



The High Desert BUGLE



May / June 2014

**American Legion Post 56, Auxiliary Unit 56, & SAL Squadron 56
PO Box 2848, Carson City, Nevada 89702**

Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM,
Veterans Memorial Hall at the corner of 2nd and Curry Street, Carson City.

Our next meeting will be held on May 8th at 6:30 PM.

Visit our website at <http://american-legion-post56-nv.us/>

POST 56 OFFICERS

Commander	Leon Werner	265-2621
1 st Vice Commander	Rick Kaspar	684-9757
2 nd Vice Commander	Ben Casad	335-6927
Adjutant	John Dickinson	246-4024
Finance Officer	Marco Manor	267-4794
Chaplain	Katherine Baran	888-2088
Sgt-at-Arms	TJ Dennington	420-0151
Historian	Vacant	

UNIT 56 OFFICERS

President	Barbara Dickinson	246-4024
1 st Vice President	Vacant	
2 nd Vice President	Vacant	
Secretary	Irma Manor	267-4794
Treasurer	Christine St. Leger-Barter	783-0502
Chaplain	Betty Sherwood	575-6219
Sgt-at-Arms	Dorothy Bolander	883-0345
Historian	Kendra Sherwood	575-6219

SQUADRON 56 OFFICERS

Commander	Matthew Sherwood	575-6219
1 st Vice Commander	Jack Ralph	882-8269
Adjutant	Marco Manor	267-4794

Commanders Comments

Comrades,

This will be my last newsletter article as your Commander. I would like to thank each of you for your support during my time as your Commander, and hope that you will give the same support to your new Commander. It was an honor to serve.

As veterans we are the people that have served our country to give it the blessings of freedom and justice. As American Legion members we are here to support those military members, and families that are still making the sacrifice to keep our country free.

Paid Up for Life Membership Program. It ensures you receive all the benefits of American Legion membership for life. Life time membership is paid either in one payment giving you an immediate savings – or charged to your credit card in 12 equal monthly payments. Once you have fulfilled your membership dues you will never receive another bill from the American Legion. Go to www.Americanlegion.org/join/PUFL to get your personalized paid up for life offer. If you need more information on Paid Up For Life membership please contact National American Legion's customer service at (800) 433-3318 (Monday through Friday).

Have you been the victim of a financial scam? Is a credit card company charging you too much interest? Are you paying extra for the refinanced mortgage? If so you may want to contact the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). If you are a service member or veteran the CFPB office of service Members Affairs is especially interested in helping to solve your financial problems. Major consumer financial issues that CFPB and OSA are currently monitoring include:

Pension advance benefits: An offer to pay military retirees a lump sum payment in return for their monthly retirement benefits. These advances might amount to only pennies on the dollar and are reported to carry interest rates from 27 to 106 percent.

GI Bill education benefits: Some institutions of higher education are aggressively marketing themselves to student veterans and their families encouraging them to use expensive private loans to pay for tuition and fees not covered by the GI Bill.

Aid and Attendance benefits: Some individuals and companies use this benefit as a hook to sell services offering help in obtaining this VA benefit for severely disabled veterans who are eligible. But they first require the customer to sign up for financial services, then move the client's assets into irrevocable trust in order to qualify for those services (pension--poaching).

Mortgage Advertisements: Many advertisements from mortgage lenders seem to be directed at veterans promising special deals or implying VA approval. Others use the lure of a no-payment reverse mortgage to troll for older veterans and military retirees who are desperate to remain in their homes.

When contacted by phone you always have the right to tell the scammer to cease and desist. You can also request paperwork from the call. If they are legitimate, they'll send paperwork. Any threats of arrest, of felony fraud charges are strictly illegal. The number one thing that veterans and service members should do is to check out your credit report --it's free. We just want people to stop and think for a moment before they get scammed. Call toll free at (885) 411-2372.

The American Legion serving past and present and future Veterans.

For God and Country
Leon Werner
Commander High Desert Post 56

2nd Vice Commanders Report

A busy time since the last report. The most exciting event being the annual Air Force baseball team BBQ. I was able to watch a close game into the third inning. I left after a nice double play by the cadets to go help Marco, Irma, Leon and Donna with the BBQ. Katherine brought the BBQ and the cadets brought their appetites, which were as large as the steaks and potatoes. I was impressed by the politeness and friendliness of the players, coaches and families. It was a great afternoon and evening. The team and coaches were invited and will return next year.

The picnic plans have been agreed on and settled, with all agreed to having the best picnic ever at James Lee Park. Without going into all the details, Mills Park was going to be too expensive and/or too much paperwork. With the Post agreement this year's picnic to beat the heat will start a little earlier. I am hoping we can have extra cover if needed and possibly a water mister. Music and games with prizes. The games being for the young as well as the young at heart. Horseshoes, bocce ball, lawn darts, badminton and of course the water balloon toss.

As you will see from the picnic invitation below, I would like to encourage those distant members of our Post who have never met us to plan on taking their time or vacation and joining us for possibly both the meeting Thursday and the picnic Saturday. At least the picnic.

Two topics came up that I have thought of for several months and had the opportunity to discuss. First, keeping the tables full at our meetings and second, having a guest speaker or entertainment more regularly at our meetings. This can be further discussed at our next meeting.

We need to be thinking of members to take the positions of finance officer and adjutant, as Marco and John have stated this will be their last year. Both positions will require working with Marco and John prior to taking over the position.

As a Post we have much to think about and a lot to do.

For God and Country.
Ben Casad
2nd Vice Commander

Post 56 PICNIC Saturday, AUGUST 16, 2014

The High Desert Post 56 picnic is scheduled for Saturday, August 16, at James Lee Park in Carson City, Nevada.

The date is set. As of this early posting some times and events within the day may change.

I would like to invite all those members of our Post from across the country to consider meeting your fellow Post members and enjoying a picnic and the scenic Eastern Sierra Mountain region and the activities and sights offered. Three large lakes; Tahoe, Topaz and Pyramid, hiking, biking, museums all that the Carson/Reno/Tahoe area has to offer.

I would like to have the games and socializing start in the earlier part of the morning with the BBQ starting at 11:00 and everyone enjoying as much of the afternoon as possible.

Games and prizes: Horseshoes, Bocce ball, lawn darts, badminton, and possibly croquet.

We will have music this year. Dancing in the park is an option.

The theme is to have fun and enjoy our friends and families.

For God and Country.
Ben Casad
2nd Vice Commander

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 08 May: Post 56/Unit 56 Member Meeting – 6:30 PM
- 11 May: Mother's Day
- 17 May: Armed Forces Day
- 21 May: Post 56 Executive Board Meeting – 6:00 PM
- 26 May: Memorial Day
- 12 June: Post 56/Unit 56 Member Meeting – 6:30 PM
- 14 June: Flag Day
- 15 June: Father's Day
- 21 June: First Day of Summer
- 25 June: Post 56 Executive Board Meeting – 6:00 PM

The 'greater meaning' of Memorial Day

By National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger - May 1, 2014



Ronald Reagan stood at an outdoor lectern in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1984, and delivered one of the most memorable speeches of his presidency. "Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war."

Many of those heroes lay beneath the crosses of the Normandy American Cemetery, others at Arlington, or in their hometowns. Millions more survived the war and raised their families under the peace and freedom they and their fallen comrades fought so hard to achieve.

Following the D-Day landings 70 years ago, thousands made the supreme sacrifice for our freedom. One was Pvt. Joe Gandara of Santa Monica, Calif., who voluntarily advanced alone and destroyed three enemy machine guns before he was fatally wounded on June 9, 1944, in Amfreville, France. He was 20. The young paratrooper was denied the opportunity to raise a family in the free world he helped ensure. On March 18, 2014, Gandara's 69-year-old niece received the Medal of Honor from President Obama on his behalf.

It was a ceremony I will never forget. Gandara and 23 other Army veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam were at long last recognized for heroic actions that cost many of them their lives, but forever earned their place in history as recipients of the nation's highest military award. And those who died fighting are forever young in the memories of loved ones.

This is why Memorial Day is so important. We don't just honor those who participated in the most hellacious firefights. We honor the more than 1 million men and women who lost their lives defending America in wars from the Revolution to the global war on terrorism – people like Marine Sgt. William Stacey, who was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed by an IED blast while walking patrol in Helmand province on Jan. 23, 2012. Like many who go to war, Stacey left a letter behind to be read “just in case” something happened to him:

My death did not change the world. It may be tough for you to justify its meaning at all. But there is a greater meaning to it. Perhaps I did not change the world. But there will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home country to come to his. And this child will learn in the new schools that have been built. He will walk his streets not worried about whether or not his leader's henchmen are going to come and kidnap him. He will grow into a fine man who will pursue every opportunity his heart could desire. He will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long. If my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change this world, then I know that it was all worth it.

Like all who fell fighting in the primes of their lives, Stacey is also forever young, to be remembered this Memorial Day and many to come for bestowing on all of us the gift of freedom.

Sixty Years of Freedom

By Matt Grills - May 1, 2014

On the eve of their last official gathering, Korean War ex-POWs reflect on their time in captivity – and the lives they built at home.



On July 27, the 61st anniversary of the armistice that ended full-scale hostilities and paved the way for their release, ex-POWs of the Korean War will gather for what's likely to be their final reunion in Louisville, Ky.

They first met in the city in 1976.

"It began with what I guess you would call loneliness," says Bill Norwood, the group's founder and president. "I needed to talk to some of these guys. For one thing, there's a lot of mysteries. The enemy would come in at night, take someone away and you'd never see him again. I needed to know some of this stuff."

He searched for two years and found 12 former prisoners. One man knew another, that man knew somebody else, and it grew from there.

Numbers are declining as they pass away, but the Korean War Ex-POW Association has members in the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia, Turkey, Canada and South Africa.

Last year, 72 men and their families traveled to Washington, D.C., for the 60th anniversary of their release. They attended ceremonies honoring the service of Korean War veterans and remembered the fallen at their national memorial.

But the most personal tributes, the most wrenching reminiscences, happened in huddled groups at dinner tables and in the hotel lobby, where the ex-POWs talked of those who didn't survive captivity or the marches to prison camps.

"This has been a form of therapy for me," Norwood says.

Philip O'Brien of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) has attended the group's reunions since 1996. A senior analyst who specializes in the Korean War, his focus is to gather information on missing U.S. servicemen and, if possible, recover their remains. He's become like family to the ex-POWs, able to tell them far more about the routes they took and where they stayed than they knew at the time.

Of the 4,500 Americans or so who returned from captivity, O'Brien and DPMO have spoken to about 700, "which is more than half the surviving population ... and the bell curve is going to fall off pretty rapidly from here."

He adds, "I know there are people here I will never see again because they will not live to the next reunion. There's a certain sadness to it. It's the greatest generation all over again."

BILL NORWOOD

For Bill Norwood, enlisting was a matter of economics.

His dad died when he was 12, his mother and two siblings needed support, and the Army made an allotment for dependents. A country boy from east Tennessee, he headed to Fort Jackson, S.C., and then Fort Lewis, Wash., for basic training when he came of age.

"After I got there, I found that's where I really belonged," he says. "I had clothes to wear, food to eat, a place to sleep, and I was happy."

Captivity took all that away.

Assigned to the 24th Infantry Division, Norwood arrived in Korea in September 1950. Though he had a rifleman's MOS, he was assigned to drive trucks. "I thought, 'This is a great job, back where there's no danger,'" he recalls. "That didn't work out."

Six months later, on April 25, 1951, Norwood was caught in an ambush. He held on for most of a day, and made it across a rice paddy and into the woods with another soldier. They traveled that night, not even sure if they were headed south. They stopped to rest and woke up to a Chinese bayonet.

"I look at being captured not as an act of heroism or cowardice," he says. "It's just an act of 'Do you want to live another minute? Another hour?'"

For a moment, fear left him. "All of a sudden the surroundings became very quiet. I saw a bright shining light in front of me, and as I walked along, I couldn't feel the pain. It was so strange. I saw my mother, hanging clothes on the line, smiling and waving at me, and that calmed me. I assumed I'd be killed, and I wasn't frightened anymore.

"Then I got back to reality, and I realized I was in a world of trouble."

The march from the 38th Parallel to the camp at Ch'ang-Song took four months and covered hundreds of miles. Along the way, the prisoners' ranks thinned for lack of food and water.

"If you've ever been thirsty – I mean really, really thirsty – it's the most uncomfortable feeling," he says. "Hunger kind of goes away, but thirst just keeps increasing."

Norwood managed to stay on his feet, but once at camp, he grew so ill that guards dispatched him to a hut called the "death house." There, he put his head between his knees and waited for the end.

Dave Dawson, a fellow Tennessean, saved his life.

"You want to sit here and die?" he told Norwood. "These people don't care. It's just a mouth they don't have to feed. If you'll help yourself, I'll help you, but if not, I'm not going to waste my time."

The camp cook, Dawson brought him charcoal from the bottoms of kitchen pots to help control diarrhea caused by dysentery, and in two weeks, Norwood was up and about.

Together they survived two years as POWs, and when buzz started to build that their release was near, Norwood and Dawson agreed they wouldn't react when their captors announced the armistice. "We weren't going to give them the pleasure of seeing us happy," he says.

They were taken in groups to Freedom Village at the DMZ, and Norwood recalls being there three days – "the longest three days of my life." At last, on Aug. 15, 1953, his name was called from a roster. He was turned over to U.S. officials, given a shower and sprayed with DDT. He returned to the United States on the same ship that took him to war: the *Gen. M.C. Meigs*.

His mother had only recently learned he was alive. Shortly after Norwood's capture, she received a telegram stating that he was missing in action. Nearly two years passed before she learned he was in captivity, from one of the few letters he'd been allowed to write.

Norwood married Elizabeth, the neighbor of a fellow prisoner, and they had a son and daughter. Neither child knew of his POW experience until they were in high school.

For a long time, he didn't talk much about Korea to anyone. Occasionally it came up during a hunting or fishing trip with Dawson, but the memories were raw even 20 years later.

Once again, Norwood finds himself in thinning ranks. He tells his story now for those who didn't come home.

"One of my main concerns is keeping alive the memory of those we left behind," he says. "I fly the POW/MIA flag. I'm often asked, 'Is Bill flying a pirate flag?' That really hurts. These were my closest friends and my buddies, and I can't ignore them. I've got to keep their memory alive."

FRANKLIN "JACK" CHAPMAN

After his release from captivity, Jack Chapman started jotting down names and anything else he could remember about the men at his POW camps. Like so many others, he says he survived because of his fellow prisoners.

"I didn't want to forget these guys because they helped take care of me," he says. "I'm really thankful for what they did."

After landings at Inchon and Iwon, Chapman's platoon was assigned to Task Force Drysdale, sent to reinforce the garrison at Hagaru-ri at the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir. In two days of fighting, he was wounded seven times. A shot to the head knocked him out.

On the evening of Nov. 30, 1950, Chapman regained consciousness. He was in a Korean hut with other troops. They'd been captured by the Chinese.

A U.S. Marine and British Royal Marine half-carried, half-dragged Chapman on a 19-day march to a temporary camp. On the way, he met Charlie Harrison, a Marine who had been a prisoner of the Japanese for 45 months during World War II.

Harrison asked Chapman how many pairs of socks he was wearing. "Two," he replied. Harrison told him to keep one pair under his arms, switching every time they stopped.

In a frigid Korean winter, "that saved my feet," he says.

Chapman paid these kindnesses forward. One man lost his sight, and Chapman led him to the latrine and on work details. Another lost his feet to frostbite, and Chapman helped make wooden carts so he could get around.

Postwar life was rough. The Army offered no help, Chapman failed a re-enlistment exam, and he struggled to keep up with his job.

He felt ashamed. He went to a bar with his uncle and a couple of friends, and the bartender asked where Chapman had been lately. "My uncle says, 'He was a POW in Korea.' The bartender says, 'Oh, he was one of those cowards.'

I thought my uncle was going to go across that bar. We had to get him out of there."

The Air Force took Chapman, and he served 15 years. He was nearly kicked out for fighting, but a doctor persuaded him to turn his life around. He got an education and worked 21 years as a college police chief in Washington State.

In 1964, Chapman finally asked a doctor about his persistent headaches. An X-ray revealed a bullet in his head. Once it was removed, he felt like a new man.

FRED LIDDELL

When Fred Liddell was young, he dreamed of a long line of people marching and, off to the side, a man watching them from atop a gray horse.

The day Liddell marched into Ch'ang-Song, that's exactly what he saw. The man on the horse was the commander of all the POW camps.

The journey had been miserable, and Liddell had seen too much death. At the Suan mining camp, he and another sergeant, Obie Wickersham, had buried 36-year-old Pat Arthur, who earned the Silver Star for gallantry at Guadalcanal and was affectionately known as "Pop." Malaria and malnutrition took Arthur's life.

Liddell also saw abuse. For trivial offenses, POWs might be put in wooden cages, forced to sit with their legs straight.

On one occasion, Liddell was punished and made to stand against a wall with his arms out. Suddenly, his friend Clarence Young – a U.S. soldier of Chinese descent – was thrown through a door down the hall.

"They stick him right next to me," Liddell says. "Now I've got somebody where I can put my arm down on his head. Finally the guard goes to sleep and I ask Clarence what he got all mad about. He says, 'I told them the only smart thing my grandma ever did was get the hell out of China.' They were trying to recruit him to join their army, but he wouldn't do it."

Liddell left the Army on Oct. 28, 1953, and returned to his wife and 2-year-old daughter. He went to work for the telephone company in Eugene, Ore., on Nov. 5. When the company offered him stock shares, he recalled how his Chinese captors had lectured POWs on how capitalism was cheating the American people.

"I thought if the Chinese hated Wall Street so much, it must be good," he says. "Now I've got all kinds of shares in AT&T that built up and split and all that. In a lot of ways, the Chinese did me some good."

In 2009, Liddell and Wickersham were notified that Arthur's remains had been recovered and identified, thanks in part to a dog tag Liddell hid on the body. Five years ago this month, they traveled to Arlington to finally lay their friend to rest in U.S. soil.

POST 56 DUES ARE STILL ONLY \$25.00 PER YEAR.



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