

V.F.W. NEWS

Published Four Times a Year by Marion C. Cranefield Post 1318
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vol 20 No. 1 January/February/March 2020



Commander Joe Hines

Greetings members!

Happy New Year everyone! Hope this New Year brings joy, good health and good luck too all. Looking back on 2019 we should all feel good about what we as a Post accomplished. We were at 100% membership and achieved All-State Post status for the first time in over ten years. We were part of a successful effort in District 2 that saw District 2 achieve All-State District and All-American District for the first time in over ten years. Our Department of Wisconsin VFW achieved 100 % membership and was also recognized as an All-American Department for the first time in over twelve years. Our very own Post Quartermaster Gundel Metz served as the Department of Wisconsin VFW Commander for 2018-2019 and was recognized as an All-American VFW Department Commander. Gundel was also recognized as the Wisconsin Female Veteran of the Year this past November by Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers and Wisconsin Secretary of Veteran Affairs Mary Kolar in a large part because of these accomplishments. Our canteen operation under the leadership of our House Committee Chairman Ray Trent is doing great and is profitable for the second year in a row.

All these accomplishments were the result of team-work! The Post was recognized as an All-State Post because each person in their own way contributed. We achieved 100% membership because many of you brought new members into the Post or asked current members to renew their membership. We executed the veteran and community service events required for All-State because many of you stepped up to volunteer your time and effort. The events such as Ruck 22 Veterans Suicide Awareness, Badger Football Game Concession Stand, Shop with a Cop, Dogs and Hogs, Patriots Pen, and Voice of Democracy are examples of these types of events. Our initiation, participation, executions or contribution to these events show that we are not only active in promoting veteran issues and welfare but also a vital part of the Madison community in which we live.

We helped our District 2 efforts in achieving All-State Districts and All-American District mainly by achieving All-State as a Post. We also supported District 2 by attending District 2 meetings and events and by providing our Post home for a District 2 meeting. Our partnership with other District 2 Posts such

(continued on page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

February

- 31 Jan – 1 FEB VFW State Mid-Winter
- 3rd – Post Meeting – 6 pm
- 4th – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 5th – Badger Honor Flight – 6:00 pm
- 8th – Rolling Thunder – 10:00 am
- 12th – Madison Veterans Council 6:00 pm
- 28th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
- House Committee – 7:00 pm

March

- 3rd – Post Meeting – 6:00 pm
- 4th – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 5th – Badger Honor Flight – 6:00 pm
- 8th – Rolling Thunder – 10:00 am
- 11th – Madison Veterans Council 6:00 pm
- 24th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
- House Committee – 7:00 pm

April

- 1st – Badger Honor Flight – 6:00 pm
- 6th – Post meeting – 6:00 pm
- 7th – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 8th – Madison Veterans Council - 6:00 pm
- 9th – Badger Honor Flight – 6:00 pm
- 25th – VFW State Loyalty Day – noon
- Post 95th Anniversary – 6:00 pm
- 28th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
- House Committee – 7:00 pm

Post is closed on Mondays.

POST OFFICERS

Commander -----Joe Hines
 Sr. Vice Commander-----Carlos Tucker
 Jr. Vice Commander -----Edward Maiolo
 Quartermaster-----Gundel Metz
 Adjutant -----Eric Ravnikar
 Judge Advocate -----Bob Evans
 Chaplain -----Pat Morgan
 Surgeon -----Rose Doucette
 Trustee, 3yr -----John Kraak
 Trustee, 2yr -----Andy Lochner
 Trustee, 1yr -----Steve Eisenhauer
 Officer of the Day----- Elisabeth Harman
 Service Officer-----Brad Burt
 Guard -----Karl Kleemann
 Americanism/Loyalty Day---Bob Evans
 Community Activities -----Bob Evans
 Legislative Officer -----Joe Hines
 Public Relations -----Joe Hines
 Newsletter Editor-----Gundel Metz
 Web Administrator-----Andy Mansfield
 Voice of Democracy -----Joe Hines
 Youth Activities -----Joe Hines
 Historian-----
 House Committee ----- Bob Evans, Joe Hines,
 Carlos Tucker, Edward Maiolo, Ray Trent, John
 Kraak, Rose Doucette, Gundel Metz, Brad
 Thompson, and Greg Burr and Permanent Guest -
 Auxiliary Representative
 House Committee and Events Committee meets on
 the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

President -----Ellen Evans
 Sr. Vice -----Rose Doucette
 Jr. Vice -----Elizabeth Moore
 Treasurer -----Melissa Crary
 Conductress-----Gundel Metz
 Secretary -----Adajo Forester
 Trustee, 1 yr----- NinaSmithback
 Trustee, 2 yr-----Rose Doucette
 Trustee, 3 yr-----Elizabeth Moore
 Chaplain-----Sharon Crary
 Guard-----Nina Smithback
 Historian----- Rose Doucette

**Find us on
 FACEBOOK and
 TWITTER**

**Facebook:
 The VFW, Cranefield's
 Post 1318
 TWITTER@VFWPOST1318**

**WEB ADDRESS
 VFW1318.ORG**

Telephone: 608-255-5955

Email: vfw1318@hotmail.com

V.F.W. NEWS DEADLINE IS
 JANUARY 10TH. IF YOU HAVE A
 STORY, AN IDEA, A WEBSITE TO
 SHARE, PLEASE SEND THE
 INFORMATION IN AN EMAIL OR
 THROUGH THE POST OFFICE TO
 THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR.

V.F.W. NEWS OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

V.F.W. NEWS is the official publication of
 Cranefield VFW Post 1318. V.F.W. NEWS is
 published quarterly by V.F.W. Post 1318, 133 E.
 Lakeside St., Madison, WI 53715.

Annual membership in VFW Post 1318 includes
 subscription to the V.F.W. NEWS through email
 or postal mail.

**V.F.W. Memorial Hall
 133 E. Lakeside Street
 Madison, WI 53715**

Questions or comments about the Newsletter?
 E-mail: VFW1318@hotmail.com

POST MEETINGS:

First Monday of each month @ 6 p.m.

AUXILIARY MEETINGS:

First Tuesday of each month @ 6:30 p.m.

**DANE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE
 OFFICE**

210 Marting Luther King Jr. Blvd Rm 108
 Madison, WI 53703
 Phone: 608-266-4158 TDD 608-266-4157
 Legislative HOT-LINE 800-362-9696



CANTEEN

CANTEEN HOURS

Mondays – Closed
 Tuesday – Thursday: 11 am to 11 pm
 Friday & Saturday: 11 am to 12 pm
 Sunday: 11 am to 8 pm

Canteen Specials:

Tuesday is Taco Tuesday
 2 for \$4.00 or
 3 for \$5.00

Wednesday is \$4.00 hamburgers till 8:00
 pm

Thursday is \$.60 Wings

Friday is Cod Fish Sandwich or
 6 pieces coconut shrimp for
 \$6.00

Check the board for our daily specials.

Trivia every Thursday starting at: 7 pm

Karaoke every Friday starting at: 7 pm

Plus we have the weekly draw on
 Fridays.

WACKO – Every Sunday

Several times a month we also have Paint
 Night. Check with the Canteen for dates
 and times and any other activities.

Stop on by and meet our staff, Kelso,
 Kate, Myranda, Vikki, Nate, and Patrick.
 Plus Greg is there almost every morning
 cleaning up.

If anyone is interested in joining
 VFW Post 1318 color guard,
 please contact the Post at
VFW1318@hotmail.com. The
 Post Color Guard assists in flag
 or veteran related ceremonies.

(Commander's column continued)

as 8384 and 7591 in Madison, and 328 in Stoughton strengthen not only District 2 but also makes us all better. These Posts are our partners – not our competitors.

Our Post Quartermaster Gundel Metz would be the first person to tell you that she would not have achieved the milestones of All-American Department Commander and Wisconsin Female Veteran of the Year if it had not been for members of this Post, District 2 and Department. Many of you within the Post stepped up your efforts and allowed her to step away from her onerous Post duties and devote more time to her efforts at the State level. Gundel inspired many members throughout the state to step up their efforts to make the Department of Wisconsin VFW one of the best Department VFWs in the VFW. The Wisconsin VFW achieved 100% membership and accomplished many other benchmarks due to her leadership.

These accomplishments are all great but the real important things are the things we cannot measure by awards or some other metric. When you call a Post member you have not heard from in a while to make sure they are OK. When you visit a fellow Post member or another veteran that may be sick at home and cannot get out and they are lonely. When you visit a fellow veteran or Post member who is in the hospital to see how they are doing. These are the real important things that really mean so much to your fellow veterans. Many of you do this on a regular basis and that is the basis of what we are all about.

I would like to address the members who don't always attend meetings. It's Ok! Many times we get caught up in work and busy with families and cannot make meetings. That's understandable. The problem comes up when a member begins to feel self-conscious and stops coming to meetings altogether because they feel guilty, unwelcome or simply lost. When you're a member you are always welcome! You may not be able to contribute now, next month or next year but you are always welcome. I read an article in the VFW Magazine about a State Commander who in his early years became a VFW Life member after being discharged from the military. This member soon got married had children and got busy raising his family and became established in his career. He was a member in his local VFW Post but was not active for over 15 years. When he was able to he began to get more involved in his Post and gradually progressed through the Post leadership positions, and became his Post commander. He later became a District Commander and then a successful Department Commander. One of the things he revealed in the article is that he always felt welcomed at the VFW even when he was not as active as he would have liked. You are all welcome here.

Many times I appeal to members to get more involved. I say this for a lot of obvious reasons. It helps us as a Post and as the VFW in general. However, I really believe it makes us as individuals feel great. It works for me even though I still feel I am not doing enough. It can work for you too. Let's all have a great 2020.

OFFICER UPDATE: Commander Hines has appointed the following individuals: Officer of the Day: Elizabeth Harman; Service Officer: Brad Burt. Recently the Post elected Steve Eisenhauer as a one year Trustee. Glenn Flanigan had held the Service Officer and Trustee position, but he is currently working in Georgia. We hope that he gets back to Wisconsin soon. Thank you to Elizabeth and Brad for stepping up. If you are interested in taking a position within the Post, please speak with the Post Commander. We can always use more help and it can also be a way for you to learn more about the Post and the VFW.



AUXILIARY PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Hello Everyone,

This past fall and beginning of winter was very busy for our Auxiliary. We love it that way!

October, November and December had us doing special projects and preparation for Shop with a Cop, our annual highlight. We baked and decorated 240 cookies for all the kids and police officers who participated with Shop with A Cop. All enjoyed the cookies after having some pizza and fruit and vegetables.

One project was a collection of new socks to donate to the VA. We ended up with 275 pairs of socks! We were also so grateful for donations from the Post and the Canteen. An Auxiliary member also took up more blankets to King Veterans home. They were dropped off on Pearl Harbor Day.

A great success again this year was the Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser for Shop with a Cop. We were also able to contribute to their total by making and donating numerous gift baskets for the Silent Auction. The Shop with a Cop day was busy as always but is always rewarding.

It's hard to see so much work put into such a few words but that's how so many things are. We enjoy every minute of it and would love to have new people join us! We have no limit on how many people we can have so please give us a try!

The new year is just beginning and the Activities Committee is planning some great new things that we are looking forward to working with and attending. You will to! 2020 What A Year!!!! This is a great place to be.

As always if you know of someone who may be eligible for the Auxiliary please have them contact me or stop by the Post and leave a message with the bar tender.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Ellen Evans
President
Post 1318 Auxiliary

SHOP WITH A COP PICTURES



Left: Police officers serving the spaghetti for the Shop with a Copy fundraiser.



Right: Post Members Sharon Warsaw, Rose Doucette, and Auxiliary member Elizabeth Moore and families enjoying the spaghetti dinner



Police Officers, Sheriffs Deputy's and kids wrapping presents in Father Henry Hall after they went shopping at Target.



Left: Post Commander Joe Hines and Auxiliary President Ellen Evans present the officers of the Shop with a Cop organization with checks.



Santa and Mrs. Claus joined the group for a picture



Left: Post Commander Joe Hines present Post Memer Norra Stachel and treasurer of Shop with a Cop organization a check for \$500. This was at the Spaghetti Fundraiser.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Joseph Hines

I reported in my October column that the Wisconsin VFW supported state Assembly Bill 75. This bill states that a local government restriction on the discharge of a firearm may not be enforced if the discharge uses blank rounds and is used to provide military honors at the following:

- A funeral
- A cemetery on Memorial Day
- A cemetery on Veterans Day
- At veterans war memorial

Current law does allow local government to prohibit the discharge of blank ammunition at these activities. Current law in the City of Madison prohibits the discharge of blank ammunition at the above veteran/military related events. This restriction can be waived by the Mayor or Chief of Police.

This bill received bi-partisan approval of the Wisconsin Assembly. Recently I attended a public hearing on the senate version of this bill by the State Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. On behalf of the Wisconsin VFW I registered in favor of this bill along with several other state veterans' organizations. The committee recommended that this bill go in front of the State Senate for approval. The passage of any legislation including veteran's legislation is an onerous process. However this particular legislation is moving through the process quite well and I will keep you posted on future developments.

EVENTS COMMITTEE

by Bob Evans

The activities committee has been busy with planning a few events. Rolling Thunder did it's extravaganza in December. It was a successful event and was enjoyed by everyone who attended. Again Rolling Thunder has really been an asset to 1318. They meet every second Saturday at 10 at post 1318. Their mission is to advocate for the return of those missing in action as well as to provide support for local Veterans. In Nov they assisted a military family who was in distress with funding and assistance. They also made sure that the family had Christmas presents for everyone. This family has taken in several children, regardless of their present family financial Status. Mother is active Navy and has had to take a leave of absence as a result of her Marine husband's psychological condition,

As you may be aware our own Roger Boeker left a legacy to the Post. A portion of this legacy is funding for an annual dinner to be enjoyed by the Post membership. This event will be held on 25 April, invitations will be coming out shortly. Liz Harman has agreed to provide the core organization and planning for this event as she did an excellent job of this last year. She could use some help, especially the day of in decorating the 1318 hall where the event will be held.

Our house committee chairman Ray Trent who has been instrumental in the turnaround of the Canteen is constantly looking for events to enhance our Canteen support. Stop by on Thursdays for Trivia competition or on Sunday for Wacko, which has been increasingly popular.

Please remember that the Canteen is the primary income to support the Post, so stop by and visit our great staff and introduce yourself as a member of 1318.

POST DONATIONS

by Gundel Metz

The Post receives certain amounts of donated money every year for the Relief Fund that we in turn donate to various organizations or help Post members or veterans and their families with some assistance. One of our Donors wishes to remain anonymous. This November we also received a donation from an Irish Company, Glanbia. Glanbia has an office in Fitchburg and they wanted to donate to Wisconsin Veterans. One of our other annual donors is Roger Boeker. Roger before he passed set up a trust and the Post every year in turn receives an amount from that trust.

So far this year we have donated to the following: VFW National Unmet Needs, Shop with a Cop (twice), Rolling Thunder, Toys for Tots, 2nd Harvest Food Bank, Auxiliary Sock Drive, State VFW Unmet Needs Program, Hogs for Heroes, Wreath Across America, Reach a Child, Serving Those who Served, and 10th Mountain Division Association. These donations totaled \$6600. Plus we have money set aside for the following VFW Programs – Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year. We spent \$150 for Voice of Democracy and \$300 for Teacher of the Year programs (all Donations to National and State VFW). We will be presenting our Patriot Pen winners from the various schools this spring with their awards. We set aside \$900 to be presented.



Post Junior Vice Commander Edward Maiolo receive the \$1000 check from the representative of the Glanbia Company.

Santa Claus (AKA Gunnery Sergeant (RET) John Kraak), Mrs. Claus, and Post Quartermaster Gundel Metz presenting members of the Marine Corps Reserves a check for \$500 for Toys for Tots.



POST ANNIVERSARY DINNER

by Elisabeth Harman

Cranefield VFW Post 1318 celebrates **95 Years!**

Join us in a celebration for our members
and our community supporters on
Saturday April 25, 2020 at 6pm*

Invitations for this private event will be sent by 1 February, 2020. RSVPs will be required by 15 April, 2020. Please direct all inquiries for this event to the organizer: Liz Harman via email to guerraypaz1984@gmail.com.

*This event is sponsored by the Roger Boeker memorial fund

*If you are an active Post 1318 member and do not receive your invite by March 1 please contact: Liz Harman at guerraypaz1984@gmail.com or call the Post Quartermaster at 608-255-5955 to RSVP.

LEONARD GEARHART BOEKER

BY ROGER BOEKER

(EDITORS NOTE: The following story was sent to me before Roger passed away. He wanted me to know something about his father, who was a member of Post 1318. I felt that now was a good time to share with the membership.)

Technical Sergeant – 103rd Combat Engineers - September 1942 to August 1945
United States Army – 28th Infantry Division - Pennsylvania National Guard (Federalized)

Leonard Boeker was born in Menomonie, WI on October 26, 1915, the sixth child and son of German immigrants Gustav Gearhart Boeker and Mary Tietz Boeker. Lennie's father Gustav and brother Arthur worked at a piano factory in Menomonie that closed in 1922. Gustav took the train to Madison to look for work. He found adequate construction work in carpentry and moved the family to Madison. The family settled in the 300 block of West Dayton Street, now the Madison Fire Department headquarters.

At age 11, Lennie walked four miles across the Monona Bay railroad trestle, (no John Nolan Causeway in 1927) to what is now the South Towne Mall. He went to see Charles Lindbergh at the old Royal airport in August on Lindbergh's barnstorming tour after his Solo Flight to Paris from New York. He carried an eight foot cracked, wooden propeller home for a souvenir of the event. This stimulated a youthful hobby of model airplane construction. That dovetailed with his technical school interests in drafting and woodworking.

In tenth grade, Lennie left Madison Central High School to go to work as an apprentice carpenter with his master craftsman brother Arthur at Fritz Construction. One project was employment at the Baraboo munitions plant erection. Busses transported the workers daily from Madison to the plant facility. In 1941, Arthur and Leonard worked on the interior ceiling of the nave for the then new Bethel Lutheran Church. When Bethel Pastor Wee found Lennie was engaged to be married, Pastor Wee offered the couple to be the first pair to be married in the new church. But the old family church, Immanuel Lutheran, with German services would be the Boeker wedding venue. Lennie held a part time job drawing posters for the coming attractions at movie houses, long before the age of lithographs. Walt Disney would tour the theaters asking for the names of particularly good artists. Lennie got a telegram from Disney in Burbank offering him an illustrator's job.

As he became a journeyman carpenter, Lennie acquired a car and built a radio controlled model airplane. Looking for open space in which to fly his creation, he parked near Lake Mendota and directed the plane over the water. Lennie had not mastered knowledge of the strength of radio signals. The plane flew beyond the control of his auto dash-mounted radio and landed in an unknown region, lake or land. He quickly began work on another balsa wood model with a wing span of five feet and five inch balloon tires. But the wing and fuselage frames went uncovered and unpowered for decades. World War II began.

Lennie married Lucille May Slauson on June 13, 1941. Six months later there would be war. Lennie became the father of Roger Stephen Boeker in September 1942. Meanwhile he attempted to enlist in the Navy. As a journeyman carpenter, the Navy would give him a petty officer rating in the SeaBees, the construction battalion units. But Lennie's vision was deemed inferior to the standards of the USN. The Army, however, was much less persnickety. Lennie was drafted for August 1942. Lennie was given permission to report after the impending birth of his son. The day after the birth, Roger was baptized and Lennie began his military sojourn by going to Camp Grant near Rockford, IL. At Camp Grant, men from Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin would serve with him through training, then to and from the European Theater of WW II in the 28th Division. Physical, military and specialization training occurred in a succession of Army bases posts. In Missouri, Louisiana, Florida and Virginia, the Engineers of the 28th Division readied themselves for the crossing to England. Lennie's unit would travel on a Liberty Ship in a convoy that included the Queen Mary being used as a troop transport ship. At one point in crossing, canned peaches seemed to be the only rations available. As seasickness seized his section, Lennie gained a fierce hatred of peaches in any form. Decades later he would accuse his daughter-in-law of attempted murder when she served a peach cobbler.

(continued on page 10)

Leonard Boeker (continued from page 9)

In Great Britain they would stage the armies for the invasion of France. The 28th Division camped in Wales across the bay from Cornwall. Many troops were billeted in civilian houses, sometimes along with the owner/occupants. Lennie was housed with an older couple from London. They had been displaced to a summer home by the Blitz air raids. They became good friends. Shown a picture of infant son Roger, the couple would send a Christmas card and gift to that child until 1960. The physical and technical training continued through the actual invasion. Lennie told of one practice amphibious landing on the west coast of England. Bad weather cost the lives of some 700 soldiers in the landings, a secret kept for a half century after the war.

Rumors regarding the actual invasion date floated about constantly. The 28th was stationed alongside the 29th Division. Both divisions being infantry outfits, they would go into battle sequentially. On June 6, 1944, the 28th awoke to find the sky filled with southbound bombers and the 29th Division had disappeared. Lennie's best pal was a firebrand Irishman. John Finn shook his fist at the sky and shouted, "YOU SONS OF BITCHES WENT WITHOUT US!" Then Finn put on his pack, grabbed his rifle and headed for the docks to hitch a ride to the fight. He was turned back and went with Lennie through Europe to Luxembourg and capture by the Germans. The engineers of the 28th landed at Normandy on D+4, June 10th.

The 103rd Engineers preceded the infantry in Europe to clear the hedge rows of France, break through barbed wire barriers with Bangalore mines, and to provide sapper support in attacking fixed entrenchments. Omar Bradley had moved his Army Headquarters to the continent and wanted a mobile office. He called for the "best damn carpenter in the outfit" to remodel a train car into his office. Lennie was summoned and carefully nailed walnut paneling to the rail car interior. When finished, an artillery barrage shook all the paneling off the walls of the car. Lennie went back and screwed down the wall paneling. [This mobile office was depicted in the movie "Patton" in the scene of Bradley meeting Patton during the Western Europe assault]

A frequent assignment was to build prefabricated Bailey Bridges to cross rivers. Having completed a particularly arduous task, Lennie's Lieutenant said about the project, "Rome wasn't built in day...but Boeker wasn't the foreman!" When Paris was liberated, the 28th Division marched 24 abreast through the Arc de Triomphe and down the Champs Elysee. An American three cent stamp used the picture of the front ranks of the men marching toward the camera with the Arch behind them and B-17s overhead. At reunions decades later, 103rd survivors would debate the names of the men in the first few ranks of the enlarged picture.

Fighting continued to the Sauer River that separated Luxembourg from Germany. The Engineers were getting ready to bridge the river at Hosingen, Luxembourg on December 15, 1944. The Battle of the Bulge began the next day. The 103rd and much of its 28th Division were surrounded, beaten or by-passed by the German attack. When the engineers ran out of ammunition, they broke down their rifles and threw the pieces down a well. They surrendered on the third day. The German captors had the U.S. engineers form ranks. A transport truck had its rear canvass raised to reveal a machine gun. George Foster of Oxon Hill, MD said to Lennie standing beside him, "Turn your head – they're going to shoot us". Then a machine gun burst came that killed several G.I.s and wounded a few more. The German officer jumped on the truck and stopped the shooting. The machine gunners were barely teenagers and were not proficient with the weapon.

The prisoners were assembled from various units and marched into Germany to a railhead east of Bitburg. About 3,000 American POWs were loaded onto cattle cars to be sent to camps away from the front. The train was moving east on Christmas Eve when the 8th U.S. Army Air Force bombed the train. About 300 men were killed that night. Lennie took a lot of shrapnel from the explosions. A cloud of what we now call PTSD followed my Father every Christmas Eve the remaining 44 years of his life. He also carried 13 pieces of shrapnel near his spine, too close to remove.

At the end of the train trip, the POWs were segregated into groups of officers, NCOs and enlisted men. For the first time since the induction Camp Grant, Finn (a private) and Lennie (a sergeant) would be separated. Lennie was sent to Stalag 4B near Leipzig. This camp was half Americans and half Russians. The allies would be separated by a tall chain link fence. Lennie's camp memories were revived years later by the movie "Stalag 13" and the TV show "Hogan's Heroes". Those shows seemed to have authentic recreations of the stalag buildings and grounds.

Camp rations were a morning and evening cup of watery soup, perhaps a small piece of potato, and one lump of coal per man per day. The coal lump was for heating and/or cooking. A picture of Lennie's home made bellows to magnify the heat value of the coal is shown in his war book. The picture was made with a pin hole shoe box camera he

(continued on page 11)

Leonard Boeker (continued from page 10)

made. Lennie would acquire film from German guards in exchange for colored pencil portraits of the guard's family pictures. Some of those drawings were undelivered when Lennie escaped and those drawings appear in his war book.

During his stay in the stalag from December to early April, Lennie had a tooth infection. Given the malnutrition and exposure in the coldest European winter in a century, the tooth ailment could be fatal. Polish Americans were able to communicate with the Russians through the wire. The Rusky's had a dentist in their outfit and his daughter was his dental assistant. Lennie met the Soviet dentist at the fence. The dentist pulled the tooth without equipment and with no pain using mysterious nerve pressure points.

At the end of March, two rumors went through the stalag. First, Hitler had ordered that all the prisoners be shot; second, the Russians were coming and they were going to shoot all the prisoners. Not long after that Lennie noticed a Russian cutting through the fence with a pliers. Lennie assumed the guard towers would begin firing at everything in the yard. He ran for the barracks. When no shooting occurred, he turned back to see the Russian running across the outer field. Lennie followed the Russian through the hole and into the woods. Lennie's hand drawn U.S. flag on an arm band to show him as an ally is in his war book. He had a scrape with a Soviet unit but was saved by a French war correspondent and he pointed Lennie toward U.S. troops. When repatriated, Lennie was sent to the 'cigarette' repatriation camps [Camps Camel, Luck Strike, etc.] at LeHavre, France.

General Eisenhower came through looking for front line intelligence. Lennie was selected to answer Ike's questions. A First Sergeant drilled Tech Sergeant Lennie Boeker for hours as to the complex procedure how to approach the five-star general. When called, Lennie followed instructions marching through the door and Ike said, "At ease soldier, have a seat". When Ike had reviewed conditions in the prison camps, he asked, "What can I do for you?" Lennie fumbled through his uniform for paper. All he could find was an inch by two inch picture of his wife Lucille. He asked Ike to sign the back of the photo, which Ike did. That signature is shown, "Dwight D. Eisenhower", while wife Lucille's picture is face down.

Sgt. Boeker returned to the U.S. the way he went to Europe, on a Liberty ship. He arrived in New York City in June 1945. He got a phone call through to his wife announcing his imminent arrival in Madison. Lennie arrived by train at the old Chicago, Milwaukee & Northwestern depot, now the Madison Gas & Electric headquarters at East Wilson and Blair Streets. He stayed in Madison a week. Having lost weight down to about 100 pounds, Lennie reported to the Army Hospital in Houston, TX for rehabilitation. He remained there for about three months before discharge and return to Madison.

In civilian life, Lennie Boeker would pursue a career in carpentry and construction. His creations from concept to completion included Storybook Gardens and Hoffman House Restaurants. The Ishnala Restaurant in Lake Delton was capstone achievement. Frank Lloyd Wright visited Ishnala and did not criticize it [backhanded high praise]. A Swedish tourist, visiting Storybook Gardens, requested a talk with Lennie. The Swede offered to bring Lennie to Stockholm for a year to remodel one floor of seven department stores in American Western motif.

Lennie Boeker died in 1989 from a heart condition related to the exposure and malnutrition suffered in prison camp. He was a continuous member of VFW 1318, gold card 50 year member of the Carpenter's Union, and a life long communicant member of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Lennie belonged to the 28th Division Association and attended reunions throughout the Middle West.

These events were overheard by a young boy eavesdropping on the conversations of relatives who were combat veterans. Many of these talks were with Lennie's five brothers-in-law, all of whom were fliers and served in Europe. In one case, the conversation with George Foster was held apart from Lennie in a conversation at Foster's Maryland home.

In 1984 and 1985, John Finn, Lennie Boeker and their wives visited Europe, staying a week each time in Hosingen, Luxembourg. The town treated them like heroes. They had created a small museum about their liberation by the 28th Division. On their last day in Hosingen, a Sunday, they attended the Catholic services where they were praised by the priest in his homily. After the service, a band concert was held in the adjacent park. All homes in town displayed the U.S. flag and the final song was the "Star Spangled Banner".

VFW Post 1318
133 E Lakeside Street
Madison, WI 53715

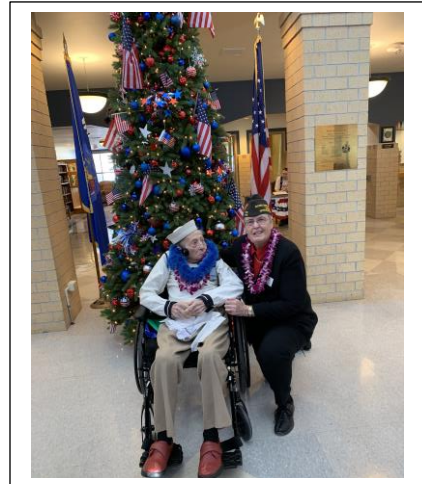
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MEMBER UPDATE



Left: Post Quartermaster Gundel Metz with State Commander Don Lynch at the Governors Reception.

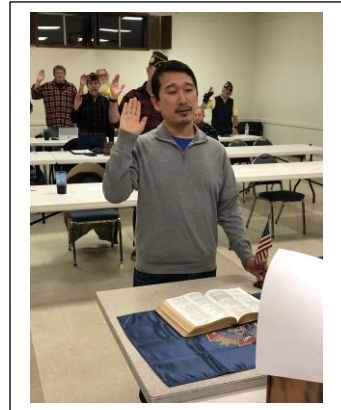
Right: Gundel Metz, National Council Member, with Pearl Harbor survivor Chuck Davis at the Veterans Home in King.



Post Member and Korean War Veteran Stan Hershleder.



Post members Mark Herrmann, Gundel Metz, William H. Harris (new member) and Bill Muether. William Harris is a Gunnery Sergeant for Navy ROTC. Bill Muethers son was commissioned as a Navy officer on day of the picture.



Post newest member Kyong Clawson taking the Membership Obligation

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY

Please notify the Post if you have moved or have a new email address so that we can keep you informed and plugged into Post Activities

Please send your email address to the Quartermaster so we can send you the Newsletter electronically. Thanks.
vfw1318@hotmail.com