



**American Legion Post 639  
(Vietnam War Memorial)  
Springfield, Missouri**

**MARCH 2023**



VETERAN

U.S. ARMY

U.S.



## Post 639 Commander



The trees are looking like they could bud out anytime. So that means Spring will be upon us soon. That means Post 639 is already prepping for our busy outdoor venue event season. Adam is working on some gravel for areas that need it, including our camper area. Any help is appreciated with that. Also I want to thank everyone who has **NOT** been driving on and parking in our Shockley Stage area. But with that being said, a few have started parking in our employee/volunteers/Post office spaces at the East end of the building, please leave this open for folks listed previously. Thank you.

We've definitely had great community outreach throughout Fall and Winter. Last month at E-board we were able to present checks to Serenity Honors, Coach Smitty and Isabelle's House and (see photos below) from the Post 639 "Hailey's Heroes" fund thru the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. What an Honor! Other good news arrived from Ron Sanders that we were approved for a grant he had submitted on our behalf for Post renovations. More news to come soon on that. Thanks Mr. Sanders for your hard work and perseverance. We are still working with the City to get the new sign up.

So many things happening at Post 639 with ALA, SAL and ALR. Please check the calendar and plan on attending.

**Thanks everyone.**

**Mike Goforth**

**Commander, Legion Post 639**



## Post 639 Adjutant



**Brothers and Sisters, I am running this content for a every month, as the problem still persists (although it's getting better). We're still receiving some mail-in renewals that have previously been paid. As was described last month, National sends out Renewal Notices quarterly and they are not paying attention to our inputs for renewals. IF you get a Renewal Notice, check the latest card you have and if it has 2023 on it, IGNORE THE NOTICE. We are returning checks as**

**we get them and verifying your status. (As of end of month January, we've returned over 100 checks) This has been an ongoing problem with National. The Department of MO is aware of the snafu but there is little to nothing they or we, here at 639, can do except to ask for your patience. If you have any questions about a Renewal Notice you may receive call me at 417-569-9871 and we will get them resolved ASAP We're making progress, but we will have a ways to go.**

**Tom Newsom**

**Post 639 Adjutant**



## 639 Chaplain



The groundhog did see his shadow - Oh well, it is still 6 weeks to spring, no mater what you think.

I have seen a few bikes and joggers out in the warm days we have had. Please watch out for them and others so they can have a good time.

Remember it still can get cold quickly and very bad out sooner than you think. I hope spring comes soon and stays warm to enjoy the nice days.

All for now, and as always the post and its members are in my prayers.

**Rex Krasche**

**Post 639 Chaplain**



## 639 Auxiliary President



It's March, and if you're looking for some of that Irish Luck this month you will find it at the Post on Saturday, March 18th. ALA is having their annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. serving Shepherd's Pie, Irish Bacon and Cabbage, dinner roll and your choice of green dessert for \$10.00. **(See our flyer on Page 5).** Put your green on and come join us!

During the February General Meeting, a special recognition presentation was given to Marsha Crom for her dedicated devotion to Post 639, ALA, SAL and ALR. The award was presented by Bob Kalwat (Post 639 Historian, ALR Secretary) to honor her commitment and friendship to us all. **(See pictures, next page)**

Marsha and I would like to thank all of the ALA, ALR, SAL and Post members and employees who assisted with the wonderful Valentine's Dinner Party last month. **(See pictures on Pages 7-8)** It was a beautiful evening for everyone who attended and you made that possible for them! Thank you so much. We



also give a **huge shout out** to our sisters of the ALA Fair Grove Unit 38 for the fantastic food service!

Our first raffle basket of the year starts this month and the theme is "March Madness". The basket will be on display and ticket sales start March 1st. Tickets will be available at the bar. The drawing will be Wednesday, March 29th at the Queen of Hearts event.

Looking forward, mark your calendars for one of the biggest event ALA has ever undertaken. Saturday, May 20th, ALA will partner up with Post 639, SAL and ALR for the "Charlie Mike" Veterans Camp / Military Informational Fair. Local organizations will be on hand to share and help with valuable informational resources to our veterans and military men and women. This event is open to the public and we are providing food, live music, silent auctions (proceeds go to the attending non-profit organizations) and free giveaways.

I leave you with this Luck of the Irish poem:

May your troubles be less, and your blessings be more;  
 And nothing but happiness comes through your door!  
 Happy St. Patrick's Day from ALA 639!

**In Spirit of Service, not Self**

**Diana Cooperider, President, Post 639 Auxiliary**



The Sons of the American Legion are looking for New and Past Members!

The Sons are made up of male descendants of Veterans who served in the US Armed Forces. Show your appreciation for your family members Service, and keep the memory of those brave Service members alive.

Our motto is "Serving Those Who Served" this great country. We do this through our events and volunteering at the LZ 639.

Annual dues are only \$25... and you get soooo much more out of your service to these brave vets, who fought to provide the freedoms each of us enjoy every day. Service with fun / fellowship - that's what you get !!

We are always interested in talking with individuals who want to help our beloved LZ 639. We meet at 7PM on the last Tuesday of each month.

Come out and sit in on a meeting or talk with a few of our members. Jump in and find your spot in SAL. Service and fellowship memories that will last you a lifetime ...

**Curtis Myers, Commander**

**Sons of the American Legion**



Another month gone, another month closer to full-blown riding season. 'Bout time. We've had some "teaser" days, but the real thing is almost here.

Things are picking up, but still slow. Queen of Hearts is slow right now, but the weather has kept it that way as well as the small (at least for now) jackpot. When Bike Nights start up in April (April 19th is the first one !!) buckle up. When the warm weather brings everybody out, it'll be bedlam. Just remember last year. Ticket sales were insane. Rest assured, it will happen again when the jackpot starts to grow. We're going to need everybody to pitch in.

Our big fundraiser for 2023 is our Gun Raffle - beautiful S&W 9MM CSX, comes with both 10 AND 12 round magazines. Tickets are \$10/each or 3 for \$25. We need everybody to be selling tickets. Ron Jackson is the point of contact for tickets. He has envelopes with a groups of tickets to assign us, so get yours and start selling. We will be working a table at the RK Gun Show at the Fairgrounds on **March 11th and 12th**. If you'd like to work a shift, you get into the show for free. See Ron for a time slot. (See the flyer on Page 9 for details and a picture.) We'll give it away at our Fish Fry on **June 9th**. Winner does not have to be present to win.

Let me sincerely thank all who assisted/attended the Valentines Dinner on **Saturday February 11th**. The Post was unrecognizable. It was simply gorgeous. All who helped make it that way, as well as helping with food preparation, **THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH**. Special thanks to the Auxiliary from Unit 38, Fair Grove, for serving us. No better service could be found at ANY restaurant in town. You all were superb !! Kenny Jones rocked the place for our entertainment. I could have sworn Darrius Rucker and Merle Haggard were in the building. (See pictures on Pages 7-8)

THEN, on Sunday, February 12th, those at the Super Bowl

Watch Party cheered our Kansas City Chiefs on to victory. 3 Super Bowls in 4 years, with 2 wins. On to 2024, let's do it again !! (Pictures on Page 6)

Our Dinner Ride in February was to Plaza Mexico (formerly La Hacienda) on Tuesday the 21st. Great turnout - 11 Riders and guests. Food was great and so was the service !!



Please remember Jeff and Barbara Gonynor in the passing of Jeff's mother on February 20th in North Carolina. Jeff, your ALR family is with you and Barbara during this tough time. We love you guys !!!

We have our first Saturday Ride coming up on April 22nd to Pizza Cellar in Rockaway Beach. Watch for details as we get closer. You never know about the weather this time of year.

Please take care of any last minute maintenance on your bikes. Need you all to be ready to roll .....

In the meantime, **RIDE SAFE OUT THERE !!!!**

**Marsha Crom**

**Director, Legion Riders Chapter 639**



Following is a list of diseases caused by exposure to toxins used by the military. If you are a post 9/11 veteran and if you have (or think you might have) any of these please, contact me about new benefit rules.

## **CANCERS**

**Brain cancer**

**Gastrointestinal cancer of any type**

**Glioblastoma**

**Head cancer of any type**

**Kidney Cancer**

**Lymphatic cancer of any type**

**Melanoma**

**Neck cancer of any type**

**Pancreatic cancer**

**Reproductive cancer of any type**

**Respiratory cancer of any type**

## **ILLNESSES**

**Asthma diagnosed after service**

**Chronic bronchitis**

**COPD**

**Chronic rhinitis**

**Chronic sinusitis**

**Constructive or obliterative bronchiolitis**

**Emphysema**

**Granulomatous disease**

**Interstitial lung disease**

**Pleuritis**

**Pulmonary fibrosis**

**Sarcoidosis**

**Bob Scott, Post 639 Service Officer**



## ***Post 639 Historian***



I had an interesting "perspective epiphany" earlier this month. One of the items on my family Christmas list this year was the "Memoir of a Revolutionary Soldier - The Narrative of Joseph Plumb Martin". I received it as a gift from my daughter, and am just now getting into reading it. The part that gave me pause were his reflections on the time prior to enlisting, when he was still underage (requiring parental consent).



The drumbeats of war with England were pounding loudly. His older peers were "signing on the dotted line", so to speak. He saw them form units, and march off to the front (yet to be established) while he was left behind. He would follow them to the edge of town, and be left behind. He was desperate to join the effort, but would have to wait his turn. Joseph had neither the education (yet extremely eloquent in his narrative), nor the aspirations to be an Officer. When his time came, he would be a Private in the Continental Army, with all of the hardships that entailed, and what he would endure. **He was undeterred.**

I wonder how many of us felt the same way (an experience shared with him across time). Some of us were drafted, some of us enlisted voluntarily. My draft number was 147, so I was in the middle. I was fortunate enough to be "of age" when my time came. Although it took some convincing to gain my parent's support (I had to engage my Marine recruiter's (GySgt Art Strong) support with a home visit in his Dress Blues, it sealed the deal), I never had to go against their wishes. My point is - the passion to serve one's country has endured across time. I had a passion to serve as long as I can remember. It was ingrained in me by my family at a very young age. When my time came, it happened to coincide with my time in history. It so happened that I had the opportunity to serve with the best talents I had to offer my country - **music**, and I embraced it with a passion.

I know many of us had a different path to our eventual service. We grew up in the middle of an unpopular war, but we chose to serve anyway. Joseph Plumb Martin faced the same situation. Many in the country were in passionate to remain loyal to England, and were adamant in their views. Conflict between those on opposite sides of the political spectrum. How well many of you who endured the Vietnam Era know all too well. But Joseph chose to join the cause in spite of it all, as many of you did. Your country called and you answered. Sincere thanks, Joseph, across the ages, for having the foresight to write down your thoughts.

We, 250+ years in the future, have benefited from your willingness to share your thoughts, convictions and perspective.

It's a travesty that the country took so long to recognize that **even if you didn't support the war, you support the warrior.** As the 29th of March is National Vietnam War Veterans Day, a special thanks to all of you who answered the call during the Vietnam War Era.

**Bob Kalwat**

**Post 639 Historian/Newsletter Editor**

## *March VSO Activities/Info*

### Give Vets Hope

#### **Our group is growing!**

On January 24th our group postponed the meeting because of the weather. It was cold, rainy and windy that night and was supposed to get worse. We have never had to do that before and yet on February 14th we cancelled again. This time it was because of a death in my family and attending a funeral service in Peoria, Illinois.

Holly, my co-facilitator and I had consulted on what to do beforehand. There just seemed to be so much involvement in bringing together and having the meeting that we decided to postpone the February meeting. Holly called several people from our group, and I got in touch with the rest, to let them know of our impending group cancellation.

I am continuing to make "Check-In Calls" on Fridays, in the process I have been thanked, told that my checking-in was appreciated and even hung up on, in staying in touch with our group. I feel fortunate enough and honored that each week most of them pick up the phone so that we can talk just for a few minutes about how things are going with them.

We are getting ready to use a "talking stick" in our group. It is a stick of old cedar with some feathers and leather to hold them on. The stick is a mnemonic or memory device that indigenous people sometimes used at their council/tribal meetings. We are going to be modeling this and using the stick to help us remember whose turn it is to talk and that whoever has the stick is the one controlling the conversation. Some people feel comfortable in talking in our group and others may not. The talking stick will provide everyone an opportunity to talk without interruption or to just pass the stick on.

Our group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, from 5:30 to about 7:00, at the VFW Post 3404 on 1136 E. Atlantic. We welcome anyone who has a relationship with a veteran to attend. Sorry no children. You may contact David Suits at 417-773-1837 and leave a message if you have any questions. We will have plenty of pizza and pop!

**David Suits**

**Give Vets Hope Co-Facilitator**

ANNUAL AMERICAN LEGION  
AUXILIARY 639 EVENT

# ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

SATURDAY, MARCH 18TH  
6:00 TO 7:30 P.M.  
SHEPHERD'S PIE  
IRISH BACON & CABBAGE  
DINNER ROLL & DESSERT  
\$10

## Can You See Me Now?

### 16th Annual Motorcycle Awareness Ride

# MAY 7, 2023

Rain Snow or Shine!

**FREE RIDE** (70 Mile Scenic Through Chuck Wills)  
**FREE SHIRT** (Limited Supply) (Watch for Motorcycles)

**STARTING POINT:**  
American Legion Post 639  
2660 S. Scenic, Springfield, MO  
Registration Begins at 11:30 am  
Kickstands up/Ride Departs at 1:00pm  
Ride will also end at Post 639  
2660 S. Scenic

**Free ride t-shirts as available**  
**LIVE MUSIC**  
Following The Ride

**For more info, contact:**  
Jim Scheele (417) 234-6216  
Nicole Boyd (417) 402-9872

Watch for **MOTORCYCLES**  
ARRIVE ALIVE  
www.MOJives.com

June 8-11, 2023 Open 24 Hours  
922 W. Republic Road, Springfield, MO  
( Located @ Wesley United Methodist Church )

## THE WALL THAT HEALS

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL REPLICA & MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER

A PROGRAM OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND  
FOUNDERS OF THE WALL

### Free Event To the Public!

**SERENITY HONORS**  
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**WELCOME HOME**

**For more information visit us at:**  
[TheWallThatHeals-SerenityHonors2023.com](http://TheWallThatHeals-SerenityHonors2023.com)  
[Facebook.com/serenityhonors](https://Facebook.com/serenityhonors)

Join Serenity & the VVMF in bringing THE WALL THAT HEALS to our community.  
You can DONATE online or by mail.  
Make checks payable to SERENITY HONORS INC. and mailed to:  
Serenity Honors \* P.O. Box 128 \* Nixa, MO 65714  
For questions call Chris at (417) 590-7500 or email [serenityhonor@gmail.com](mailto:serenityhonor@gmail.com)  
Serenity Honors Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation.  
Any contributions are fully tax deductible as allowed by law.

## History in March ....

**March 1, 1781** - Formal ratification of the Articles of Confederation was announced by Congress. Under the Articles, Congress was the sole governing body of the new American national government, consisting of the 13 original states. The Articles remained in effect through the Revolutionary War until 1789, when the current U.S. Constitution was adopted.

**March 4, 1681** - King Charles II of England granted a huge tract of land in the New World to William Penn to settle an outstanding debt. The area later became Pennsylvania.

**March 4, 1933** - Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office and delivered his first inaugural address attempting to restore public confidence during the Great Depression, stating, "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..." His cabinet appointments included the first woman to a Cabinet post, Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins.

**March 5, 1770** - The Boston Massacre occurred as a group of rowdy Americans harassed British soldiers who then opened fire, killing five and injuring six. The first man killed was Crispus Attucks, an African American. British Captain Thomas Preston and eight of his men were arrested and charged with murder. Their trial took place in October, with colonial lawyer John Adams defending the British. Captain Preston and six of his men were acquitted. Two others were found guilty of manslaughter, branded, then released.

**March 6, 1836** - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on February 23rd, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.

**March 8, 1863** - During the American Civil War, Confederate Colonel John Mosby, leader of Mosby's Rangers, captured Union General E.H. Stoughton at his headquarters in Fairfax County Courthouse, Virginia.

**March 9, 1864** - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General and became commander of the Union armies.

**March 10, 1862** - The first issue of U.S. government paper money occurred as \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills began circulation.

**March 11, 1918** - The 'Spanish' influenza first reached America as 107 soldiers become sick at Fort Riley, Kansas. One quarter of the U.S. population eventually became ill from the deadly virus, resulting in 500,000 deaths. The death toll worldwide approached 22 million by the end of 1920.

**March 12, 1938** - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.

**March 13, 1943** - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.

**March 15, 44 B.C.** - Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate chamber in Rome by Brutus and fellow conspirators. After first trying to defend himself against the murderous onslaught, Caesar saw Brutus with a knife and asked "Et tu, Brute?" (You too, Bru-

tus?) Caesar then gave up the struggle and was stabbed to death.

**March 17th** - Celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day commemorating the patron saint of Ireland.

**March 17, 1776** - Early in the American Revolutionary War the British completed their evacuation of Boston following a successful siege conducted by Patriots. The event is still commemorated in Boston as Evacuation Day.

**March 18, 1837** - Grover Cleveland, the 22nd and 24th U.S. president was born in Caldwell, New Jersey. He was the only president to serve two nonconsecutive terms and was also the only president to be married in the White House.

**March 19, 1848** - Wyatt Earp was born in Monmouth, Illinois. He became a legendary figure in the Wild West as a lawman and gun-fighter, best known for the shootout at the O.K. Corral in 1881, in which the Earp brothers (Wyatt, Virgil and Morgan) fought and defeated the Ike Clanton gang.

**March 19, 2003** - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops. The troops made rapid progress northward and conquered the country's capital, Baghdad, just 21 days later, ending the rule of Saddam.

**March 21, 1918** - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war. The battle began with a five-hour artillery barrage followed by a rush of German troops. The offensive lasted until April 6th and resulted in the Germans gaining about 35 miles of territory. Allied and German casualty figures for both battles approached 500,000.

**March 23, 1775** - Patrick Henry ignited the American Revolution with a speech before the Virginia convention in Richmond, stating, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

**March 24, 1934** - The Philippine Islands in the South Pacific were granted independence by President Franklin D. Roosevelt after nearly 50 years of American control.

**March 25, 1807** - The British Parliament abolished the slave trade following a long campaign against it by Quakers and others.

**March 26, 1979** - The Camp David Accord ended 30 years of warfare between Israel and Egypt. Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat signed the treaty of mutual recognition and peace, fostered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

**March 26, 1992** - Soviet Cosmonaut Serge Krikalev returned to a new country (Russia) after spending 313 days on board the Mir Space Station. During his stay in space, the Soviet Union (USSR) collapsed and became the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**March 31, 1968** - President Lyndon Johnson made a surprise announcement that he would not seek re-election as a result of the Vietnam conflict.

# Valentines Dinner

February 11, 2023

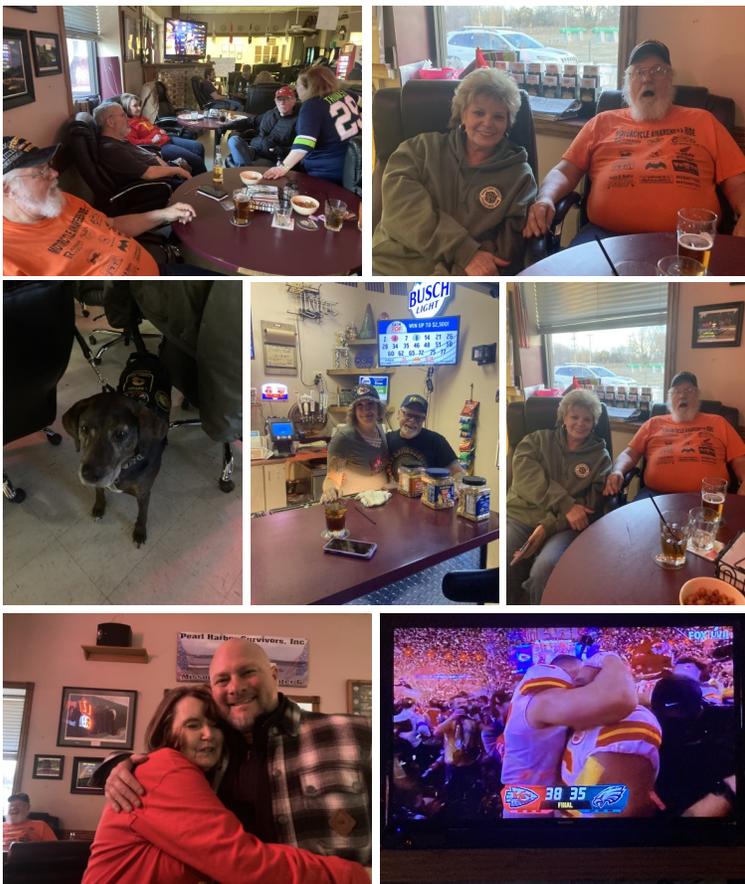
*Valentines Dinner Party*  
Saturday February 11th, 6:00 to 10:00 pm.  
Tusson Chicken Dinner  
Live Music by Kenny Jones  
Tickets \$15 available January 23rd  
at Post 639 bar  
Cocktails at 6:00 Dinner served at 6:30



Valentines Party Pictures, cont'd .....



Super Bowl Watch Party  
February 12, 2023



**Start planning for 2023 Bike Nights NOW.**  
**Get these dates on your calendars while they're all open. Don't miss a single one !!!**

# ★ BIKE NIGHT ★

**@LZ639**  
**EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY**  
**6:30 - 10**

**QUEEN OF HEARTS**  
CARD DRAW EVERY WEDNESDAY

VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL  
TOGETHER THEN  
**Post 639**  
TOGETHER NOW  
AMERICAN LEGION

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT
19	3, 17, 31	14, 28	12, 26	9, 23	6, 20	4, 18

**TOO BROKE FOR STURGIS**



**SCHMITT LAW FIRM**  
KANSAS CITY  
816-400-1000

BIKE NIGHT  
PRESENTED BY



**RENEGADE HARLEY-DAVIDSON**  
SPRINGFIELD • MISSOURI



**SPOKES GARAGE**  
Premier Motorcycle Service  
Dark, MO

**2660 S SCENIC, SPRINGFIELD, MO**  
**FOOD \* MUSIC \* 50/50 & COOL PRIZE RAFFLES**





## The Smith & Wesson CSX 9mm Pistol

**MSRP: \$609.00**

### American Legion Riders

**Raffle Tickets: \$10.00 each or Three for \$25.00**

**(Drawing Held on Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, Need Not Be Present to Win)**

#### Product Features

- The CSX is built on an aluminum alloy frame with interchangeable polymer backstraps, providing the user the ability to customize their level of concealment and ergonomic fit.
- Chambered in 9mm, the CSX holds an impressive 12+1 capacity and comes with an additional 10 round magazine for deeper concealment.
- Designed with flexibility in mind and, despite its micro-sized frame, the CSX packs both ambidextrous slide releases and manual safeties.



## For the Good of the Legion ...

Two words that exemplify what we at Post 639 strive for ...

The word "courage", Cor/Cour, from the Latin/French means "heart". The suffix, "age", makes it an **action**.

The next word "Respect" is French, and it means "to look at or know something with "wholeness" I think about this as examining a diamond with many facets. Once we have looked at it from all angles and find it complete ( a person whose character, emotions, and reasoning is balanced perhaps), then we "respect" it/them. In that case because we have not passed "judgement" on that thing/person until all aspects have been considered, the "respect" rendered is also a reflection of ourselves.

At the General Meeting on February 7th, I witnessed a lot of "Heart in Action". **Courage** and **Respect** were very evident to me.

Submitted by ....

**Mike Walters, Member, Post 639/ALR.**

## Did You Know ....

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the Nation's record keeper. Of all documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States federal government, only 1-3% are so important for legal or historical reasons that they are kept by us forever.

Those valuable records are preserved and are available for you, whether you want to see if they contain clues about your family's history, need to prove a veteran's military service, or are researching a historical topic that interests you.

Explore our nation's history through our documents, photos and records at:

<https://www.archives.gov/>

Submitted by ....

**Scotty Kelly, Member, Post 639**

9/28/22, 5:46 PM

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**ENTER TO WIN**  
CITADEL BOSS 25  
12 GAUGE SEMI AUTOMATIC

**\$20 PER TICKET OR 6 TICKETS FOR \$100**  
**\*\*ONLY 250 TICKETS TO BE SOLD\*\***

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT  
AMERICAN LEGION POST 639, 2660 S. SCENIC  
SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

DRAWING TO BE HELD FOLLOWING THE SALE OF ALL TICKETS.

PROCEEDS WILL GO TO  
AMERICAN LEGION POST 639 AND TREEHOUSE.VET.  
TREEHOUSE.VET IS A 501(C)3 NON-PROFIT CORPORATION THAT  
FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF VETERANS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH EDUCATION, RESOURCES AND THE  
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FAITH • SERVICE • COMMUNITY



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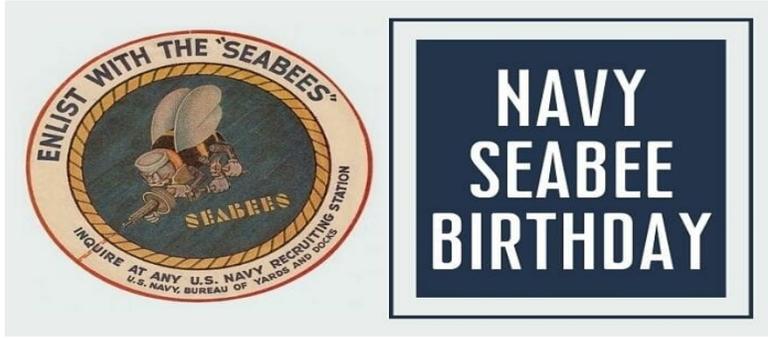
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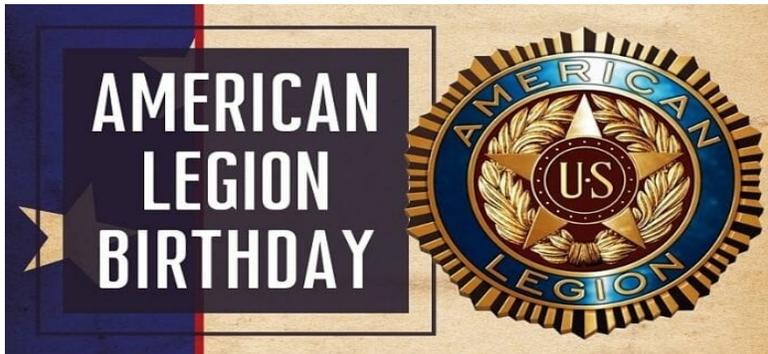




US Navy Reserve Birthday - March 3rd



US Navy Seabees Birthday - March 5th



American Legion Birthday - March 15th



National Medal of Honor Day - March 25th



National Vietnam War Veterans Day - March 29th

Wall Street Journal article, January 26, 2023

Jerry C. Davis, Chancellor, College of the Ozarks

*The Vietnam War ended with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on Jan. 27, 1973. More than 50,000 Americans were killed in the war, and hundreds of thousands were wounded. Many who served weren't properly welcomed home. Veterans often were advised not to wear their uniforms lest they become targets for mistreatment. Some were cursed, spat on and worse.*

*These great Americans deserve an apology.*

*Vietnam veterans often had trouble getting jobs. I learned this firsthand. When I became a college president in 1977, it was hard to find any reference to military service on applicants' résumés. This saddened me, as my two brothers had served honorably. I changed the hiring approach at the institutions I led, and Vietnam veterans ended up being some of the best employees I hired over the next 45 years.*

*Most Americans know the treatment of Vietnam veterans was wrong. Soldiers don't start wars. They are sent on our behalf by our representatives in Washington. They fight and die for us. Those who wear this country's uniform in any war always should be respected.*

*At the College of the Ozarks, we have the Knight Center for Patriotic Education, which seeks to carry out a patriotic goal: "to encourage an understanding of American heritage, civic responsibilities, love of country, and willingness to defend it." The center accomplishes this with classes (including in military science), events, convocations and publications. It also boasts the Patriotic Education Travel Program, which pairs students with veterans on trips to battlefields where the veterans fought, in North Africa, Italy, Germany, France, Hawaii, Japan, Vietnam and elsewhere. I went on four of these trips during my 34 years as president of the school and watched the students' respect for the veterans grow as they began to understand the sacrifices made. The program has sent a total of 53 students and 37 veterans to Vietnam.*

*There aren't many colleges that try to pass on a love of country to new generations. But several organizations have stepped up to help those who served on our behalf, such as Samaritan's Purse, Wounded Warriors and Tunnel to Towers. Schools and colleges need to step up, too.*

*As National Vietnam Veterans Day approaches on March 29, the American people should speak as one voice before the Vietnam veterans fade into history.*

*H.J. Res. 59, introduced by Texas Rep. Dan Crenshaw, a combat veteran, represents, on behalf of the American people, an apology to Vietnam veterans and their families for how many were treated during and after the war.*

*America was divided then, and it is divided now. This resolution, which is 50 years overdue, acknowledges this stain on American honor. It would serve as a message to young people, as well as a reminder to all citizens of this country, that "e pluribus unum" is more than a motto.*



## Post 639 Schedule of Events

### March 2023

- March 01 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6-8PM
- March 03 Fri - US Navy Reserve Birthday
- March 04 Sat - Post 639 Breakfast 8AM - 10AM
- March 05 Sun - US Navy Seabees Birthday
- March 07 Tue - Legion 639/Aux General Meeting, 7PM
- March 08 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6-8PM
- March 09 Thu - Finance Committee Meeting, 6:30PM  
- Marine Corps League Mtg, VFW 3404  
6PM Food/Fellowship, 7PM Mtg
- March 11 Sat - Sub Vets Meeting, 11AM
- March 14 Tue - Korean War Vets Meeting, 1PM  
Give Vets Hope, VFW 3404, 5:30PM
- March 15 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6-8PM  
- American Legion Birthday
- March 17 Fri - VFW 3404 Fish Fry 5:30-7PM
- March 18 Sat - St. Patricks Day Dinner, 6 - 7:30PM
- March 19 Sun - ALR Meeting, 5PM
- March 21 Tue - Auxiliary E-Board Meeting, 7PM
- March 22 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6-8PM
- March 23 Thu - Fleet Reserve Association 6PM  
- Newsletter Content Due
- March 25 Sat - National Medal of Honor Day
- March 27 Mon - Post 639 E-Board Meeting 6:30PM
- March 28 Tue - Sons of the American Legion Mtg, 7PM  
- Give Vets Hope, VFW 3404 5:30PM
- March 29 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6-8PM  
- National Vietnam War Veterans Day



## From the Bar/Galley ...

### Happy Hour at LZ639 :

12PM-2PM 7 Days a Week (.50 off)

6PM-8PM, Monday thru Saturday (.50 off)

### Saturday Breakfast - Morning Chow @ LZ639

1st Saturday of the Month

8AM - 10AM

Your Saturday breakfast is made possible by the following 6AM crew - **Bob Dale, Dylan Dale, Mike Chandler with support and assistance of Scotty and Jeff.** Breakfast

served 8AM-10AM. Drinks separate charge. No charge for salt and pepper. Tell your friends as it's only \$8 all you can eat. Please thank the people who give up their time to support this Post 639 benefit.

Post 639 Breakfast on February 4th was enjoyed by all, thanks for being there!

I feel it's about time everyone is well aware of the main cook for these great breakfasts we all enjoy. He has helped in the past, and stepped up again. For some reason he's not a member of the Post's Sons Department but still supports the Post. Recently married, he's also an expecting father. He is the son of Post Member and Member at Large Bob Dale. Yes, it's **Dylan Dale!**

What you might not know is that Dylan is the Kitchen Manager at the Victory Mission. He is also a Chef and has done Radio and TV cooking shows.. He knows what he's doing and is showing us every Saturday at the Post Breakfast. The rest of us are just the Go-Fers for him, and we enjoy our part. He can slice and dice like I've never seen before.

Please attend the Post Breakfast each month and give Dylan your personal thanks for helping us at Post 639. He gives up what little time he has for us and needs to be thanked by everyone who enjoys his cooking. We're blessed to have Dylan Dale as a Volunteer.

The 6am crew thanks Dylan for everything he does, you should too!

**Jim "Skippy" Cooper (got peanut butter)**

**Your 6AM Support Team**





# MARCH 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>QUEEN OF HEARTS</b> <b>6 - 8 PM</b>	<b>2 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>3 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>US NAVY RESERVE BIRTHDAY</b> March 3, 1915	<b>4</b>  <b>BREAKFAST</b> <b>8 - 10AM</b>
<b>5</b>  <b>US NAVY SEABEES BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>6 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>7 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>LEGION/AUX GENERAL MTG</b> <b>7PM</b>	<b>8 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>QUEEN OF HEARTS</b> <b>6 - 8 PM</b>	<b>9 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>FINANCE COMMITTEE</b> <b>6:30PM</b>  <b>MCL 993 6PM-8PM</b>	<b>10 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>11</b>  <b>SUB VETS MTG</b> <b>11AM</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>14 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>KOREAN WAR VETS</b> <b>1PM</b> <b>GIVE VETS HOPE</b> <b>VFW 3404 5PM</b>	<b>15 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>QUEEN OF HEARTS</b> <b>6-8PM</b>  <b>AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>16 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>17 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>VFW 3404 FISH FRY</b> <b>5:30 - 7 PM</b>	<b>18</b>  <b>ST PATRICKS DAY DINNER 6-7:30PM</b>
<b>19</b>  <b>ALR MEETING</b> <b>5PM</b>	<b>20 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>21 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>AUX E-BOARD MTG</b> <b>7PM</b>	<b>22 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>QUEEN OF HEARTS</b> <b>6 - 8PM</b>	<b>23 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>FLEET RESERVE ASSOC. 6PM</b> <b>NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE</b>	<b>24 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>25</b>  <b>NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>E-BOARD MTG</b> <b>6:30PM</b>	<b>28 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>SAL MTG 7PM</b> <b>GIVE VETS HOPE</b> <b>VFW 3404 5PM</b>	<b>29 LUNCH 11-2</b>  <b>QUEEN OF HEARTS</b> <b>6-8PM</b>  <b>VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY</b>	<b>30 LUNCH 11-2</b>	<b>31 LUNCH 11-2</b>	

# LZ639 LUNCH MENU

AVAILABLE MON-FRI

11 AM-2 PM

**(ALL BURGERS AND SANDWICHES SERVED  
WITH ONE REGULAR SIDE)**

SOFT DRINKS...\$2

- COKE
- DIET COKE
- DR. PEPPER
- DIET DR. PEPPER
- SPRITE
- DIET SPRITE
- TEA

## REGULAR SIDES

- THICK CUT FRIES
- TATER-TOTS

## PREMIUME SIDES

(UPGRADE FOR JUST A \$1)

- ONION RINGS
- MUSHROOMS
- SEASONED CURLY FRIES

**(LOAD YOUR SIDE FOR JUST A \$1 MORE WITH  
NACHO CHEESE AND BACON BITS)**

**(ADD A SIDE SALAD OR SIDE OF SOUP FOR \$2  
MORE)**

Seasonal Soups \$5:

Chicken Tortilla, Loaded Potato, Roasted Red  
Pepper with Gouda Cheese, Broccoli Cheddar, or  
Chili

## BURGERS & SANDWICHES

(Add: Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, or Pickle)

**HAMBURGER...\$7**

**CHEESEBURGER...\$8.50**

Choice of cheese: American, Swiss, Provolone or,  
Pepper Jack

**Blue Burger...\$9**

A burger topped with melted blue cheese crumbles

**BBQ BURGER...\$9.50**

A burger topped with two onion rings, your choice  
of cheese and BBQ sauce

**BRUNCH BURGER...\$9.50**

A burger served with a fried egg & bacon with your  
choice of cheese of cheese

**LZ639...\$9**

A burger topped with grilled onions served on a  
toasted garlic aioli bun with your choice of cheese

**PATTY MELT...\$9**

A burger with grilled onions & Swiss cheese served  
on Texas Toast

**PORK TENDERLOIN SANDWICH...\$9.50**

A 7oz. tenderloin

**GRILLED CHICKEN SANDWICH...\$9**

Grilled chicken breast with bacon, Swiss cheese  
served on a toasted garlic aioli bun

**THE REUBEN...\$9.50**

Swiss cheese melted over corned beef & sauerkraut  
topped with Thousand Island served on rye bread

**BLT...\$7**

Four slices of bacon topped with lettuce & tomato  
served on Texas Toast

**GRILLED CHEESE...\$6.50**

Grilled Texas Toast with your choice of cheese.

**HOT HAM & CHEESE...\$7**

Four slices of smoked ham with your choice of  
cheese served on Texas Toast.

# LZ639 PIZZA

## MENU

(ALL PIZZAS ARE A 10 INCH CRUST)  
(NO ADD ONS OR SUBSTITUTIONS)

### THE CLASSICS

Cheese.....	\$7.50
Pepperoni.....	\$8
Sausage.....	\$8
Bacon.....	\$8
Canadian Bacon.....	\$8

### SPECIALTY PIZZAS

<b>Hawaiian</b> .....	\$8.50
Canadian Bacon, Pineapple	
<b>Chicken Bacon Ranch</b> .....	\$9
Ranch, Italian Seasoning, Diced Chicken, Bacon Bits	
<b>BBQ Chicken</b> .....	\$9
BBQ Sauce, Diced Chicken, Onions	
<b>Alfredo</b> .....	\$9
Alfredo Sauce, Italian Seasoning, Diced Chicken, Mushrooms, Bacon Bits	
<b>Buffalo Chicken</b> .....	\$9.50
Ranch, Cream Cheese, Buffalo Sauce, Diced Chicken	
<b>Veggie Lovers</b> .....	\$8.50

### EXTRA SPECIALTY

<b>Loaded Hawaiian</b> .....	\$9.50
Canadian Bacon, Bacon Bits, Pineapple, Onion	
<b>Five Meat</b> .....	\$9.50
Canadian Bacon, Hamburger, Sausage, Bacon Bits, Pepperoni	
<b>Supreme</b> .....	\$10
Canadian Bacon, Hamburger, Sausage, Bacon Bits, Mushrooms, Onions, Black Olives, Green Peppers, Pepperoni	

## Ongoing Suicide Prevention

EVERY month is Suicide Prevention month. Always be vigilant for your brothers/sisters that might need help.

Some signs of concerning behavior include:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends

If you notice any signs of concerning behavior here are some things you can do:

- **Start a conversation:** Mention the signs that prompted you to talk to them. Stay calm and let the person know you want to help them. Don't leave the person alone.
- **Listen, express concern and reassure the individual:** Let the person know you care and that you take the situation seriously. Letting the person know you care will go a long way in establishing a support system.
- **Create a safety plan:** Ask the person if they have access to anything that could harm them and call for help if you feel the situation is dangerous.
- **Get the individual help:** Provide resources for the individual. **Call the Veteran's crisis line at 1(800)-273-8255.** Or if you feel the situation is severe, take the individual to the closest emergency room or call for help.



# Battle of Wake Island, December 8, 1941

The Alamo of the Pacific

November 2022

PAUL A. DOELGER

University of Minnesota, Crookston

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach

This short story is dedicated to our greatest generation.

*“They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side. To them we have a solemn obligation — the obligation to ensure that their sacrifice will help to make this a better and safer world in which to live.” (“Chester W. Nimitz Quotes That Make History Feel Palpable”)*

## Introduction

At 12:30 p.m. on December 8, 1941 the President of the United States, delivered his “Day of Infamy” speech describing the attack on Pearl Harbor and asking Congress for a declaration of war against the Japanese. The President went on to say that the news was not good, the Japanese had just attacked the United States Fleet at Pearl Harbor with devastating results. Not only was Pearl Harbor attacked but the Japanese made similar attacks on American outposts such as Guam, Midway, Wake and the Philippines. In Europe the news was just as bad, the German Army that occupied much of Europe and was advancing towards the gates of Moscow. The American public, thinking that things could not get much worse, were in for a shock. On December 11, 1941 Germany declared war on the United States putting the world at war. Moral was low, and Americans needed a victory, something they could rally around as they prepared for the tough times ahead. That something was the Battle of Wake Island, and this is its story.

## Wake Island

At that time names like Guam, Midway, Wake and the Philippines were only words in textbooks or dots on a map; now these names were known around the world. Wake, also known as the island of the Kio flower, is in the western Pacific Ocean. The island was claimed by the United States in 1899 and remains one of the most isolated islands in the world. The atoll is uninhabited and has no potable water but does have a large population of sand crabs and sooty terns. The atoll is made up of three separate islands, Wake, Wilkes, and Peale, and together they resemble a wishbone from the air. The main island of Wake consists of two-and-a-half square miles of coral, sand, and rock. What makes Wake unique is that it and the island of Midway are centrally located between the United States and Asia. From a commercial standpoint this made the islands ideal locations for refueling and maintenance stations for Pan American Airways

(PAA) fleet of Flying Clippers.

On May 9, 1935, approximately four hundred constructions workers were sent to Wake to clear the lagoon for flying boats and to construct a prefabricated 48 room hotel for Pan American guests. On October 25, the Hawaii Clipper flying from Hawaii, landed at Wake with its first paying airline passengers ever to cross the Pacific. Following the first successful flight, PAA began flying two scheduled flights per week to and from the Wake Island lagoon.

## Strategy

The military also had its eyes on Wake. The 2½ mile strip of coral and sand that made up the main island were of strategic importance to the United States. By militarizing Wake, military planners had hoped that Wake and the island of Midway, would be able to provide an early warning screen protecting the United States Navy’s Fleet based at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Unfortunately, the Navy was unable to develop Wake due to the restrictions imposed on it by the Washington Naval Treaty (WNT) of 1922. This treaty prohibited both the United States and the Japanese from expanding military fortifications in the Pacific Island chain. To disguise the planned work being done, the island was designated as a bird sanctuary. Now the preliminary work could be explained as efforts to save the island’s Sooty Terns. Based on the survey results, the United States Navy (USN) recommended that the atoll be converted into a base used for landplanes, seaplanes and submarines. The Navy wanted to begin fortifying the island in 1938 but were unable to get the necessary funding approved until January of 1941. Shortly after funding was approved, construction of the base started with the arrival of construction crews. On February 14, 1941, the President of the United States formally dismissed the limitation of the Washington Naval Treaty and issued Executive Order 8682 creating the central Pacific territories as naval defense areas.

## Defensive Plans

The Pioneer Party, members of the Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases (CPNAB) arrived on Wake in January 1941 and went to work fortifying the island and building the base’s infrastructure. By December of that same year the contractors had erected seaplane facilities, a runway, and barracks for those assigned to the base. Admiral Kimmel, the commander of the US Pacific Fleet had planned to send 1851 US Marines, 760 Sailors, two fighter squadrons, one Patrol Bomber Squadron, and a half squadron of torpedo bombers to fortify the base. On August 19, members of the First Marine Defense Battalion (FMDB) arrived and began to set up defensive positions. At first there was some animosity between the Marines of FMDB and the Pioneer Party Contractors. The contractors had a tight deadline to meet and were unwilling to lend their heavy construction equipment to the Marines who were forced to use hand tools to dig their en-

trenchments.

The FMDB was led by a strict disciplinarian by the name Major James Patrick Devereux. The Major arrived at his new command knowing of its strategic importance and of the likelihood of a Japanese attack. He worked his men 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week, setting up defensive positions. The Wake Island garrison consisted of 524 officers and enlisted men of which there were (449) Marines, 69 sailors and a 6-man radio detachment from the Army. Admiral Kimmel had equipped the defenders of Wake with 12 three-inch anti-aircraft (AA) guns, six five-inch seacoast guns, six searchlights 18 .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine guns and 30 .30 caliber machine guns.

On December 4, 1941, the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise arrived off the coast of Wake to deliver elements of Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF) 211. The Marine fighters would be responsible for the air defenses and ground support of the island's atoll with its 12 Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat fighters. With the arrival of VMF 211, Commander Winfield Scott Cunningham, United States Navy, (USN) assumed overall command of the Naval Air Station (NAS) Wake Island.

### **The First Amphibious Assault**

At approximately 06:40 hours on December 8, 1941, Wake's Army radio detachment intercepted a radio message from Pearl Harbor. The naval base at Pearl Harbor was located east of the international dateline where it was Sunday morning December 7. According to Gregory J.W Urwin, professor of history at Temple University, the message stated: "SOS ISLAND OF OAHU ATTACKED BY JAPANESE DIVE BOMBERS. THIS IS THE REAL THING." Soon after this message was received Major Devereux ordered his bugler to sound "To Arms" and the defenders of Wake Island manned their battle stations. The Japanese attack started at 11:58 when 27 Japanese Mitsubishi G3M3 medium bombers, code named "Nell," broke through the clouds and began their attack on the island defenders. Without radar warning of the incoming aircraft, the air defenses of NAS Wake Island were caught flat-footed. The Japanese were able to destroy eight of VMF-211's 12 Wildcats on the ground and killing many of the ground crew. After the initial air attack, the differences between the Pioneer Party Contractors and the Marines ended and they both worked together to prepare for the next attack. In total there were 12 more air raids on Wake Island leading the Japanese high command to believe that they had neutralized the Islands defenses.

On December 11, the Japanese Navy appeared off the coast of Wake Island and was preparing for amphibious landings. The Japanese attacking forces under the command of Rear Admiral Sadamichi Kajioka, consisted of three light cruisers, six destroyers, two troop transports, two patrol boats and two

submarines. The troop ships were loaded with 450 soldiers from the Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces (SNLF). Admiral Kajioka, knowing that Wake Island had been pounded by air bombardments, felt confident that the Wake Island defenses had been neutralized. He ordered his fleet to open fire four miles off the coast. The Marines of the defense battalion were ordered to hold their fire. The enemy slowly moved closer and closer until they were 465 yards off the beach. The command by Commander Cunningham was given, and the Marines opened fire with everything they had. The fire was deadly accurate, and one destroyer sunk, and a cruiser and another destroyer were heavily damaged. In addition, three other destroyers had taken hits and were forced to withdraw. As the Japanese fleet retreated, they were harassed by the four remaining wildcats left on the island. A flight of four wildcats led by captain Henry Elrod flew ten sorties against the fleeing Japanese, strafing and dropping 100-pound bombs on the enemy. One bomb struck the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) destroyer Kisaragi and caused such severe damage it eventually sank. In addition to shooting down two enemy fighters, Captain Elrod became the first U.S. pilot to singlehandedly sink a warship with a fighter plane. The Wildcats of VMF-211 were not finished and sank a Japanese Submarine that made the mistake of surfacing 25 miles off the atoll. The defenders had reason to celebrate, troop from the JSNP never reached the beaches, they had stopped the Japanese. The initial assault on Wake Island was the first and only time during the war that coastal defenses were able to defeat an amphibious assault.

The news from Pearl Harbor was devastating and President Roosevelt prepared the nation for the worst. According to Urwin (2020), the President said "So far, the news has been all bad. We have suffered a serious set-back in Hawaii, our forces in the Philippines, which include the brave people of the Commonwealth, are taking punishment. The reports from Guam, Wake, and Midway islands are still confused, but we must be prepared for the announcement that all these three outposts have been seized" (p. 6) The news of the initial victory at Wake came shortly afterwards and became a rallying point for a nation having been delivered bad news. Admiral Kimmel was determined to save NAS Wake Island and put together plans for reinforcing the garrison.

### **USN Relief Attempt**

Considering the pounding that the USN suffered at Pearl Harbor it was surprising that the navy was able to assemble such a sizable fleet to oppose the Japanese at Wake. Admiral Kimmel pushed forward with his relief efforts before being relieved of his command. The Admirals main relief efforts were built around Task Force (TF) 14 under the command of Admiral Jack Fletcher. Admiral Fletcher's command consisted of the fleet carrier Saratoga, the oiler Neches, the seaplane tender Tangier, three heavy cruisers and eight destroyers. The TF also carried with it, elements of the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Defense Battalion which include four

three-inch (AA) and two five-inch 51 caliber guns. To supplement the Wake Island Air defenses additional planes from VMF-211 consisted of Brewster F2A-3 Buffalo Fighters loaded aboard the Saratoga waiting to fly to NAS Wake Island. To support TF 14, TF 11 under the command of Admiral Brown, who was aboard the aircraft carrier Lexington was assigned to make diversionary attacks of Japanese bases on the Marshall Islands. Admiral Halsey and the aircraft carrier Enterprise was assigned to support the other two TFs in the event the Japanese Second Carrier Division attempted to stop the relief efforts. In overall command of the relief efforts was Vice Admiral W.S. Pye, the interim commander of the U.S. Fleet, based at Pearl Harbor. On December 16, the relief force sortied and left Pearl Harbor heading towards Wake.

### **Second Amphibious Assault**

The Japanese continued to bombard the Island of Wake in preparation for its second assault. By this time, the four Wildcats of VMF-211 that remained had been destroyed and the pilots and ground crew were re-assigned to assist the First FMDB by loading ammunition belts and running supplies to the forward outposts. On December 22, the atoll was hit by 29 bombers and 18 fighters launched from carriers. Pearl Harbor was immediately notified of the presence of a Japanese carrier fleet operating nearby and requested reinforcements. On December 23, Admiral Kajioka's fleet appeared off the coast of Wake with 2000 troops ready to hit the beaches. Shortly after midnight barges and landing craft began the assault. At 02:50 a message from Commander Cunningham on Wake to Admiral Pye was sent "ISLAND UNDER GUNFIRE. APPARENTLY LANDING" (Cunningham, 2022). At 03:15 Admiral Pye replied that "NO FRIENDLY VESSELS SHOULD BE IN YOUR IMMEDIATE VICINITY TODAY. KEEP ME INFORMED" (Cunningham, 2022). By 05:00 Commander Cunningham radioed "ENEMY ON ISLAND. ISSUE IN DOUBT" (Cunningham, 2022). By this time, Admiral Fletcher's relief forces were less than 625 miles from Wake atoll, and a controversial order was given by Admiral Pye, to return to base. The Admirals' decision was met with a storm of criticism by staff officers and aviators embarked aboard the ships as the fleet headed home. The decision to cancel the relief efforts all but sealed the fate of the island defenders and it was not long before the situation became hopeless. At 07:30 after all important documents and equipment had been destroyed, Commander Cunningham surrendered. The defenders of Wake were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

To this day, there remains controversy over Admiral Pye's decision to abort the relief efforts. With the forces that Admiral Kimmel assembled it was likely that the relief efforts would have been successful. In judging Admiral Pye, it is important to remember the situation at the time. The recent attack on Pearl Harbor had left the Pacific fleet crippled and all that remained

to carry on the fight were the carriers and support vessels of the relief efforts. The ships that remained were all that stood in the way of another attack on Pearl Harbor or even an attack on the west coast of the United States. Admiral Pye chose to be cautious at a time when public opinion wanted revenge, his decision was looked upon with disgust. Tokyo Rose, a name given by soldiers to a female radio broadcaster responsible for anti-American transmissions intended to demoralize soldiers fighting in the Pacific theater, summed it up best when she broadcasted "Where oh where, is the United States Navy?" (ZIMMERMAN, 2014).

As always, it is easy to look back on the situation and gain a better understanding of the events that unfolded that day. It is easy to hypothesize on what would have changed if the Americans had defeated the Japanese at Wake. It would be fair to assume that Japanese strategy would have changed after the defeat and thereby altering the timeline of the future. Just one year later the decisive battle of Midway may never have been fought. As for Admiral Pye, he turned over command of the Pacific Fleet to Admiral Chester Nimitz on December 31, 1941. Admiral Pye was ordered back to the states and assumed lesser commands until he retired in 1946. The Admiral passed away on May 4, 1959, his name forever synonymous with his orders to abandon the Wake Island garrison.

### **Casualties**

In the end the battle cost the lives of 52 Marines, including Captain Elrod, and the loss of three sailors. In addition, there were 70 civilian contractors killed. When the island fell 433 US personnel were captured by the enemy. By comparison, Japanese losses exceeded 700 dead. Eventually all but 98 civilian prisoners remained on the island, all other military personnel were transferred to prisoner of war camps. The horrors suffered by the prisoners can hardly be imagined. While being transported to Prisoner of War (POW) camps, a [Japanese Guard Commander, named Toshio Saito](#), chose five Wake Island prisoners and had them bound and blindfolded. He next assembled 150 spectators and declared "You have killed many Japanese soldiers in battle. For what you have done you are now going to be killed for revenge. You are representatives of your American soldiers and will be killed. You can now pray to be happy in your next world" (Cunningham, 2022). Each prisoner was beheaded, bayoneted, and mutilated; their bodies were then thrown overboard. This same guard took Commander Cunningham's Naval Academy ring in the name of the emperor. The 98 enslaved captives that remained on the island were starved, beaten, and forced to improve the island's defenses. On January 6, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stood before Congress giving his State of the Union Address. He cited Wake as a heroic battle, saying: "There were only some four hundred United States Marines who in the heroic and historic defense of Wake Island inflicted such great losses on the enemy. Some of those

men were killed in action; and others are now prisoners of war. When the survivors of that great fight are liberated and restored to their homes, they will learn that a hundred and thirty million of their fellow citizens have been inspired to render their own full share of service and sacrifice." (Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1942)

### Island Hopping

The Japanese worked their remaining captives hard, increasing the fortifications and preparing for an eventual assault to retake the island. Rather than attack this strongly defended position, the American leaders decided to bypass Wake in favor of attacking weaker positions of greater strategic value. This became known as "island hopping." By bypassing heavily defended positions, the US would expend far less resources and thus incur far fewer losses. As US naval and airpower increased, the USN was effectively able to blockade Wake, allowing its defenders to "wither on the vine" (Island Hopping, 2022). The blockage was so effective that the Japanese nearly wiped out the protected Sooty Terns population as they slowly starved.

### The 98 Rock

In addition to the blockage, Wake was subjected to air attacks on its garrison. In February of 1942, American aircraft pounded the island defenders with repeated air attacks. On July 24, 1943, a large formation of Consolidated B-24 Long Range Heavy Bombers struck the island. On October 5, 1943, the island was bombed again by naval aircraft launched from the U.S.S Lexington. The attack from carrier borne aircraft made the garrison commander, Captain Shigemitsu Sakaibara, believe an invasion was imminent. He ordered that all remaining prisoners be executed, they were taken by the Japanese to the north end of the island, blindfolded, and gunned down with machine guns. One of the prisoners managed to escape, returning to the place of the execution and carved the message "98 US PW 5-10-43" (Battle of Wake Island, 2022) into a large coral rock. The man was captured by the enemy and put to death, but the rock remains and is referred to as "The 98 Rock." The invasion never materialized, however, and the island continued to be bombed.



One such mission was launched from the decks of the USS Sand Jacinto. The San Jacinto (CVL-30) was an Independence-class light aircraft carrier and a young ensign by the name of George H. Bush flew his first combat mission from her deck against the Japanese on Wake Island. The Japanese garrison surrendered without a fight on September 4, 1945. Captain Sakaibara initially denied the prisoner executions but later confessed after some of his subordinates left handwritten confessions prior to thme committing suicide. Captain Sakaibara was convicted of war crimes by the allies and executed by hanging on the island

of Guam on June 19, 1947.

### After The War

After their repatriation both Major Devereux and Commander Cunningham were awarded the Navy Cross for their actions during the battle. Major Devereux retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Brigadier General and went on to serve as a United States Congressman. Commander Cunningham continued to serve in the Navy, his last duty assignment was as the Commanding Officer, Naval Technical Training Center, in Memphis Tennessee where he retired as a Rear Admiral. Captain Henry Elrod was killed during the battle and was posthumously promoted to Major and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. After the war, attempts were made to find the Japanese Guard Commander, Toshio Saito who executed the five POWs after their surrender. Officials were unable to find Saito, but they were able to find Commander Cunningham's class ring. The ring was in the pocket of one of Saito's kimonos and was later returned to Admiral Cunningham.



The memory of Wake Island lives on even today. The Navy has a custom of naming its frigates and destroyers after Navy and Marine Corps heroes. On September 21, 1985, the USS Elrod (FFG 980), was commissioned. The USS Elrod served with distinction during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211 flies to this day and are known as the "Wake Island Avengers."



Wake Island remains an important part of the United States strategic planning. The island's airstrips and military fortifications still serve as defensive screens against our enemies. Wake's sand crabs and Sooty Terns have returned and continue to flourish in their native habitat. If you were to take a stroll along Wake's shoreline you would come across remnants of war, bits, and pieces of destroyed landing crafts, bunkers, rusted tanks, and gun emplacements with their gun barrels pointing towards the sea. As you continue to walk along the beach, you will come across a white monument with a plaque that reads "Dedicated to the Gallant Defenders of Wake, 8 Dec - 23 Dec 1941, Enemy on Island Situation in Doubt." Finally, as you end your walk on the north end of the island you would come across "The 98 Rock." The rock stands as it did on that fateful day in 1943, watching over the site of the fallen - Lest we Forget.



## Conclusion

The Battle of Wake Island occurred during one of the darkest times in American history and is often referred to as the “Alamo of the Pacific.” Like those who fought to defend the Alamo, the defenders of Wake knew that they were on their own. They fought with bravery, tenacity and esprit de corps and because of that, it rallied a nation eager for revenge. Compared to the tragedy at Pearl Harbor, the Battle of Wake Island may seem insignificant, but to the Japanese it gave them a taste of things to come. As the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Thomas Holcomb said “Wake Island began the war magnificently for the Marine Corps, and America found that the old soldierly virtues are still embodied in its fighting men. Out of such actions as this a people’s strength and ultimate victory must come. America remembers Wake Island and is proud. The enemy remembers Wake Island and is uneasy” (Urwin, 2020). Of the outposts that were attacked early in the war, only the Island of Midway survived the initial onslaught by the Japanese. It would not be long before the Japanese Navy appeared off the coast of Midway, but that is another story.

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## Volunteer Opportunities at the Legion

As always, we have several volunteer opportunities for members and non-members. Currently, we are in need of someone with excellent administrative skills and the ability to see a task through to completion. This could mostly be done at home, but it will take some familiarization with how the business here operates.

As our buildings age, maintenance has become a growing concern. If you have any skills in any of the trades, or if you are a "Jack of ALL Trades", we could use your help. There are several projects pending.

**At this time, we're always looking for those with cooking skills. Special events, cooking lunch on those days when we need a sub to fill in, etc. If you want to show off your culinary skills to the membership, please contact the Post and we'll get you set up.**

If you're interested, please call 882-8639, or drop by. We'll contact you and match you up with an opportunity. **Volunteers are what allow Post 639 to function. YOU ARE NEEDED.** Come work and fellowship with us !!!

## Average Weather in March for Springfield .....

Daily high temperatures *increase* by 9°F, from 54°F to 63°F, rarely falling below 37°F or exceeding 77°F.

Daily low temperatures *increase* by 9°F, from 33°F to 42°F, rarely falling below 20°F or exceeding 57°F.

Over the course of March in Springfield, the length of the day is *rapidly increasing*. From the start to the end of the month, the length of the day increases by 1 hour, 12 minutes, implying an average daily increase of 2 minutes, 23 seconds, and weekly increase of 16 minutes, 43 seconds.

The shortest day of the month is *March 1*, with 11 hours, 23 minutes of daylight and the longest day is *March 31*, with 12 hours, 34 minutes of daylight.

The earliest sunrise of the month in Springfield is 6:30 AM on *March 11* and the latest sunrise is 59 minutes later at 7:28 AM on *March 12*.

The earliest sunset is 6:07 PM on *March 1* and the latest sunset is 1 hour, 28 minutes later at 7:34 PM on *March 31*.

Daylight saving time (DST) starts at 3:00 AM on *March 12, 2023*, shifting sunrise and sunset to be an hour later.

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The price is **\$6.00** per pizza for 10" pizzas . This is for personal use and cannot be resold. See one of the Bar Staff for additional information and to order.



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