. We will need volunteers.

Buddy Poppy Days at Family Fare in Hudsonville on Port Sheldon Road will be on the **7th, and 8th of May**. The schedule is:

Friday, May 7th

9:00 AM to Noon - Lorena Brown/Carol Koning
Noon to 3:00 PM - Joan and Doug (tentative)

Saturday, May 8th

9:00 to Noon - Ron Oakes/Jim Hekker
Noon to 3:00 PM - Judy Randall/Cindy Beadle

Family Fare on Northland Drive:

Friday, May 7th

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM - Steve and Sonya

Saturday, May 8th 9:00 – Noon - Larry Foster and Sonya

Noon -3:00 PM - Beth and Paula

Last year we ran out of Poppies and received over \$700 in donations. These funds stay with the post for our local use. We have 1,500 poppies to pass out this year. Please note we pass these out for donations only.

Anyone who cannot make any of the sites and wish to receive a Buddy Poppy contact anyone of the officers listed below and we will get make sure you receive one. Thank you for your support.

VFW Post #702 is one of the leaders in new memberships in the Department of Michigan. We are always looking for additional members. Anyone who knows of someone who would like an application let one of the officers listed below know and we will mail out information to them. Current dues have just been reduced for our post to just \$18 a year. However the post is extending its paying the first year for all new members for a limited time. If the prospective member is unemployed and needs assistance in paying the first years dues we have resources available to assist them when they request to join Post #702

Remember, we hold bingo for the residents at the Michigan Veterans Home the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. It runs from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Come out and see what it means to them.

We have adopted a Michigan National Guard unit. Co C BSTB 86th IBCT has deployed to its MOB site. This is the first military unit the post has adopted in a very long time. The formal paperwork has been completed and has been accepted at National HQs. Below is a list of what we are looking for to send to the unit:

Various CDs (music/Movies), crackers, cheese spread (can type) peanuts, cookies, local books/magazines, toiletries, candy (all kinds), drink mixes (Crystal Light), microwave popcorn, and cans of coffee. If any of you have ever tasted military supplied coffee you will know why they are requesting the 1-2 pound cans.

VFW Post #702 will be marching in the **Walker Memorial Day Parade** and the **Grandville 4th of July Parade (held on the 5th**

this year). We would like to see a good turn out for both of these events. Any questions contact one of the officers listed below.

One last thing, I want to again welcome to the post all the new members. There have been a lot of wonderful people joining us recently. **Remember the monthly meeting is at 7:00 PM the first Tuesday of each month.** The meeting place is at the United Postal Workers Hall just north of 28th Street at 2554 Burlingame. All post members are encouraged to attend.

I also wish to inform you that our Auxiliary is also looking for new members. Any wife, mother, or daughter of a veteran (living or deceased) who would like to become a member of the post auxiliary please contact anyone listed below for further information.

For all additional dates to remember please refer to the monthly calendar provided with this newsletter.

Below is a list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses to use when contacting the post.

Ron Oakes
Post Commander
oakesrg@chartermi.net
(616) 791-0316

Larry Foster
Post Sr Vice Cmdr
nofixit@aol.com
(616) 363-8264

Doug Broek
Post Jr Vice Cmdr
douglas.broek@att.net
(616) 532-5227

Steve VanValkenburg
Post Quartermaster
stvan1@msn.com
616-447-9978
1709 Woodworth St. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Commander
Ron Oakes

AUXILIARY NEWS

AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Election of officers took place at the April meeting and went well. Installation of officers will take place at our next meeting on May 4th Newly elected officers are:

President - Beth Flintoff
Sr. Vice - Sonya VanValkenburg
Jr. Vice - Teri Bockheim
Treasurer - Joan Broek
Chaplain - Carol Koning

Conductress/- Cindy Beadle
Guard - Judy Randall
2 Year Trustee - Kay Farquhar

Thank you for a great year, and with this group, we can only expect more this next year.

Sonya VanValkenburg
Jr. Vice

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We had a nine members attend our April meeting.

Elections for officers for next year were held. Installation will be held on May 4th by Past President Sonya VanValkenburg

Dates to remember:

May 7th and 8th – Buddy Poppy Days

May 14th & 15th – Arts & Crafts Fair at the GRHV

July 3rd - Welcome Home for Vietnam Vets will be held at 5/3 Ball Park

July 30th – set up for Carnival at the GRHV

July 31st – Carnival at the GRHV

We continue to collect supplies for the National Guard Unit that we have adopted. We will get you more information on their needs as we are made aware any requests.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Lorena Brown, Secretary

AUXILIARY AMERICANISM, COMMUNITY SERVICE, HOSPITAL, and VFW NATIONAL HOME REPORTS

The LZ Michigan event planning, taking place on 7/03/10 at Fifth Third Ball Park is coming along nicely. Anyone interested in a sponsorship or making a financial donation, please contact Tim Eernisse at eernisst@gvsu.edu or go through their website at <http://www.wgvu.org/lzmichigan/>. Please visit this website, and sign up to volunteer your time. Tickets are now available, and all tickets are general admission for \$10.00 (Vietnam veterans are free), and can be purchased at the website. Also on the website is a link called "Meet Me @ LZM" where veterans can sign in with their name, unit #, and dates of service. Feel free to join the others that have signed up.

July 3, 2010 will be an eventful evening welcoming home our Vietnam veterans. Of course, we all know that they did not have proper homecomings, and this event will do just that. We are asking for testimonial letters from Vietnam Veterans, submit a photo or two, and looking for veterans to interview for a short clip. Please contact Tim at eernisst@gvsu.edu to participate or send information to Mr. Tim Eernisse, Development and Marketing Manager, Grand Valley State University, 301 W. Fulton, Grand Rapids MI 49504.

Entertainment has been secured and the Patriot Guard Riders, along with the American Legion Riders are holding a Motorcycle Rally, prior to the gates opening at 5:30. Check out the link on their website to participate or line the streets.

Fliers are available to print from the website and post in the community. I encourage everyone to help us get the word out, as well as follow LZ Michigan on Twitter and Facebook. A press conference is scheduled for the 1st week of May. Get involved and be a part of this historical event to finally give our Vietnam Veterans the long overdue "WELCOME HOME".

GRAND RAPIDS HOME FOR VETERANS

Our booth for Carnival on **July 31st** at Grand Rapids Home for Veterans has been reserved. If you have never attended Carnival, I encourage you to be there this year and see how much it means to the residents. We will be in the same proximity as last year. Carnival takes place from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. We get there by 9:30 AM to get our booth set up and decorated. Carnival set up help is needed on July 30th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. Please call Sonya at 447-9978 if you would like to participate in any of the events posted in our newsletters.

May 26th – flag placing at cemetery 6:00 -6:30 PM, volunteers be there by 4:30 PM

May 30th – Memorial Day Service at Band shell at 2:00 PM

May 31st – Memorial Day parade in Walker, MI

Thank you for all you do for our veterans.

Sonya VanValkenburg,
Community Service, Veterans & Family
Support, VFW National Home, Hospital
Chairperson

LEGISLATIVE/PAC

I encourage you to continue contacting Senators Levin and Stabenow and Congressman Hoekstra concerning the Priorities and Goals for this year. We have talked about the importance of VA Health Care, Benefits and Compensation, Military Quality of Life, Veterans Employment, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs but we cannot let down the pressure until all the priorities and goals have been met.

Congress Passes Key Health Care Package:

The House and the Senate gave final approval to VFW-supported legislation to improve women veteran health care services and expand caregiver assistance. The bill now awaits the President's signature. **S. 1963, *The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act***, will:

Improve the health care services provided to female veterans at VA, to include establishing a childcare pilot program, providing seven days of post delivery care to newborns, and training mental health professionals who care for women veterans affected by military sexual trauma.

The bill also expands two support programs for caregivers of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and another for caregivers of other veterans. Both groups would be eligible for training and education assistance, counseling and mental health services, and respite care. Caregivers of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans will also be eligible for lodging and subsistence payments when accompanying patients on medical visits.

Other provisions in the bill include improving rural health care services through community providers and Health and Human Services, prohibiting VA from collecting copayments from catastrophically-injured veterans, and enhancing homeless programs and initiatives.

VFW Supports Bipartisan Veterans Jobs

Bill: The VFW backed a bipartisan jobs bill introduced Wednesday by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) to help ease the rampant unemployment rate among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. According to the Department of Labor, there are more than 1.1 million unemployed veterans, a quarter-million of whom are Iraq and Afghanistan veterans,

with unemployment rates of 30.2 percent for age 24 and younger, and 17.9 percent for ages 25 to 34. The national unemployment average is just below 10 percent. "The nation's economy is showing signs of improvement, but the unemployment rate of current war veterans is accelerating in the wrong direction," said VFW National Commander Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., who is very supportive of Murray's bill, S. 3234, because it would expand counseling, training and placement services, as well as entrepreneurial opportunities, because veterans hire veterans.

SBA Expands Vets Outreach Centers:

The Small Business Administration announced the opening of eight new Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) to provide entrepreneurial development services to eligible veterans and reservists. Services provided by the VBOCs include outreach, long and short-term business training, counseling, direct referral, entrepreneurial education and access to capital. For the SBA press release and outreach locations, go to http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/news_release_10-14.pdf.

Thank you for contacting our Senators and Congressmen to encourage their support of bills that support our veterans.

Kathie Oakes
Legislative/PAC Chairperson