



THE GRAF-O'HARA MESSENGER

3230 S. WAGNER ROAD PO BOX 2509, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106
(Between Ann Arbor and Saline)
Meetings – 2nd Monday Each Month at 8:00PM

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Commander's Message

Well the residue of winter is almost behind us and spring is almost upon us. For those of us here in Michigan that is. I am proud to have been elected for a second term as Commander of Graf-O'Hara Post 423. I learned much in the first year and you members should have learned much about me. So, now let's see what we can do in the coming year to make our post even greater than it is.

It is great to see that we have recently picked up several younger members. Welcome to all. Post 423 is your post as much as it is us older members. So, I hope you get involved when you can and help make it grow.

We have just elected Margaret Gersh as our Jr. Vice Commander. That made Margaret our first, first line officer that our post has ever had. We have other female members like our wonderful Betty Dove, who has served as a Trustee and chairman for some of our operating committees. And we have other female members who also contribute. To all of us old guys, things are a changing, and I believe for the good. So, welcome Margaret to your new office.

John K, Commander

Our Post Chaplain Receives Special Recognition

Comrade Murl Eastman, our Graf-O'Hara V FW Post Chaplain, has recently received very special recognition. His picture is on the front page of the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center newsletter, *The Volunteer View*.

Chaplain Eastman was cited for his outstanding volunteer work at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center. He is the 2006 Male Volunteer of the Year. He deserves such recognition for his dedicated work. He does volunteer work there most every morning.



WWII Picnic 2006

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Ladies Auxiliary President's Message

I am very proud to be Auxiliary President again. Our Auxiliary is fortunate to have a great group of hard working members.

We recently adopted the 160th Army unit from Fort Campbell, Ky. We are going to make and design cards to send to those that are deployed in Iraq.

We also have started to include the patients on 8 West when doing our monthly bingos at the VA Medical Center. Patients on 8 West are not allowed off the ward, so we send the same treats that we give out at bingo up to them. This way we hope they won't feel forgotten. There are usually 16 patients in 8 West.

Sincerely, Marilyn West

2007 Post Election Results

I thank all the members who accepted their nominations for the different offices. Those who tossed their hat into the election ring were willing to step forward for our Post. I sincerely thank all of you. See the new roster of officers on another page.

Now, I hope all of you are able to make the installation of officers dinner on Sunday, May 20th at our Post. Be sure to sign up at the May meeting or call Marilyn West (734-904-5641) to attend this dinner. The installation dinner will probably begin about 2:00 with time for refreshments, then the installation and then the catered Dinner.

John Kinzinger
Commander

Spring Post Cleanup

Home Board Chairman Bob London announced at our April meeting that we plan to have an outside spring cleanup of our VFW Post grounds. We will begin work at 2:00 on Tuesday, May 1st. So, if you are up to working a little around our post with fellow comrades, come on out. If you have one, please bring a rake and shovel, just in case we need them.

John Kinzinger
Commander

(Eastman continued)

His primary function is to visit every new hospitalized Veteran, sometimes more than 20 in a day.

He greets them and checks to see if they need any comfort items or have other needs that he can help with. In doing this, Chaplain Eastman walks long distances each day visiting the new patients in their rooms.

As Post Commander, I am very proud to have Comrade Eastman as a member of our Graf-O'Hara Post. Our membership salutes you Comrade Eastman. Thank you for all you do for our hospitalized Veterans. Keep up the great work. – Commander John K

For those who are not aware John K has on the new Post baseball cap that has the VFW logo and Post 423 on one side of the logo and Ann Arbor on the other.

The new baseball caps can be purchased at the next Post meeting for \$10.00. Make sure you attend as these hats will be out of stock soon. If there is enough interest more will be ordered.



Commander K visiting Fred Bentz at Whitehall on March 7, 2007. Notice the two era of head covers being worn.



Post 423 VFW Baseball Cap. No, this will not replace the Official VFW Garrison cap. The baseball cap is to be worn to advertise our Post. Wear it with pride.

Walter Reed Hospital John K

Walter Reed is not falling down. If you believe the coverage by the mainstream media, you are made to think it is. As a person who visited a local man wounded in Iraq recovering at Walter Reed in March 2007, I can verify that it is not falling down. Pete Belaire and I drove all around the complex. We visited the room of the young local man recovering from his foot amputation. In his nice room, we found he had two double beds, two computers with Internet access, a large flat screen television on the wall and lots of storage space. He spoke very positively about his visit there. We visited with him while he did physical training in the main hospital. While he worked out, with an officer one on one, I walked around the hospital. I visited the Red Cross office and the Chaplain's office. I wanted to see where the ceilings were falling down or roofs caving in. I found nothing like that the two days we were at Walter Reed. We did not get into Building 18, which was specifically cited for problems. But that particular situation was painted across the entire Walter Reed, which is not true.

Did those who decided to use Building 18, which I am to understand was not in the best of shape, do wrong? Maybe, but I believe they were dealing with the decades-long status quo in Veterans Administration being under funded. I personally have been doing volunteer work at our Ann Arbor VA for 20 years. Currently I am the Chairman of the Executive Committee over the many hundreds of volunteers at our local VA Medical Center. We are very fortunate to have what is considered one of the best VA Medical Centers in our nation. However, even here it has been a constant struggle most every year with cuts necessary to meet harsh budget requirements. If there is one problem at the local VA, it is the need for additional staffing, especially nurses and specialty doctors.

In the lobby at the Walter Reed main hospital, there hanging on the wall are picture frames with photos of the hospital leadership. There were 4 or 5 picture frames without a photo. I assume they were the scapegoats for the most recent drive-by media focus of Walter Reed being in shambles.

I have a major problem with all of the do-gooder, finger-pointing politicians who have held office for the past several decades, like our local Senator Levin and Representative Dingell. They are the ones who should answer to the under funding of the VA system and any of the inadequate facilities and treatment our returning wounded may experience. But of course, once the Walter Reed story smeared that facility, the politicians were throwing more money at the VA. That is good, but the cause of the failings of our VA medical system belongs to the decades of politicians who did not fully fund the VA. This current wave of interest in the quality of VA medical care needs to move to full funding, which includes full spending of those funds, to take care of our American Veterans as they should be. The VA patients made the sacrifices and freedom payments that all others reap the rewards and take for granted. So, if you really want to help our hospitalized Veterans and Support Our Troops, confront your national politicians and ask them when our VA will be given full funding to properly take care of our Veterans' healthcare needs. It is our politicians who decide how much funding the VA receives, not the medical center staff members. So as I see it, it is up to you to

contact your national politicians and urge them to fully fund our VA medical system. They are the ones who have had the opportunity over the past decades to fully fund the VA. The status quo under-funded VA would have continued. As the smoke rises over the 'falling down Walter Reed,' it is clear who is really responsible. In advance, thank you for helping the push for full funding of the VA medical system.

John Kinzinger
Commander

Buddy Poppy Sales Days for Post 423 May 9, 10 & 11

Mark your calendars! There are so many Veteran's with emergency needs We need to replenish our Poppy Fund once again. I would like to see us turn out in record numbers this year to support our comrades in need. I will be passing around signup sheets at the April and May meetings for 2 hour shifts. In the past we have been at Penney's, Kmart, Hillers and Busch's in Ann Arbor. If you have any questions or would like to just call me to volunteer you may phone me at (734)429-0772 or Email me at: bobski9933@aol.com.

Comrade Bob Kwiecinski
Poppy Chairman

Proceeds from our poppy sales program go into a fund that our Post Chaplain uses for emergency purposes for local Veterans in need. Chaplain Eastman, 2006 VA Volunteer of the Year, wisely spends from this fund throughout the year. So, if you would like to help our Post make a difference for Veterans who could use some help, like two local troopers who were seriously wounded in Iraq, join in our effort.

For those of you unable to sell poppies, we have offered in the past a mailing means for you to share in this effort. In the past we mailed you a poppy along with a letter and return envelope. We had many problems with the poppies and envelopes getting chewed up in the mail machines and system. So, this year we decided we would send you a special note and envelope with this newsletter. If you desire you can help out by sending your tax deductible gift our Quartermaster Milton Davis. We feel this will work out better. Please add your stamp to save us more as a post. Thank you in advance for helping with this effort.

John Kinzinger
Commander

Installation of Officers Dinner, Sunday, May 20th

Each year we hold our installation of VFW Post and Auxiliary officers at a special dinner. At this time the new officers will be sworn into office and a fine meal is catered for all to enjoy. We will have hors d'oeuvres and refreshments at 5:00 and dinner at 6:00. We hope you are able to attend, so be sure to mark Sunday, May 20th on your calendar. ***If you plan to attend, please be sure to contact Marilyn West (734-904-5641) or Ann Liedel (734-428-8032) by May 15th*** for catering headcount purposes.

Each Post member and one guest are free, up to two additional attendees will be \$10 each.

John Kinzinger
Commander

Museum Display & Open House

In honor of Memorial Day the post will have an Open House and the Museum on display. The Post will be open May 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2007 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Come out and view the Military Memorabilia. This is one of the largest private collections in the Midwest. On Saturday the post will provide hot dogs and refreshments for visitors. So come on out to the post and visit friends and reminisce. We will be setting up the Museum on Thursday afternoon if you would like to come out and help. For more information call Milton at (734) 428-7874

Milton Davis
Quartermaster

New Members

We have added several new members in the past few months. Three of them are local young men injured in Iraq. Our post unanimously voted to make all of them VFW life members. It is an honor to have John Lockwood, Tim Lang and Jared Isbell (recently returned to his unit serving in Iraq) as members of our Graf-O'Hara VFW Post.

John Kinzinger
Commander

2007- 08 Post Election Results

I thank all the members who accepted their nominations for the different offices. Those who tossed their hat into the election ring were willing to step forward for our Post. I sincerely thank all of you. See the new roster of officers on the back page.

John Kinzinger
Commander

Calendar of Events

May 1st, 2:00, Post Spring cleanup (*see article page 1*)

May 2nd, 6:45pm. VA Bingo

May 10-12, Post Poppy Sales, (*see Buddy Poppy this page*).

May 20th, Installation of officers dinner, (*see Installation of Officers this page*).

May 25-28th, Museum Display and Open House, (*see Open House this page*)

June 16th, 5:00, District 6 Testimonial at our Post 423

August 5th 2nd Annual WWII Korean War Veterans Picnic (more to come in a later issue)



GRAF-O'HARA VFW Post 423
P.O. Box 2509
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Election Results for 2007-08

Commander: John Kinzinger	Post Surgeon: Dick Knight
Sr. Vice Commander: Frank Ciaravino	Post Advocate: Bob London
Jr. Vice Commander: Margaret Gersh	3 Year Trustee: Horace Frazier
Post Quartermaster: Milton Davis	County Council 3 Year Delegate: David 'Doc' Martinez
Post Chaplain: Murl Eastman	Home Board Members Elected: R. D. Scott, Pete Belaire & Bob London

Ladies Auxiliary Officers 2007-08

President: Marilyn West	Conductress: Mateline Lothamer
Sr. Vice President: Regina Liedel	Guard: Ivette David
Jr. Vice President: Sharon Kish	Historian: Regina Liedel
Chaplain: Peggy Foglia	1 Yr. Trustee: Ivette David
Treasurer: Ann Liedel	2 Yr. Trustee: Patrician Orta
	3 Yr. Trustee: Mateline Lothamer

The VFW Post is located at 3230 S. Wagner Road, between Ann Arbor and Saline, three miles south of Varsity Ford on Wagner Road. See you there!