



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

**JUNE 2021**



REMEMBER

## **From the Commander ...**

Friends,

Summer 2021 is about here, and I'm pretty sure we are all ready for it.

Last weekend we had the Pharaoh's Hanging Dice National's car show here at the post, and it went really well. Even with the rain, they had cars from as far as California and Delaware with over 100 entries and spectators parked from Scenic to the ball field. They've already booked to do it again next year.

We almost sold out of a few of our more popular beers, and we moved 75 pounds of smoked beef shoulder, 60 pounds of Bratwurst, and about a million tacos. The post made a lot of money off that food, and it was 100% volunteer prepared and served. In fact, we had more people offering to help than we needed, which is always a good thing. I can't begin to name all them all, but I think they had more fun than anyone else at the show.

Wednesday nights are picking up also with the Queen of Hearts jackpot nearing \$3000 and the weather warming up to allow our bands to play outside. Come out and check it out if you haven't been here lately.

Larry Melton is cooking in Judy's spot two days a week, and he's pretty good at it. If you don't know him, stop in and say hi. He's a great guy, fun to talk to, and knows his way around a cheeseburger. He and Steve (the guy who cooks the other days) are going to create a new summer menu with some changing daily specials and some lighter options to get us through the hot summer months. If there's something you're craving, let them know. They're both volunteering 10 or more hours a week for us, so be sure to say thanks when you see them around.

Coming up, we've got the OIF/OEF memorial the first weekend in June. It's the first memorial to post 9/11 veterans we've done, and probably the first one in the area. There's no charge to come see it, so bring your friends and any of those young veterans that you may know. Mary Newsom is heading up that project and still looking for volunteers. If you can help, even for just a short time, please let her know. We will be serving lunch all three days, so I'll also need help with that if you are looking for a good time.

The following weekend, we have the Junebug Jamboree back. They're pretty well self-contained, but we will need help in the sugar shack and some runners for the clubroom bar that weekend, especially if the weather is good.

In short, I suppose I'm saying there are plenty of ways you can support the Post and your community here at the Legion while having a good time with your friends.

Also coming up on June 1st we will be having elections for officers for the 2021-2022 year. Bob's going to have a list of the current nominees later in the newsletter, and we will open the floor to nominations again on the night of the election.

You **MUST** have your 2021 current membership card to vote

that evening, so be sure you do. If you need a replacement or haven't received yours yet, please call the Post and speak with Tom Newsom, the Adjutant, and he will get you taken care of.

Finally, at the last meeting there was some discussion about the Post's tax-exempt status with the IRS. I'm going to include a brief article in this newsletter about what a 501(c)19 Tax-exempt organization is and what we are can, must, and cannot do under the IRS rules. I've managed tax-exempt organizations professionally for years, and even amongst professionals in this industry there is quite a bit of confusion about the different types of charitable, non tax-exempt, and tax-exempt nonprofits, so this article should clear some of that up for those of you who are interested, or may be interested in making charitable donations or including the Post in your estate plan.

### **IRS Guidelines for 501c organizations**

The federal tax code has a few dozen different classifications for non-profit organizations under section 501(c). Two of which, 501(c)19 and 501(c)23, apply specifically to organizations made up of veterans. The main difference is that 501(c)23's have to be organizations formed prior to 1880, and the American Legion was formed in 1920, so it qualifies as a tax exempt charity under section 501(c)19.

The excerpt below from the IRS's website outlines what it takes to continue to qualify under this designation. The requirements are fairly broad, and we have no problem meeting them here, as long as "No part of its net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual."

You may claim a charitable deduction on your annual income tax filings for donations you make to Post 639 as long as you receive nothing of value in return for that donation (no, you cannot claim your bar tab as a charitable donation).

The following is from <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/veterans-organizations>:

The Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) includes two subsections [501(c)(19) and 501(c)(23)] which provide for tax -exemption under section 501(a) for organizations that benefit veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Internal Revenue Code section 7701(a)(15) defines "Armed Forces of the United States" to include all regular and reserve components of the uniformed services which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force, and each term also includes the Coast Guard.

**To be exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(19), an organization must be either:**

- a post or organization of past or present members of the United States Armed Forces
- an auxiliary unit or society of such post or organization
- or a trust or foundation for such post or organization

**A veterans' post or organization must meet the following**



## requirements to be exempt under section 501(c)(19):

1. It must be organized in the United States or any of its possessions
2. At least 75 percent of its members must be past or present members of the United States Armed Forces
3. At least 97.5 percent of its members must be:
  - present or former members of the United States Armed Forces,
  - cadets (including only students in college or university ROTC programs or at Armed Services academies) or spouses, widows, widowers, ancestors, or lineal descendants of individuals referred to in the first or second bullet
4. It must be operated exclusively for one or more of the following purposes:
  - to promote the social welfare of the community (e.g., to promote the common good and general welfare of the people of the community)
  - to assist disabled and needy war veterans and members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents - and the widows and orphans of deceased veterans
  - to provide entertainment, care, and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the United States Armed Forces
  - to carry on programs to perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and members of the United States Armed Forces and comfort their survivors
  - to conduct programs for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes
  - to sponsor or participate in activities of a patriotic nature
  - to provide insurance benefits for members or their dependents or
  - to provide social and recreational activities for members
5. No part of its net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

**Tax Treatment of Donations:** Donations of war veterans' organizations are deductible as charitable contributions on the donor's federal income tax return. At least 90% of the organization's membership must consist of war veterans. The term war veterans means persons, whether or not present members of the United States Armed Forces, who have served in the United States Armed Forces during a period of war (including the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the Persian Gulf war, and later declared wars)

If you have questions about this, please feel free to ask me or your tax preparer, or check the IRS website. It's easy to use and full of good information.

Also, several websites exist that help you evaluate the charities that may solicit funds from you. You can try <https://www.guidestar.org> or <https://www.charitynavigator.org>. But keep in mind that these websites may not include information for charities organized under section 501(c)19 or 501(c)23. For a list of the IRS non-profit designations under section 501c, you can look here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501c\\_organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/501c_organization)

As always, I want to thank all the volunteers, both the ones you see and the ones you don't, for making our Post one of the biggest and best in the state. Come in, have a beer and a burger, and see your friends if you haven't lately.

Semper Fi, Darin Hargis

## **Post 639 Election for 2021-2022**

The following candidates have been nominated to serve as Post 639 Officers for the 2021-22 year. Candidates will have the opportunity to make statements, answer questions, and discuss their positions during the General Meeting on **Tuesday, June 1st**. The election will then be held.

### **Remember, you must present your Legion Membership card to attend and vote in the election.**

| Office             | Candidate      | Office          | Candidate    |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Commander          | Darin Hargis   | Service Officer | Bob Scott    |
|                    | Mike Goforth   | Chaplain        | Rex Krasche  |
| Adjutant           | Tom Newsom     | Historian       | Bob Kalwat   |
| 1st Vice Commander | Justin Adamson | Member at Large | Don Weiss    |
| 2nd Vice Commander | Mike Chandler  |                 | Jim Matney   |
| Finance            | Nathan Carlson |                 | Barry Greene |
| Judge Advocate     | Jim Cooper     |                 | Mike Howard  |
| Sergeant at Arms   | Ron Jackson    |                 | Jeff Wurtz   |

## **Chaplain**

I heard we lost one of our members. Mark Deatherage passed away May 20th, 2021. I do not have any details, only that he had some health problems. I don't have any time when the funeral will be. Please pray for Mark's family in their time of need. As you all know, we don't know when the Lord will call you home to be with him.

Some of the assisted-living locations are slowly opening to visit residents, but you have to wear a mask. I will be glad when that will be over. Mt. Vernon Veterans Home is not open yet, I hope soon.

All for now. As always, I keep the Post and its' members in my prayers.

Chaplain Rex Krasche

## **Auxiliary**

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers, support, love, concern, cards, Peace Lily and flowers for the loss of my brother and Terra's uncle.

Special “thank you” to Commander Darin Hargis, Miss Connie, Miss Dana, and Hallie and Bob Scott for coming to the visitation. You will never know how much that meant to Terra and I.

We have had a rough May with the loss of our ALA Sister, Maria Davis and Past Commander Mark Deatherage. Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. Death is part of the cycle of life. It is never easy for those left behind. We are left with the memories that we hold dearest in our hearts for the loved ones we have lost. May our memories help heal us, comfort us, and fill our hearts with joy and love. We are blessed for all the days we have with each other.

June will find the Celebration Tree graced with Army flags in honor of their birthday which is June 14th. Cake and ice cream will be served after our June general meeting.

ALA members are looking forward to assisting with the OIF/OEF Wall Event June 3rd - June 6th. Please come out for this amazing event to honor those who served this country during this time.

Fathers’ Day is June 20th, and ALA will be presenting Fathers’ Day gifts to our veterans at Mt. Vernon. If you would like to help us, we are looking for items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, large-print playing cards, large-print word search books, handkerchiefs, non-skid socks, etc. You can leave your items at the bar. We will need the items by Wednesday, June 16th.

The Cruise-in and Hangin’ Dice Nationals Car Show was a huge success despite the rain Mother Nature gave us. Thank you, ALA members and spouses/families, who helped with that event !! Manning the Sugar Shack on Friday and Saturday were: Marsha, Kathy, Bre, Steve, Mary, Randy, Zella, Connie, Joyce, Terra, Olivia, Riley and Justin. Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU !!M

On May 16th, ALA began ridding the Post of our “Stuff”. We cleaned out the shack and filled up the dumpster! The clean-up crew of Post members Ron, Mike, Justin, ALA members Miss Connie, Hallie, Susan and Terra did a fabulous job! Thank you for your help! Next is the shed. We will save that for this fall at that building gets extremely hot to work in when the weather gets warm. ALA has nothing stored in the Sugar Shack except our two canopies which we shared with other Post groups when they are needed. ALA will no longer use the Sugar Shack for the storage of our “stuff”. I am still in the process of cleaning and organizing the VSO office. The office has been painted, thank you Terra and Justin for your assistance. Mr. Jackson is putting in storage shelving units for us, THANK YOU SIR ! I hope that everyone will do their part and help keep it organized. It does us no good if we can’t find anything in there. Let’s keep everything in it’s place!

ALA will be taking second-round nominations and acceptance at the June general meeting for Officers of the 2021-2022 election in July. If you can’t make the June meeting, but would like to nominate a member for Officership, please let one of the current member know and we will be happy to submit your nomination for you. However, please remember to submit that request in writing - paper, email or text form.

I hope everyone has a safe Memorial Day holiday. And remember, Memorial Day is not for hot dogs and beer ... It’s about those who didn’t come home - those who died for this country, those who died for US. Memorial Day is for remembrance.

In the Spirit of Service, not Self

Diana Cooperider

President, Auxiliary

## **Legion Riders**

Hello, Riders !! Been a busy last few weeks, trying to ride while dodging the weather. Sometimes the rain got to us, other times not. We got in Dinner Rides to Missouri Mike’s in April, and Bellecino’s in May. Our April monthly ride to Roaring River State Park got rained out, and we weren’t able to make it up. But we did get in a ride to Back 40 in Mountain View, AR on 5/22. Was fun to finally open ‘em up for a good long run.

We will ride to Clinton, MO on Wednesday, June 3rd to escort the Memorial to Post 639. Kick Stands UP is 9:30AM. We will also be providing security for the OIF/OEF Memorial from June 4th to 6th. We have the duty rosters pretty well filled, but if you want to assist, there’s plenty of ways to help. Just contact me and we’ll find a place for you.

**GREAT** to have **Chuck Tutone** back with us after some serious health issues. **WELCOME BACK !!**

Our ALR monthly meeting for June will be **moved to 6/27**, so that we allow all our fathers to spend time with their families on 6/20.

Remember, we follow the **50/50 rule** for our rides. **50% or greater rain** forecast, or **temp of 50 degrees or below** and we’ll choose to wait for a better day.

### **Remaining 2021 ALR Ride Schedule**

**Saturday, June 26 - Gaston’s, Lakeview, AR**

**Saturday, July 24 - Sam’s Cellar, Neosho, MO**

**Saturday, August 21 - Pizza Cellar, Rockaway Beach, MO**

**Saturday, September 25 - Ozark Café, Jasper, AR**

**Saturday, October 23 - Pied Piper, Eureka Springs, AR**

**Ride safe out there ..**

**Marsha Crom, ALR Chapter 639 Director**

## **Historian/Newsletter Editor**

June is an extensive month history-wise.

\* **The Battle of Midway (June 4-7, 1942)**

\* **Operation Overlord (D-Day, June 6, 1944)**

\* **Flag Day / US Army Birthday (June 14th)**

\* **Korean War begins (June 25, 1950)**

## \* National PTSD Awareness Day (June 27th)

This month's newsletter features extensive coverage of the Battle of Midway from the perspective of our own Sgt. Ed Fox, USMC, Post 639 member, who is the last surviving Marine who was present on the island when the battle commenced. Ed was interviewed on May 18th at the Post, using his story on [pacificwar.org](http://pacificwar.org) as a guide for discussion. Reading the content here will leave an indelible mark on your memory. Please take your time and allow yourself to absorb it.

Sgt Fox was interviewed mid-May regarding his WWII experiences. His transcribed comments will appear in the **July Post 639 Newsletter**.

So much to remember and reflect on. So much past/present/future selflessness/sacrifice to be thankful for. Always remember and pray for those veterans and their families, who are still fighting the past in their current lives, and be willing to help whenever the need arises.

**Semper Fi .....**

**Bob Kalwat**

**Post 639 Historian/Newsletter Editor**

## **A MARINE ON MIDWAY -**

### **ED FOX'S STORY ©**

**By Ed Fox, Pfc - 6th Defense Battalion,  
Fleet Marine Force**



**(Photo courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service)**

Ed Fox was serving on Midway with the 6th Defense Battalion, Fleet Marine Force, at the time of the Battle of Midway, 4-6 June 1942. His post was a machine-gun bunker on the south-eastern shore of Sand Island, the larger of the two islands situated at the southern end of the Midway Atoll lagoon.

If the United States Pacific Fleet had been destroyed at

Midway in accordance with Admiral Yamamoto's plan, the Japanese would have launched amphibious landings from the southern side of Midway Atoll. Ed Fox's bunker would have faced an intense barrage from the guns of Japanese warships and would have been directly in the path of crack Japanese assault troops when they stormed ashore to capture the last American-garrisoned base west of Hawaii.

**I join the Marine Corps** - Volunteering for the Corps on 1 June 1941 in Omaha, Nebraska, I had not the slightest conception as to what lay ahead for me. I had been motivated to enlist by the attack on the American gunboat *Panay* in the Yangtze River in 1937. Helping my parents recover from the Great Depression by leaving home was also in the back of my mind. I was also a member of the National Guard at the time - had been for three years. The Guard was very lax on qualifications - be able to walk, breath, and say "yes sir" - all for the sum of \$21.00 per month (both the Guard and the Corps paid the same). I was even promised 30 days *vacation* each year. How could one complain with benefits like that during Depression years?

In Omaha, the recruiting sergeant presented me with a train ticket and meal tickets for travel to the San Diego Marine Corps Training Station. I was even sent "Pullman style", with first class dinners and sleeping quarters. Now that was living!

**I meet my first "Gunny" sergeant** - We were greeted by one mean looking gunnery sergeant at the San Diego train station. After forming the bewildered "boots" into a makeshift formation, the "Gunny" asked, "anyone with prior service in the ranks?"

That's when I learned my first lesson: *don't ever volunteer!* Gunny had me come "front and center", and informed me that I was to be the platoon guide. "Do you know what a guide is supposed to do, boot?" That's when I made my second mistake. "I think so", I replied. We then all found out the meaning of "drop and ten". What a beginning!

We slept in ten-man pyramid tents with wood decking and canvas cots. Close order drill was the primary subject, along with organized calisthenics under arms. The weapon was a 1903 bolt action Springfield. We learned the parts and care of *our weapon!* That "weapon" (not a "gun" or "rifle") was our sleeping partner on many a night.

The food was superior to what many of us ever had at home - all "family style". Many of us served on mess duty as additional duty and received the large amount of \$5.00 extra per month. That was promptly blown on "pogey-bait" (candy).

**Marine training was never intended for the faint-hearted** Physical training was primarily associated with learning your General Orders by heart. Woe be to the person who by the second week didn't know his G/Os - I being among the unlucky ones! My punishment was to string cigarette butts on a spool of thread by a certain time. Even with friends helping me smoke packs of cigarettes (at 5 cents a pack), I did not make the deadline. My additional punishment was to fill my

back pack with wet sand and wear it for 28 hours. I still know my General Orders.

The drill instructors, known to us as the "DIs", pushed us hard, even threatened us. Training platoons were very competitive in everything. Our platoon had to be *the best*, or else. One morning, our Gunny marched us to the brig. One squad at a time entered this fearful establishment. We sat in a cell and had the hatch slammed and locked. Each squad spent ten minutes in there and listened to a lecture on P&P. "P&P" is Marine jargon for brig time on a diet of bread and water. P&P was what was going to happen to us if our platoon failed in any way in winning top honors at the end of the three month training period.

We were taught the basics: map reading, how to box a compass, work together to achieve a goal, become proficient on the .03 (Springfield rifle), .45 caliber pistol, .30 caliber MG (machine-gun), grenades, bayonets and "hand-to-hand". There were times in the middle of the night when the DI would wake us up and order us to pack up for an extended time in the "boonies". The first week you were taught what was to be in that pack. The wrath of "you know who" would be all over you if you failed to have the complete requirements within. At the end of the march, some three to four hours later, we would be told to "prepare for inspection." The SOP was to empty your pack and lay the contents out on your poncho, identical to the picture in the manual.

One poor soul named Helms had newspaper in his pack, nothing else. When the Gunny came by for inspection not one word was said to him. The DI just went on as if Helms was not there. When we were told to pack up, and prepare to march back to our tents, our route took us to the brig. Helms was told to fall out and report to the turnkey. His weapon and bayonet were taken from him in front of the platoon. The expression on his face was all about dread. He was led into the brig and locked in a cell. We then came into the brig one at a time, told Helms goodbye, and left.

Helms received P&P that night and the next morning. Gunny brought him back the next day just before noon lunch. Helms spoke about his time in the pokey, of lost sleep, and "sweep & swab" all night long. Training was severe, and sometimes we thought combat would be easier than three months under this Gunny.

**My graduation from Boot Camp** - I still have my graduating basic platoon picture. As sure as I am sitting here typing this to you all, had it not been for our gunnery sergeant's dedication to us (which we could not realize at the time), I and many others would not be here today.

The last day we were in full greens - spit and polish. All the training platoons were to "pass in review". Full band, colors, reviewing stand with VIPs - and *our platoon* was the color guard. As we formed up that morning, Gunny called me "front and center" and asked, "Marine, do you know the duties of a guidon bearer?" My reply was, "yes, Gunny, I do!" He then placed the guidon in my hands and said, "take your post, Marine."

In my life to date, there were many times I felt proud of my accomplishments, but this honor, as the Gunny ordered me to be the platoon's guide to pass in review, was without a doubt the proudest moment that I can recall.

**By the way**--Helms graduated with honors and was later recommended for Officer Candidates School.



This photograph was taken at the time of Ed Fox's arrival on Midway with the Sixth Defense Battalion in January 1942. He is wearing a World War I model steel helmet. He trained with the .03 caliber 1903 Springfield rifle. During the months immediately following Pearl Harbor, much of the equipment used by American servicemen dated from World War I

**Arrival on Midway** - After graduating from Boot Camp, I was assigned to the 2d Marine Division, 10<sup>th</sup> Marines HDQ. We left San Diego for Midway just before Christmas 1941.

When I arrived on Midway in late December 1941 or early January 1942, I had been in the Marine Corps for six months. Like others, I was green, untested, cocky, and so mission oriented, I wondered why we needed so many of us (56 Officers/enlisted) to defeat the Japanese. The day we disembarked onto Sand Island, we were shelled by a submarine. The projectiles did not land near us on the dock, confirming to us "boots", those Japanese couldn't hit a barn wall if they were inside the barn. I was to learn later how foolish that statement was.

My first impression of Midway was: What a beautiful place, just birds, white coral sand, surf, some trees and sunlight. Six months ago, I left home Omaha, NE, where my parents were having a difficult time due to the lingering 1930s Depression. This seemed to be a luxury assignment.

**Preparing to "repel boarders"** - We practiced and practiced on how best to repel an invading force. At the same time, we spent day and into the evening constructing barbed wire lines with concertina wire in front and behind the barbed wire line. Some of us were selected (ha!) to work in the surf at low tide to lay again more wire barriers. Sun screen was an unknown word, and the "Man-O-War" took their toll - me included. We also constructed demolition devices. These were wooden boxes about two feet square packed with nails/spikes, and many pounds of dynamite with an impact detonator located on the island side of the mine. One could fire his weapon, and strike the bull painted on the box to detonate the device. In theory, this was a good morale booster for us, but as the days went on and the heat played havoc with the compound of the dynamite, we learned that it was better not to walk between the device and the surf as the "Gooneys" (albatrosses) often would crash land and strike one of these now motion-

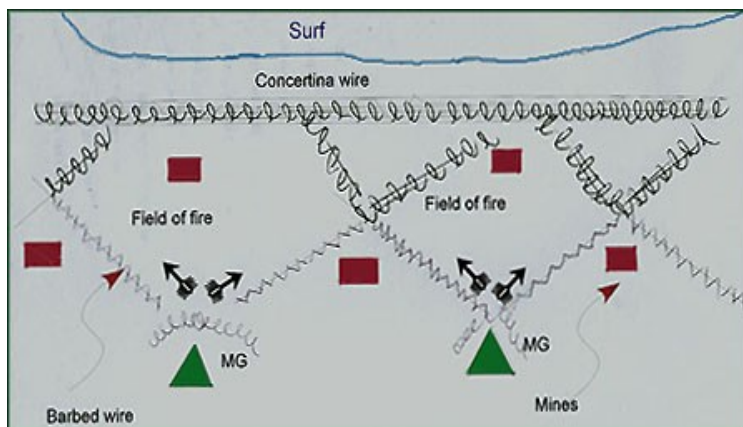


sensitive mines.

With only one year in the Corps, including six months on Midway, I was not in any position to know what lay ahead. We knew of and prepared for an attack, but us lowly "grunts" had such a swaggering attitude (as most "boots" have) we were more concerned about our beer ration at the time. Call it blind, dumb bravado if you will, we were inexperienced at warfare. The only times we had come under fire since Pearl was when Japanese submarines would surface at dusk and fire a few rounds. They were on the horizon. Not one of those rounds ever came close to our bunker.

Many of us were cross-trained on most every weapon on the island, including the four tanks. Not that we would be proficient on these weapons, but we could operate the tank and load the 7-inch naval guns, the 3-inch anti-aircraft (AA) guns, the 40 mm Bofors AA dual mounts, and the .50 Browning machine-guns. The 40 mm AA guns could also be depressed for use against an amphibious landing.

As for secondary positions inland, if there were any, my team was not informed. Fall back and retreat was not in our training manual. Nor did we train for such an event. Deny the enemy the ground in front of you was our order for the battle.



Ed Fox's machine-gun (MG) bunker was dug almost to the water line on the south-eastern tip of Sand Island. If the Japanese had invaded Midway, as they planned to, his MG bunker would have been directly in the path of their assault waves and supporting off-shore bombardment. The makeshift mines, packed with dynamite and nails are shown in red. The Marine machine-gun bunkers are shown in green. Each bunker was separated by 200 yards from adjoining bunkers on either side.

### **A machine-gun bunker "with view" on the beach at Sand Island**

My machine-gun (MG) bunker was dug almost to the water line on the south-eastern tip of Sand Island. If the Japanese had invaded Midway, as they planned to, my MG bunker would have been directly in the path of their assault waves.

During high tides it became kinda moist inside the bunker.

We had a coral sand deck. Shoes and our gear were never stored on the deck. The bulkhead (or wall) was lined with sandbags, I believe the overhead was of oak, similar to railroad ties. On the exterior was waterproof covering, and then a neat layer of sandbags covered with some eight to nine feet of coral sand. Foliage was transplanted on the top, front and rear of the gun position. The front and rear of this mound was also heaped with coral sand sloping off some twenty feet or more. The entrance from the rear was enter, go six feet, turn, go six feet, and turn once more to enter the bunker. There was the appearance of a sea wall or dike from one MG position to the next, though no connection (tunnel) was even thought of.

Inside, the bunker had two rooms. One room was very small with low overhead. It had the two-tiered double bunks, an equally small table, four ammo boxes for chairs, and one single light bulb of very low wattage. The second room housed the .30 caliber Browning water-cooled 1917 model machine-gun. I think this room was about six foot squared.

The MG was mounted on a tripod that was sandbagged on a ledge. We had an excellent view of the beach, the barbed wire, and reef through the port. Picture a funnel flattened, that is what the port looked like. We could traverse the MG left about 30 degrees from center, and likewise to the right. We had our gun lined up on the barbed wire, the theory being that the enemy would gang up on the wire and you would have your target. There were similar barbed wire lines to right and left of our bunker, but those lines were for the MG bunkers on our right and left to cover. Those bunkers were located 200 yards away to our right and left. The overall plan was that the field of fire of each MG would overlap the adjacent gun - left or right. I have shown in the sketch above the location of two of our MG bunkers guarding the beach at Midway; how the barbed wire defenses were positioned; the makeshift mines; and the respective fields of fire of two adjoining MGs.

At the rear of the MG bunker we had a round, sandbagged, five-foot deep hole with a mono mount for a .30 BAR directly in the center. The "BAR" or Browning Automatic Rifle is a clip feed 20 round shoulder or bi-pod mount weapon. This was our secondary weapon, and my selection for a personal weapon plus a .45 caliber pistol. This position was intended for use against aircraft. We manned it once on 4 June, after the Japanese air attack.

Communication was unsatisfactory. We were wired up in series from one bunker to the next. If the line went dead for our EE8 crank-up field phones, one of us would walk to the position that we could not converse with, left or right, to find the problem, repair it, and return.

We had sound power phones also. What a toy that was! Two lines to the next position; one line hooked up to your phone, the other grounded to an area that you kept damp. Fresh water at our position was too valuable to waste pouring on the ground. We needed that water for the water-cooled MG. "Field expedience" took care of the damp

ground.

When not on alert, we ate in the mess hall, got fresh showers, clean clothes, and clean heads. On alert, hot food would be brought near your position. On "red alert", our famous C-rations would have to do.

**Our bunker was equipped with "all modern conveniences"** - A slit trench was the norm for "calls of nature", but sometimes we would scrounge wood from the night stores and build our own outhouse. The trouble with the outhouse was keeping it hid. After Pearl Harbor, Japanese submarines had a nasty habit of surfacing at twilight off the southern coast of Sand Island, and firing off several quick rounds at the island before crash-diving. Their aim wasn't good, but we weren't going to give the Japanese our outhouse for a target. Needless to say, no Marine was going to be caught in a makeshift outhouse on the beach while under fire from off shore. We made one that collapsed until it was needed. We could pull it up with rope, secure the sides and door, and "do your thing". Then we undo the sides, lower it to the ground, and cover it back up with camouflage netting.

We had a searchlight battery close to our MG bunker. It was a dangerous companion when under fire from the sea. A Japanese submarine surfaced off the southern coast of Sand Island on 8 February 1942, and began firing at the island. Marine 5-inch Battery A began returning fire, and our nearby searchlight battery lit up to probe for the submarine. A searchlight draws enemy fire like a moth to candlelight. We ran like hell for cover!

**Beach patrols** - Beach patrols, one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise was SOP. For a time walking the "beach", listening to the surf, and the ever present din of the birds was enjoyable. But that soon tired. The sand was not packed as one would think. The wave-washed beach was several yards away where nice packed sand was located. We walked in loose deep coral sand, sinking at each step, and often filling your ankle high boots. When darkness fell, I would often remove my shoe laces so I could readily empty the boot. Sometimes I would walk bare footed (I had better not let the OD\* see me in such out-of-uniform state). I would bury my feet into the sand whenever he and the Sarg of the Guard inspected. Whether they knew and never said anything I'll never know. I was never challenged about my lack of shoes.

**Officer of the Day** - As the south-eastern tip of Sand Island was close to the reef, it was deemed the point the enemy might select to infiltrate for reconnaissance. Because of this potential, my area of patrol, and the area on each flank, was inspected at night often, even two to four times; mainly to see if we grunts were paying attention to our Special Orders. I had a fear that some over eager OD might surprise me by approaching from my rear, let alone the enemy. The OD I worried about. The enemy, well, one could shoot his butt! I devised a tactic that would alert me somewhat, if

one did try to cross my path or approach from my rear. It wasn't foolproof but it worked for me.

I would gather a branch of foliage and drag it behind me as I walked my "beat". On my return, I would be able to see tracks left on the beach had the OD come down to see if I was doing what I was supposed to do. I often would find where he would lay hidden in the inland shrubbery then walk down to my patrol area. Sometimes I would challenge him as he would approach. One other time I detected him hidden, and I was able to get behind him, sneak up on him, and stick the muzzle of my BAR against his butt while saying in a loud voice, "Who goes there"? I almost got court martial over that. But, you know what, that officer never challenged my ability again.

**I shoot a nocturnal intruder** - Near the end of May 1942, we were pretty sure the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) had us in their sights for an invasion. Instead of four hours on duty at the beach patrols, we spent two on and four off. The thinking was that one would be more alert with just two hours on duty. It worked. Morale was better, and we really were able to do a better job at keeping an eye peeled for whatever.

During one of these assignments, I was on my usual strolls during one helluva storm; thick cloud cover, strong winds, heavy rain, and high, roaring surf. Black would not describe the visibility that night. But as I trudged along trying to keep my weapon dry under my poncho which was acting like a sail, I noticed a dark object in the surf. This unidentified object was approaching the beach and directly to my front. All I could ID was, it was black, and crawling slow and man-size toward my position. My adrenaline kicked in as I got into a prone position, brought my BAR up, and sighted in on my crawling subject. I am sure all this took seconds but what seemed like a long time to me. The enemy had arrived and here we go. I don't even remember slipping the safety off, but my clip held 20 rounds. I let go three rounds, striking the subject, and waited and waited and waited. Not a movement on the beach anywhere. The island sirens sounded off, and the entire island went into "Condition Red".

I did not move. I could hear my buddies calling my name, but how many were there in the surf I did not know. For several minutes I lay still and quiet. I finally observed my friends approaching in strength, and then called out that I had shot somebody or thing in the surf. I found out later that the entire ring of the island patrols were tripled because of my incident.

Sunrise revealed that I had shot a seal, striking it with two rounds. I fired three, and my First Sergeant made me pay one dollar to the slush fund for wasting one round. Needless to say, I did receive a pat on the back from my CO and that officer I had scared so bad gave me a case of beer. The side effect of the whole thing was I got razzed for sometime - shooting a poor defenseless seal!



**We go to "Condition Red"** - The day the Japanese attacked Midway will never leave my memory. At one hour before sunrise all personnel on the island went to Condition Red. This had been a normal routine every morning. Word had been passed down that the IJN was close, and an assault on the island was imminent. Not many of us had slept that night. I had spent four hours on beach patrol during the night and my adrenaline was very active on this morning.

During the battle, I was to remain stationed at my machine-gun position on the south-eastern tip of Sand Island. We were charged with guarding the southern tip of Sand Island. Our sole job was to deny the enemy any foothold on the island. I had a .30 caliber water-cooled machine-gun, a .30 caliber BAR, a .45 cal. pistol, 50 fragmentation hand grenades, and two rolls of toilet paper. We joked about the TP. We figured that if we expended all our munitions we'd sure as hell need the TP.

A short time after sunrise, we stood down from Condition Red to a lesser alert. But then, as we ate our cold breakfast, the sirens began to sound, returning us to Condition Red. The IJN had been sighted! My machine-gun bunker was pretty well covered with coral sand and foliage, and had a single open port towards the sea. Sitting waiting, watching the sea out that small port was nerve racking. The Marines manning the beach MG bunkers had to stay underground so as not to draw fire or reveal the location of our bunkers to the Japanese.

**The Japanese bombs begin to fall** - Now it was a waiting game. I do not remember the exact time but the sirens sounded again. Word was passed on the sound power phones that the IJN planes were sighted and to take cover. I waited in my mole hole. Anti-aircraft (AA) fire could be heard, and bombs that were dropped on the island could be heard. The bombardment lasted only a few minutes. The nearby AA guns ceased firing. I then went topside to get a view of the island, and observed the north end in smoke and flames. A single IJN plane came in from the south-west at a low altitude, seemingly headed right for me. I headed for my safe hole again.



Japanese carrier-launched bombers have withdrawn after striking Midway on the morning of 4 June 1942. In this view of Sand island, the camera is facing south-west and shows the bomb-damaged laundry building in the foreground and burning oil tanks in the distance. Ed Fox's machine-gun bunker was located beyond the burning oil tanks and on the shore line

**So few of our planes return** - Later that morning, as I waited for our returning planes - sitting in the foliage - hardly a Midway-based plane returned; only a few of our planes - from a carrier, I was told later. So many flew off that day to deny the enemy access to Midway and to protect me; many never to return. To this day, I have the highest respect for those men. They did not know me, nor I them. What they did was their job, that they were trained to do. They gave the ultimate sacrifice though. I have often wondered if I could have been that brave.

**Midway in Retrospect**—On paper our Midway defenses may have looked great, but the issue would have been in doubt if we'd been invaded. At the time I was untried, untested, too young and cocky to realize the consequences of combat. Iwo Jima taught me how foolish I had been at Midway.

Had the IJN begun to shell us, my position would not have held up. Even a near miss would have brought the coral sand down in front of the port, blinding us for sure. Had the enemy gained the island where would we go? We would stay and fight, doing what we had been trained for.

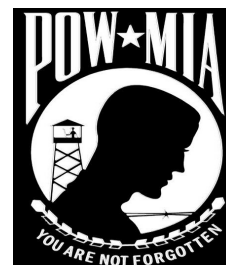
Since then, I have given much thought to that "what if". Here we are holding off the IJN landing parties. Just maybe, the Army Air Corps or Navy air from Pearl could come to our rescue. We should have had a sizable force in Hawaii air and afloat, at least enough to distract the enemy from landing.

We would have held the ground we were assigned to protect at a terrible loss. I just pray that I would have been as brave as the Navy and Marines that attacked the carriers that day, but were unable to return.

After Midway, I trained as a forward observer for artillery and air support with the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. I was on the third wave at Iwo Jima and called in several emergency barrages from a battleship. It might have been the *Iowa*. I experienced then what a Navy bombardment and two divisions of Marine artillery can do. *If the tables had been turned around, we would have been hurting at Midway.*

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# JUNE 2021



| Sun  | Mon  | Tue  | Wed   | Thu   | Fri  | Sat   |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
|  |  | <b>1 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>GENERAL MTG<br/>7PM ELECTION</b>            | <b>2 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>QUEEN OF<br/>HEARTS 6-8PM</b>    | <b>3 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>OIF/OEF<br/>MEMORIAL WALL</b>                               | <b>4 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>OIF/OEF<br/>MEMORIAL WALL</b>     | <b>5</b><br><br><b>OIF/OEF<br/>MEMORIAL WALL</b> |
| <b>6</b><br><br><b>OIF/OEF<br/>MEMORIAL WALL</b> | <b>7 LUNCH 11-2</b>  | <b>8 LUNCH 11-2</b>  | <b>9 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>QUEEN OF<br/>HEARTS 6-8PM</b>    | <b>10 LUNCH 11-2</b>  | <b>11 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>JUNE BUG SHOW<br/>JUNE 11-12</b> | <b>12</b><br><br><b>SUB VETS<br/>1PM</b>         |
| <b>13</b>  | <b>14 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>SAL PLANNING<br/>MTG 7PM</b> | <b>15 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>AUXILIARY<br/>E-BOARD MTG<br/>6:30PM</b> | <b>16 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>QUEEN OF<br/>HEARTS 6-8PM</b> | <b>17 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>RED KNIGHTS<br/>6-8PM</b>                                | <b>18 LUNCH 11-2</b>   | <b>19</b><br><br><b>CVMA VETS<br/>5PM</b>      |
| <b>20</b>  | <b>21 LUNCH 11-2</b>   | <b>22 LUNCH 11-2</b>   | <b>23 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>QUEEN OF<br/>HEARTS 6-8PM</b> | <b>24 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>FLEET RESERVE<br/>ASSOCIATION<br/>NEWSLETTER CONTENT</b> | <b>25 LUNCH 11-2</b>   | <b>26</b>   |
| <b>27</b><br><br><b>LEGION RIDERS<br/>6PM</b>  | <b>28 LUNCH 11-2</b>   | <b>29 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><b>E-BOARD MTG<br/>6:30PM</b>  | <b>30 LUNCH 11-2</b><br><br><b>QUEEN OF<br/>HEARTS 6-8PM</b> |   |  |   |



# 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.

## National PTSD Awareness Day - June 27th



# 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.

**We have an opportunity for work on our "hardcopy Newsletter" list. The need is to contact these members and attempt to secure an email address.**

If you're interested, please call 882-8639, send an email to [historianeditorlz639@gmail.com](mailto:historianeditorlz639@gmail.com), or drop by. We'll contact you and get you set up !!!



# JB's



## Gourmet Spice Blends

FLAVORFUL BBQ  
SEASONINGS & RUBS

### SAVOR THE Q

JUST SPICE - NOTHING ELSE  
Low Sodium \* Gluten Free \* No MSG

JOSHUA BRACK  
(Founder)  
Ozark, Mo

[Jbspiceblends.com](http://Jbspiceblends.com)  
[Info@Jbspiceblends.com](mailto:Info@Jbspiceblends.com)  
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A Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Business  
(SDVOSB) providing mission essential cyber security capabilities  
[www.foxholetechnology.com](http://www.foxholetechnology.com) - Wes Hester, CEO

LZ639 Pizza Company will make available to our members of Post 639 and families your choice of 12 different pizzas that we offer to area bars. There is a minimum order of 6 pizzas and they will only be made when we are making orders for our wholesale customers and will be **take out only**.

The price is \$6.00 per pizza for 10" pizzas. This is for personal use and cannot be resold. See Connie or the bartender for additional information and to order.





Vietnam War Memorial  
American Legion Post 639  
2660 South Scenic Ave  
.Springfield, MO 65807  
[www.americanlegionpost639.org](http://www.americanlegionpost639.org)

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Permit Number 451



US Army Birthday, June 14th

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