



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

MARCH 2024

REMEMBER



Post 639 Commander



Spring is upon us. And Post 639 is preparing for a busy season of Veteran and Community events. Be sure to check the newsletter calendar and mark your calendar for everything. Our employees, support groups and volunteers put in numerous hours to plan and execute all of our events. So with that being said, you can volunteer to help as much or as little as you want. In February our **1st Friday Night Dinner** was a success, thanks everyone who worked to make it happen and to all of you who came to eat.

The volunteers at Post 639 are 2nd to none. So many folks don't know what goes on behind the scenes, from policing the grounds, sweeping and mopping before hours, kitchen work for Wednesday and Friday night dinners and Saturday morning breakfast, keeping all things mechanical up and running takes hours and hours. And I would personally like to brag them up, they make me look good. So on Friday Night April 5th we have planned a Cajun Boil (crab legs, shrimp, sausage, taters, and corn) with live music by The Crossroads Band. Tickets will be on sale soon. So get your tickets early from the clubroom because they will be limited. We have received some business and personal sponsorships/donations to help us make this happen.

Adam and I got the display rifles back on the West wall above the barn doors, plus hung the shelving behind the bar so check them out when you come in.

BIKE NIGHTS START ON APRIL 17TH. (Flyer, Page 11)

Stand tall, fly your Flag and be proud.

Mike Goforth
Commander, Post 639



639 Chaplain



Great news, Spring is just around the corner. A time of renewal and fresh starts. So let us be the ones to help someone get that fresh start and renew their lives.

Frank Grantham
Chaplain, Post 639



Post 639 Service Officer



We spring our clocks forward on March 10th. I for one, hope it's the last time! Followed by National Napping Day on the 11th, seriously it's been around since 1999. Followed by St Paddys day on the 17th, the first day of Spring is the 21st, and opening day of major league baseball is March 28th. Play ball!

Hope everybody enjoyed the Super Bowl, and gets out and enjoys this wonderful Spring weather!

Belinda Brown
Post 639 Service Officer
USN Retired
417-306-2504



Post 639 SAL Commander



The Sons of the American Legion are always 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 ...

Erik Duff
Commander, SAL 639



639 Auxiliary President



ALA would like to thank everyone who came out for our Dessert Auction during SAL's Chili Cookoff event on Saturday, February 10th. **(Pictures, page 9)** Thank you all for participating and special mention to Commanders Mike Goforth and Eric Duff for taking a pie in the face! Congratulations to our very own ALA member, Gail Willey, for taking first place with her Smoked Chili! It was awesome. Thank you to ALA members Susan Heppard, Trisha Denzer, Junior Libby Gonynor, Gail Willey and Marsha Crom for helping with the Dessert Auction. Grateful thank you to ALA members Ann Theurich, Sheila Calhoun, Karen Doelger, Mary Gerstl, Susan Heppard, Barbara Gonynor, Libby Gonynor, Marsha Crom, Tricia Denzer and Tammi Grantham who provided all of the yummy homemade desserts.

It's the Luck of the Irish that's upon us this month. Happy St. Paddy's Day everyone! ALA will be having their annual St. Pat-

rick's Day Dinner on Saturday, March 16th from 6:00 to 7:30. **Catch our flyer on Page 11** for the event in this newsletter for all the details. Put your green on and come celebrate with some Irish home cooking.

Friday, March 1st is your VSO Friday Night Dinner and ALA, SAL and ALR will be serving a nice Smoked Chicken, sides and dessert. **(Flyer, Page 6)** This event is on the first Friday of every month and the proceeds go to our Post. It's our way of giving back to our Post. See the flyer for more details.

Our regularly scheduled DIY night is the third Thursday of every month but the month of March we are having two DIY Thursday Ladies' Nights. The first one is on March 7th at 6:00 p.m. which is a 2nd Soap Making Class due to the overwhelming response to the first one. Our regularly scheduled event is a Puzzle Palooza team contest with prizes for the winning teams. The date is Thursday, March 21 st at 6:00 p.m. **(Flyer, Page 6)** The cost is \$5.00 per person and bring a snack to share with everyone. NO crockpot items, please.

You can find all of our current fliers posted on our bulletin board which is located by the back door of the Post. It's a great way to stay in the know with what is happening at Post 639.

For Easter this year, we will not be having our annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Post. Instead, we will be filling Easter Baskets with goodies and toys which we will be delivering to community children's facilities in Springfield and hopefully the Easter Bunny will join us.

For the last two years we have had many requests to have a Spring Paddle Party so by popular demand, the ALA Spring Paddle Party and SAL Meat Raffle will be Saturday, April 27th. **(Flyer, Page 6)**. Ticket and paddle sales for the event start at 5:00 p.m. We will have your favorite vendors, games, free gift drawings and more, in between rounds of "Quarters in, Paddles up". Huge thank you to ALA member and Post Bar Manager, Kim Goforth, for saying YES to this event. We couldn't do it without her !!!!

Happy St. Patrick's Day from ALA Unit 639!

In The Spirit of Service, Not Self,
Diana Cooperider, President
ALA Unit 639



Post 639 ALR Director



ALR Members: Spring is right around the corner so get you bikes and trikes ready for our summer rides. The rides will be the 2nd Saturday of each month, starting in April. Hopefully the weather will be more cooperative this year!

First scheduled ride is **Saturday April 13th** to Rockbridge Trout and Game Farm in Rockbridge, MO. KSU and other details will be forthcoming as we get closer to the ride and we

can finalize our ride schedule at the next ALR meeting (Sunday March 17th at 1700). Also, we will have a get together dinner Tuesday after the meeting – come to the March 17th meeting with a suggestion or two.

Again, I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to thank Marsha Crom for all she has done for ALR and Post 639. She is still going to be around to help with things and we appreciate that.

Glenn Smith
Director, ALR Chapter 639



Post 639 Historian



The conning tower (sail) of the **USS Lapon (SSN-661)** on the grounds of our Post, along with the choppers, is a strong part of our "Brand". It's important to be familiar with its history so we can share it when we have an opportunity. **The Lapon has a storied history in the Silent Service.** That history is available, but it's not consolidated in one place for easy access. I thought it would be appropriate to put it at the forefront before too much more time passes.

USS Lapon History

The **USS Lapon** is the second submarine to carry the name.

SS 260

Commissioned on 23 January 1943, the USS Lapon was a Gato class submarine that served during WW2 in the Pacific theater.

Between June 1943 and July 1945, the USS Lapon completed eight war patrols. During these patrols she sunk a total of 53,443 tons of Japanese shipping and damaged many other vessels.

She was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation and earned four Battle Stars before being decommissioned and subsequently transferred to the Greek Navy.

SSN 661

Awarded: October 24, 1963

Keel Laid: July 26, 1965

Launched: December 16, 1966

Commissioned: December 14, 1967

Decommissioned: August 8, 1992

Builder: Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., Newport News, Va.

Propulsion system: one S5W2 nuclear reactor

Propellers: one

Length: 292 feet (89 meters)

Beam: 31.7 feet (9.65 meters)

Draft: 29.2 feet (8.9 meters)

Displacement: Surfaced: approx. 4,250 tons

Submerged: approx. 4,700 tons
Speed: Surfaced: approx. 15 knots
Submerged: approx. 30 knots

Armament: four 533 mm torpedo tubes for Mk-48 torpedoes, Harpoon, Tomahawk, and SUBROC missiles, ability to lay mines.

Reference: navsource.org/archives/08/08661.htm

Commissioned on 14 December 1967, the USS Lapon was a Sturgeon class fast attack boat. Although she was the thirteenth ship in her class, she was commissioned 4th in her class. She made tours in the Arctic, North Atlantic, Mediterranean, and cruised to the Indian Ocean.

During the cold war she proved her worthiness by tracking Soviet submarines including a much heralded account of tracking a Yankee class ballistic missile sub. *One account is as follows:*

“In 1969, the Soviets had built a nuclear-powered missile submarine that had similar capabilities from the Polaris design being used in US submarines. This submarine was nicknamed the “Yankee.” According to the book, it was Lapon’s job to hunt down more information about this new submarine and what the Russians might be planning. As the story goes, “There in front of his scope was a Yankee, 429 feet long, 39 feet across, weighing 9,600 tons. Mack sidled Lapon up to within 300 yards and stared...The submarine was indeed a Polaris look-alike, from the shape of its hull down to its sail-mounted diving planes. With each peek of the periscope, he [Mack] grabbed a few photos, each time capturing another small portion of the massive boat. It would take seven of the photos pasted together to show the entire Yankee.”[1] While photographs were needed, it was more imperative to see the Soviet boat in action. Lapon made several attempts at tailing the Soviet submarine, but failed each time. The Yankee was simply too quiet for standard SONAR to track. However, luckily, Mack had slipped aboard a cutting-edge piece of equipment that could zero in on specific tones. Through a series of trial and error and pure luck, Mack and crew realized that when the Yankee moved to the left, the tone was slightly higher. When she would disappear from the SONAR, she had moved right. They also realized that if they did not follow directly behind, but a little to the left, the Soviet submarine was slightly louder and was easily traceable for the Lapon. As the crew followed the Yankee, they noted her patterns and schedule. They realized that the Soviets had “settled into a holding pattern that covered about 200,000 square miles. They moved back and forth, staying between 1,500 and 2,000 miles off the United States. Up until now, the Navy had been convinced that the Soviet Union would send its Yankees as close as 700 miles from U.S. shores. But Mack’s discovery would help Naval Intelligence determine that the Yankee’s new SS-N-6 missiles had a range of 1,200-1,300 miles.”

The Lapon followed the Yankee for a total of forty-seven days. It was this mission that led crewmen Tommy Cox to

write the “Ballad of Whitey Mack,” in honor of their captain. Mack’s success in trailing the Yankee created a new mission for the submarine force. Attack submarines became a critical piece of the nation’s strategic nuclear defense system. A few months later,

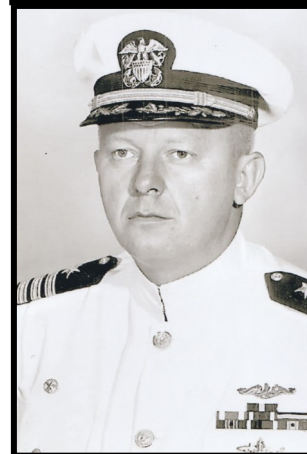
Lapon received the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award ever given to a submarine. Chester “Whitey” Mack was given a Distinguished Service Medal, the highest personal award given to officers in peacetime. Mack passed away on September 25, 2008. In 2009, at a Lapon reunion, “Whitey” was honored with a moment of silence in his honor. Despite his awards and his bravery and ambition in service, Mack was remembered by his crew, family and friends for the great man he was. In interviews,

Tommy Cox would comment that, “Crewmembers would make comments like, ‘I’d go anywhere with Captain Mack,’ or ‘Everybody in the submarine service is trying to get orders to Lapon.’...I just say: I took on the Soviet Navy with Whitey Mack, Then I leave it at that!” When Admiral Wilkerson presented Mack with the Distinguished Service medal, it was done in private, with only members of crew and their families present. No specific information was given on why the honor was being given. The crew knew and the families understood why they could not know. In note at the end of the chapter in *Blind Man’s Bluff*, his an enduring piece of information, on Mack’s love for his crew. It reads:

“Mack was told by an admiral that his men would get their presidential thank you, PUC certificates, and ribbons, in a ceremony as secret as their mission: wives and children cordially not invited. In answer, Mack kindly informed the admiral what he could do with his PUC. As far as Mack was concerned, there would be no award and no ceremony, unless the men’s families could be there. He stood his ground, and in the end, the awards were made in the steel bowels of a Navy ship, families present, without a single word spoken about how or why the men had earned awards signed by the president.”

In a 2002 performance, Cox recalled a visit with Mack in 1971. Mack showed Cox his Service medal and said, “Look what my crew earned for me.” Mack didn’t see the mission as being his success, but rather that of his entire crew. Mack’s humility was a characteristic that stayed with his crew long after their submarine careers. A year after Mack’s death, the Lapon was inducted into the Submarine Hall of Fame at the annual Submarine Veterans of World War II memorial service. She was the 11th boat to receive the honor, with selection based on a submarine’s contribution to national security. At the ceremony, guest speaker, Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Peter Flannery cited the courage and re-

CDR Chester M. “Whitey” Mack
14 Dec 1967 - 8 Sep 1970



sourcefulness of the Lapon's officers and men. He said, "Our nation expected Lapon's crew to be physically harder and mentally stronger than any adversary at sea. Lapon's men persevered, never quit, and thrived on adversity. The strength can be greatly attributed to Captain Chester Mack."

Reference:

<https://ussnautilus.org/the-ballad-of-whitey-mack/>

Submarine Force Library and Museum Association

When not chasing Soviet submarines, she supported underwater acoustical science during many ops including an Arctic Ice Ex run. (Arctic Ice Exercise - ICEX).



It may have been the sharpest submarine in the U.S. Navy when he was at the helm. Despite the fact his boat was named for the ugliest fish in the sea, Mack and his crew were good—they knew it. **During the three years he skippered the *Sturgeon Class* atomic attack sub, it won every award the Navy gave for operational excellence.** This was probably the only U.S. Navy submarine to have it's own slot machine next to the Coke machine!

During her 25 year service she was awarded with 18 awards including a Presidential Unit Citation and several Meritorious Unit and Navy Battle "E". She was decommissioned on 8 August 1992 and, with the exception of her sail, scrapped.

Sail resting in Springfield, MO

At decommissioning, the American Legion in Springfield Missouri, along with the Ozark-Runner Base Organization made a bid for the opportunity to save the sail for posterity. It was dedicated at Post 639 on July 3, 2005. The sail lives on for visitors and members. **The picture at the lower right of the grouping to the left shows the geographical coordinates of the sail at Post 639.**

Through donations and volunteer hours we are able to keep this sail presentable for years to come.

Commemorative bricks can be ordered through the Ozark-Runner Base Organization

References:

usslapon.org/sail.html

Bob Kalwat

Post 639 Historian/Newsletter Editor

Other VSO Activity

Give Vets Hope

Our group continues to help other veterans by being good listeners and careful speakers. Each of us have unpleasant stories, questions, or feelings to share that may only be helped by being shared. One of the things we have talked about is visualizing things about ourselves in the others, as they share their stories.

What our group, further offers, is an opportunity to keep things on track for each of us by not interrupting, or carry on another conversation (cross-talk) while someone else is talking. We also have the "Talking Stick" to indicate not only who is talking, but who is listening.

In talking with others and in our group, the idea of not being not being judgmental is critical, even if you feel strongly about something. Also, if you want a meaningful conversation and experience please don't interrupt the person that's talking. When any of us have something difficult to communicate it can take time, silence and patience are important. There is

also a lot to learn to be learned by a good question.

Something else to try,... look right at the person that's talking and make their being and talking critical to what is being communicating. You may accomplish some "intentional listening".

Our group welcomes all veterans, their support systems no matter who they are. We meet in the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, at the Post. We also have lots of pizza, pop, and something for dessert sometimes.

Find us at [givevetshope/facebook](https://www.givevetshope.com).

David Suits

Give Vets Hope co-facilitator
417-773-1837 - please leave a message



Give Vets Hope
Help and Hope for Veterans
DAVID SUITS MS. Ed
Co-facilitator/Founder
Vietnam veteran
VFW Post 3404
1136 E Atlantic
Please call/Text for information
417-773-1837

Missouri Veterans Commission

ESTATE PLANNING FOR VETERANS

March 28, 2024
3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

2223 E Bennett Street
Springfield, MO 65804

* Free services offered for Veterans and spouses include:

- Simple wills
- Powers of attorneys
- Living wills
- Health care directives

RSVP Deadline: March 22, 2024
mvc.dps.mo.gov/will-clinic-reservation
or call Scotty Allen - 573-522-4224

*by appointment only | must be a Missouri resident



RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Contact Scotty Allen at 573-522-4224 to reserve your spot for this event !!!

Presented by the VSO's of Post 639
ALA, SAL and ALR

**VSO FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER
MARCH 1ST, 6 TO 7:30 PM**

AMERICAN LEGION 639
2660 S SCENIC AVE SPRINGFIELD, MO

**SMOKED QUARTERED CHICKEN
POTATOE CASSEROLE
COLE SLAW
GREEN BEANS
ROLL & DESSERT
\$15.00**



POST 639 DIY LADIES FUN NIGHT PUZZLE PALOOZA

THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST

6 TO 8 PM

1ST, 2ND & CONSOLATION
PRIZES

TEAM EVENT CONTEST

\$5.00 PER PERSON

BRING A SNACK TO SHARE



ALA SPRING
PADDLE PARTY
&
SAL MEAT RAFFLE

The American Legion
Post 639
2660 S Scenic Avenue
Springfield, MO.

**ALA SPRING
PADDLE
PARTY
&
SAL MEAT
RAFFLE**

*Saturday, April 27th
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.*

*Paddles & Tickets go on
sale at 1:00 p.m.
Don't Forget your
quarters!*



\$2 paddles or 10 for \$10. Food Buffet \$8, Games and Swag giveaways between rounds.
Event Starts at 1:00 p.m!

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..." **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, Brutus?) 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 gunfighter, 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.

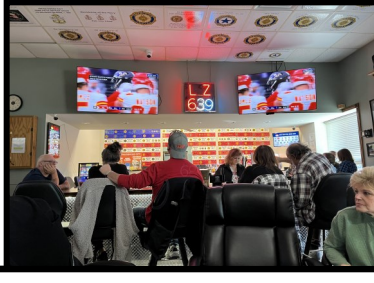
March 26, 1979 - The Camp David Accord ended 30 years of warfare between Israel and Egypt. Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat signed the treaty of mutual recognition and peace, fostered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

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.

Chiefs vs. Ravens Watch Party

January 28, 2024



639 VSO Friday Night Dinner

February 2, 2024

POST 639 VSO'S PRESENTS
POST 639
FUNDRAISER
Italian Dinner
Friday, February 2nd
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Your Choice
Lasagna or Chicken
Alfredo
\$15.00
Entree, salad, bread and
dessert



639 VSO Friday Night Dinner

(Cont'd)



SAL Chili Cookoff / Aux Dessert Auction

(Cont'd)



DIY Ladies Night

February 8, 2024

DIY SERIES
LADIES NIGHT

SOAP

Making class

FEB. 8TH 6-9PM
\$15 INCLUDES ALL SUPPLIES AND A TAKE HOME MINI LOAF OF SOAP

AMERICAN LEGION POST 639
2660 S SCENIC
SPRINGFIELD, MO. 65807



The February Class sold out. Kim Goforth is doing a second class on March 7th at 6PM to meet the demand.

SAL Chili Cookoff / Aux Dessert Auction

February 10, 2024

\$10



SAL Chili Cookoff / Aux Dessert Auction

(Cont'd)



Chiefs Super Bowl Watch Party

February 11, 2024



Chiefs Super Bowl Watch Party

(Cont'd)





AMERICAN LEGION POST 639 BIKE NIGHT



EVERY OTHER
WEDNESDAY
6:30P – 10:00P

QUEEN
OF
HEARTS
CARD DRAW
EVERY
WEDNESDAY

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT
17	1, 15, 29	12, 26	10, 24	7, 21	4, 18	2, 16

TOO DRUNK
FOR STURGIS

BIKE NIGHT
PRESENTED BY



2660 S SCENIC, SPRINGFIELD, MO

FOOD • MUSIC • 50/50 & COOL PRIZE RAFFLES



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 10, 2024*, shifting sunrise and sunset to be an hour later.



MARCH 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 LUNCH 11-2	2  1ST SATURDAY BREAKFAST 8-10AM
3 	4 LUNCH 11-2	5 LUNCH 11-2  LEGION/ALA GENERAL MTG 7PM 	6 LUNCH 11-2  QUEEN OF HEARTS 6 - 7:20 PM	7 LUNCH 11-2  LADIES DIY SOAPMAKING #2 6PM	8 LUNCH 11-2	9  SUB VETS MTG 11AM
10 	11 LUNCH 11-2	12 LUNCH 11-2  KOREAN WAR VETS 1PM  GIVE VETS HOPE VFW 3404 5:30PM	13 LUNCH 11-2  QUEEN OF HEARTS 6 - 7:20 PM	14 LUNCH 11-2  FINANCE COMMITTEE 6:30PM  MCL 993 VFW 3404 6-8PM	15 LUNCH 11-2  AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY	16  ST PATRICK'S DAY DINNER 6PM
17  ALR MEETING 5PM	18 LUNCH 11-2	19 LUNCH 11-2  AUX E-BOARD MTG 7PM	20 LUNCH 11-2  QUEEN OF HEARTS 6 - 7:20 PM	21 LUNCH 11-2  LADIES DIY PUZZLE PALOOZA 6-8PM	22 LUNCH 11-2  VFW 3404 FISH FRY 5:30 - 7 PM	23
24	25 LUNCH 11-2  E-BOARD MTG 6:30PM 	26 LUNCH 11-2  SAL MTG 7PM  GIVE VETS HOPE VFW 3404 5:30PM	27 LUNCH 11-2  QUEEN OF HEARTS 6 - 7:20 PM	28 LUNCH 11-2  FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION 6PM	29 LUNCH 11-2  VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY	30
31						

For The Good of the Legion

The Post 639 Newsletter for February features four anniversaries in US history that are important to all of us - “Four Chaplains Day” (February 3rd), USO Birthday (February 4th), Battle of Iwo Jima Anniversary (February 19th), and President’s Day (February 20th).

The USO is an outfit that gives our Servicemen/Service Women access to news, entertainment, games and other services, both overseas and in the US.

Since the Iwo Jima Anniversary is one of the four, it felt fitting to give a “brief” on the Memorial that one sees when they take the Honor Flight.

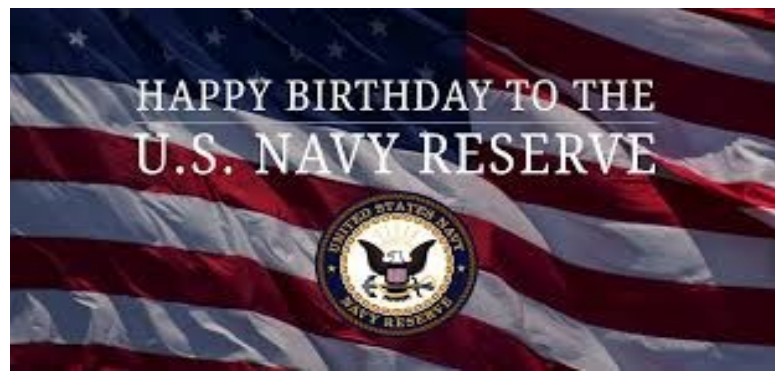
The Iwo Jima Memorial is one of the most impressive displays in all of Washington D.C. It stands about 80 feet tall, its color is bright, and has no faded look. It is really crafted well. You can see even the laces on their boots. The Memorial is made of bronze, cast over a three-year period.



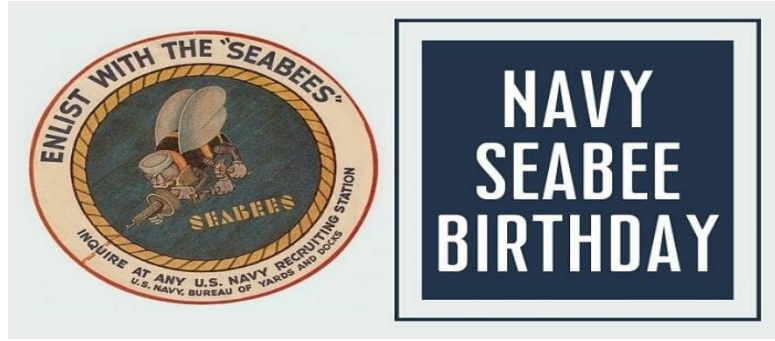
The Iwo Jima battle was largely an operation by the US Navy / United State Marine Corps, with the first landings on February 19th. The US Army’s 147th Infantry Regiment also landed later in the battle to provide follow-on support. US Army Air Corps forces also participated in the pre-battle bombardment with the US Navy. The combined effort from all services finally secured the island. US Marines, however, suffered the vast majority of the operation’s casualties.

The Iwo Jima Memorial is a somber reminder of the 2 flag-raising that occurred on February 23rd, 1945, enshrining the events and the sacrifices of the Marines forever in US history.

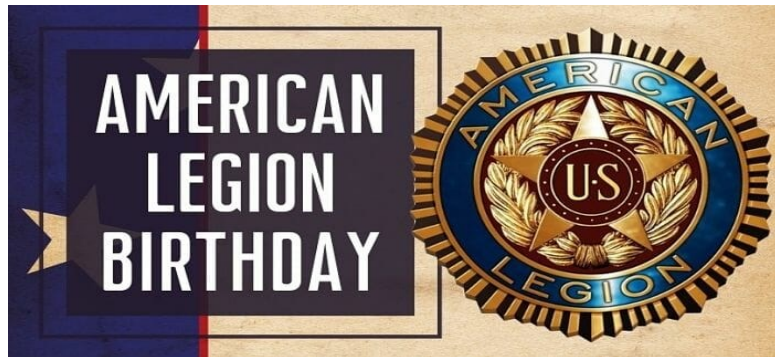
Charlie Weaver
“Budreau”



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

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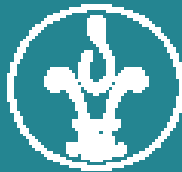
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SFC, US Army, Retired
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Outreach Coordinator
Veterans Upward Bound

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Springfield, Missouri 65802
www.otc.edu/vub

Office 417-447-7840
Fax 417-447-6925
boleyj@otc.edu

Volunteer Opportunities at the Legion

As always, we have several volunteer opportunities for members and non-members. Currently -

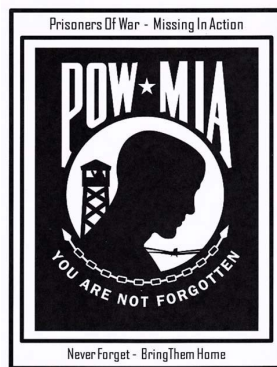
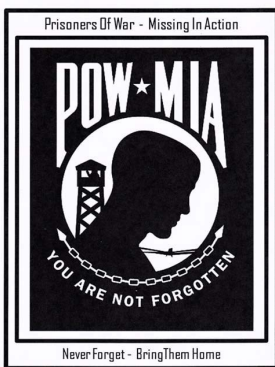
- The Post Historian is looking for someone with advanced computer skills to assist in the production of the Post 639 Newsletter.

- We get requests for Post 639 members to present awards to schools (JROTC), Senior Citizens, Community Organizations, etc. If you would like to assist with this, let us know.

- 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'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.

Volunteers are what allow Post 639 to function. **YOU ARE NEEDED.** Call the Post at 882- 8639 and we'll get back to you.



From the Bar/Galley ...

Happy Hour at LZ639 :

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

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

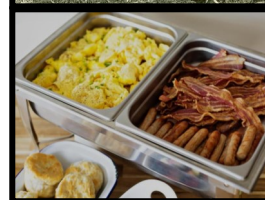
Saturday Breakfast - Morning Chow @ LZ639

1st Saturday of the Month 8AM - 10AM

The 6am Breakfast crew with this short message for you -

Post remodeling completed. Weather is prohibiting camping out and other swimming activities. So put your water skis away and join us the first **Saturday of each month, 8-10am** for the best breakfast for your money, or somebody else's.

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. Tell your friends as it's only \$10 all you can eat. Please thank the people who give up their time to support this Post 639 benefit.



I would like to extend the Saturday breakfasts from **ONE** to **TWO** per month, but I would have to have a more consistent attendance from members. You don't even have to bring your own eating utensils. They're included at no extra cost, like the salt & pepper.

Jim "Skippy" Cooper (got peanut butter)

Your 6AM Support Team

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*.

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:

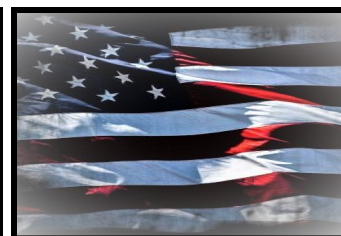
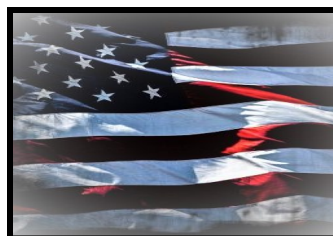
- **Start a conversation:** Mention the signs that prompted you to talk to them. Stay calm and let the person know you want to help them. Don't leave the person alone.
- **Listen, express concern and reassure the individual:** Let the person know you care and that you take the situation seriously. Letting 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.



Post 639 Schedule of Events

March 2024

- Mar 01 Fri - Friday Night VSO Dinner, 6 - 7:30PM
- Mar 02 Sat - 1st Saturday Breakfast @ Post 639, 8-10AM
- Mar 03 Sun - US Navy Reserve Birthday
- Mar 05 Tue - General/Auxiliary General Meeting
- Seabee Birthday
- Mar 06 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6 - 7:20PM
- Mar 07 Thu - Ladies DIY Soapmaking, Add'l class. 6PM
- Mar 09 Sat - Sub Vets Meeting, 11AM
- Mar 10 Sun - Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar 12 Tue - Korean War Vets Meeting, 1PM
- Give Vets Hope, 5:30PM VFW 3404
- Mar 13 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6 - 7:20PM
- Mar 14 Thu - Finance Committee Meeting, 6:30PM
- Marine Corps League Mtg, VFW 3404
6PM Food/Fellowship, 7PM Mtg
- Mar 15 Fri - American Legion Birthday
- Mar 17 Sun - ALR Meeting, 5PM
- Mar 19 Tue - Auxiliary E-Board Meeting, 7PM
- Mar 20 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6 - 7:20PM
- Mar 21 Thu - DIY Ladies Night - Puzzle Palooza 6-8PM
- Mar 22 Fri - VFW 3404 Fish Fry 5:30-7PM
- Mar 25 Mon - Post 639 E-Board Meeting, 6:30PM
- Medal of Honor Day
- Mar 26 Tue - SAL Meeting, 7PM
- Give Vets Hope, 5:30PM VFW 3404
- Mar 27 Wed - Queen of Hearts/50-50, 6 - 7:20PM
- Mar 28 Thu - Fleet Reserve Meeting, 6PM
Newsletter Content Due
- Mar 29 Fri - National Vietnam Veterans Day



LZ639 LUNCH MENU

AVAILABLE MON-FRI

11AM-2PM

**(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

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

EXTRA SPECIALTY

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

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 one of the bar staff for additional information and to order.

Camping Services/Facilities at Post 639

Post 639 Bar Staff	417-882-8639
Adam Jamieson (24/7)	417-343-8723
Mike Chandler (24/7)	417-860-8910

Contacts for RV Site reservations:

7 Sites (2 Class A, 5 Travel Trailer), Water/Electric (30/50/20) hookups, Max size 45 ft. Available on “First come, First serve” basis. PETS WELCOME !!!!!

General Public - \$20/night, **Veterans** - \$10/night, Back-in sites only. **One night maximum.** Extended stays require prior approval. Total # of guests per party must be specified when making the reservation. **NOTE: Post 639 members and families/friends MUST notify the Post 72 hours in advance to ensure accommodation of their reservation request. Extended stays require approval.**

Stroll through our on-site Veterans Memorial Park, featuring a submarine conning tower and two Vietnam-era helicopters. Our 23-acre property is attached to the largest public park in Springfield. **Nearby attractions** - Bass Pro Shops flagship store, Wonders of Wildlife Museum/Aquarium. Springfield Cardinals baseball, Branson entertainment, Silver Dollar City (USA Today’s #1 Theme Park in America). **Post 639 is ALSO a Harvest Host participant.**



Post 639 Hours of Operation:

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Full lunch menu served daily Monday-Friday 11AM-2PM. Full Bar open during business hours. Pizzas and appetizers available during business hours. **Happy Hour** - .50 off, 12PM-2PM 7 days a week, 6PM-8PM Monday - Saturday.

Sunday	1PM - 7PM
Monday	11AM - 8PM
Tuesday	11AM - 8PM
Wednesday	11AM - 8PM
Thursday	11AM - 8PM
Friday	11AM - 8PM
Saturday	11AM - 8PM



Profiles of Valor: MSgt William Crawford

Life lessons in leadership from a humble janitor

By Mark Alexander

William Crawford survived his combat trials, and his humble life of service exemplified the character of so many in his Greatest Generation, especially those who never made it home. His story is their story.

With generations of family and friends who have served our nation with honor and integrity, and continue to do so, and as the proud father of a United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) graduate, I was drawn to MSgt Crawford's compelling story. I invite you to read this profile of an extraordinary man who went from sweeping combat fields in search of the enemy to sweeping USAFA dormitory hallways and bathrooms. He was a quiet and unassuming janitor until his heroic acts were rediscovered by an Academy cadet — and then properly acknowledged by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

William Crawford was a native of Pueblo, Colorado, a town about 40 miles south of Colorado Springs, which, in 1954, would become the home of the Air Force Academy. He joined the Army in 1942 and a year later was a private with the 142nd Infantry Regiment 36th Infantry Division, serving in Italy. On September 13, 1943, he was his squad's scout when they were attacked. (You can read more about his actions that day in his Medal of Honor citation below.)

The USAFA cadet who discovered who his squadron floor janitor really was 33 years after his heroic actions in Italy later recounted that story in an article titled "Lessons in Leadership from a Janitor," published by the prestigious Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. According to **Col. James Moschgat (Ret.) (USAFA '77)**:

"William 'Bill' Crawford certainly was an unimpressive figure, one you could easily overlook dur-

ing a hectic day at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Mr. Crawford, as most of us referred to him back in the late 1970s, was our squadron janitor."

Moschgat continued:

"While we cadets busied ourselves preparing for academic exams, athletic events, Saturday morning parades and room inspections, or never-ending leadership classes, Bill quietly moved about the squadron mopping and buffing floors, emptying trash cans, cleaning toilets, or just tidying up the mess 100 college-age kids can leave in a dormitory. Sadly, and for many years, few of us gave him much notice, rendering little more than a passing nod or throwing a curt, "G'morning!" in his direction as we hurried off to our daily duties.

Why? Perhaps it was because of the way he did his job — he always kept the squadron area spotlessly clean, even the toilets and showers gleamed. Frankly, he did his job so well, none of us had to notice or get involved. After all, cleaning toilets was his job, not ours. Maybe it was his physical appearance that made him disappear into the background. Bill didn't move very quickly and, in fact, you could say he even shuffled a bit, as if he suffered from some sort of injury. His gray hair and wrinkled face made him appear ancient to a group of young cadets. Face it; Bill was an old man working in a young person's world. What did he have to offer us on a personal level?

Mr. Crawford's personality also rendered him almost invisible to the young people around him. Bill was shy, almost painfully so. He seldom spoke to a cadet unless they addressed him first, and that didn't happen very often. Our janitor always buried himself in his work, moving about with stooped shoulders, a quiet gait, and an averted gaze. If he noticed the hustle and bustle of cadet life around him, it was hard to tell. So, for whatever reason, Bill blended into the woodwork and became just another fixture around the squadron. The Academy, one of our nation's premier leadership laboratories, kept us busy from dawn till dusk. And Mr. Craw-

ford ... well, he was just a janitor.”

And then one fall Saturday afternoon in 1976, Moschgat notes, “All that changed”:

“I was reading a book about World War II and the tough Allied ground campaign in Italy, when I stumbled across an incredible story. On September 13, 1943, a Private William Crawford from Colorado, assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, had been involved in some bloody fighting on Hill 424 near Altavilla, Italy. The words on the page leapt out at me: “in the face of intense and overwhelming hostile fire ... with no regard for personal safety ... on his own initiative, Private Crawford single handedly attacked fortified enemy positions.” It continued, “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, the President of the United States...”

“Holy cow,” I said to my roommate, “you’re not going to believe this, but I think our janitor is a Medal of Honor recipient.” We all knew Mr. Crawford was a WWII Army vet, but that didn’t keep my friend from looking at me as if I was some sort of alien being. Nonetheless, we couldn’t wait to ask Bill about the story on Monday.

We met Mr. Crawford bright and early Monday and showed him the page in question from the book, anticipation and doubt in our faces. He stared at it for a few silent moments and then quietly uttered something like, “Yep, that’s me.” Mouths agape, my roommate and I looked at one another, then at the book, and quickly back at our janitor. Almost at once we both stuttered, “Why didn’t you ever tell us about it?” He slowly replied after some thought, “That was one day in my life and it happened a long time ago.”

I guess we were all at a loss for words after that. We had to hurry off to class and Bill, well; he had chores to attend to. However, after that brief exchange, things were never again the same around our squadron. Word spread like wildfire among the cadets that we had a hero in our midst — Mr. Crawford, our janitor, had been bestowed the Med-

al! Cadets who had once passed by Bill with hardly a glance, now greeted him with a smile and a respectful, “Good morning, Mr. Crawford.”

Those who had before left a mess for the “janitor” to clean up started taking it upon themselves to put things in order. Most cadets routinely stopped to talk to Bill throughout the day and we began inviting him to our formal squadron functions. He’d show up dressed in a conservative dark suit and quietly talked to those who approached him, the only sign of his heroics being a simple blue, star-spangled lapel pin.

Almost overnight, Bill went from being a simple fixture in our squadron to one of our teammates. Mr. Crawford changed too, but you had to look closely to notice the difference. After that fall day in 1976, he seemed to move with more purpose, his shoulders didn’t seem to be as stooped, he met our greetings with a direct gaze and a stronger “good morning” in return, and he flashed his crooked smile more often. The squadron gleamed as always, but everyone now seemed to notice it more. Bill even got to know most of us by our first names, something that didn’t happen often at the Academy. While no one ever formally acknowledged the change, I think we became Bill’s cadets and his squadron.

As often happens in life, events sweep us away from those in our past. The last time I saw Bill was on graduation day in June 1977. As I walked out of the squadron for the last time, he shook my hand and simply said, “Good luck, young man.” With that, I embarked on a career that has been truly lucky and blessed. Mr. Crawford continued to work at the Academy and eventually retired in his native Colorado.”

Col. Moschgat concluded:

“A wise person once said, ‘It’s not life that’s important, but those you meet along the way that make the difference.’ Bill was one who made a difference for me. While I haven’t seen Mr. Crawford in over twenty years, he’d probably be surprised to

know I think of him often. Bill Crawford, our janitor, taught me many valuable, unforgettable leadership lessons.”

William Crawford’s Medal of Honor citation notes:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Altavilla, Italy, 13 September 1943. When Company I attacked an enemy-held position on Hill 424, the 3d Platoon, in which Pvt. Crawford was a squad scout, attacked as base platoon for the company. After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machinegun and small-arms fire. Locating 1 of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Pvt. Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the machinegun and killed 3 of the crew with a hand grenade, thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance. When the platoon, after reaching the crest, was once more delayed by enemy fire, Pvt. Crawford again, in the face of intense fire, advanced directly to the front midway between 2 hostile machinegun nests located on a higher terrace and emplaced in a small ravine. Moving first to the left, with a hand grenade he destroyed 1 gun emplacement and killed the crew; he then worked his way, under continuous fire, to the other and with 1 grenade and the use of his rifle, killed 1 enemy and forced the remainder to flee. Seizing the enemy machinegun, he fired on the withdrawing Germans and facilitated his company’s advance.”

And the rest of the story...

Mr. Crawford never had an official recognition event for his Medal of Honor award because, at the time the award was delivered to his family, he was listed as killed in action – it was unknown that he was actually a POW. But that was rectified in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan. In an address to the USAFA graduating class that year, Reagan and USAFA officials arranged a special ceremony for Mr. Crawford. With the cadets, their families, and

dignitaries in attendance, Reagan formally presented the Medal of Honor to Master Sergeant Crawford.

In his remarks, President Reagan cited some of the leadership lessons that all of us should take away from this humble janitor. **Col. Moschgat later adapted those lessons in his Wharton Business School article:**

Be Cautious of Labels: Labels you place on people may define your relationship to them and bound their potential. Sadly, and for a long time, we labeled Bill as just a janitor, but he was so much more.

Everyone Deserves Respect: Because we hung the “janitor” label on Mr. Crawford, we often wrongly treated him with less respect than others around us. He deserved much more, and not just because he was a Medal of Honor recipient. Bill deserved respect because he was a janitor, walked among us, and was a part of our team.

Courtesy Makes a Difference: Be courteous to all around you, regardless of rank or position. Military customs, as well as common courtesies, help bond a team. When our daily words to Mr. Crawford turned from perfunctory “hellos” to heartfelt greetings, his demeanor and personality outwardly changed. It made a difference for all of us.

Take Time to Know Your People: Life in the military is hectic, but that’s no excuse for not knowing the people you work for and with. For years a hero walked among us at the Academy and we never knew it. Who are the heroes that walk in your midst?

Anyone Can Be a Hero: Mr. Crawford certainly didn’t fit anyone’s standard definition of a hero. Moreover, he was just a private on the day he earned his Medal. Don’t sell your people short, for any one of them may be the hero who rises to the occasion when duty calls. On the other hand, it’s easy to turn to your proven performers when the chips are down, but don’t ignore the rest of the team. Today’s rookie could and should be tomor-

row's superstar.

Leaders Should Be Humble: Most modern-day heroes and some leaders are anything but humble, especially if you calibrate your “hero meter” on today's athletic fields. End zone celebrations and self-aggrandizement are what we've come to expect from sports greats. Not Mr. Crawford — he was too busy working to celebrate his past heroics. Leaders would be well-served to do the same.

Life Won't Always Hand You What You Think You Deserve: We in the military work hard and, dang it, we deserve recognition, right? However, sometimes you just have to persevere, even when accolades don't come your way. Perhaps you weren't nominated for junior officer or airman of the quarter as you thought you should — don't let that stop you.

Don't Pursue Glory; Pursue Excellence: Private Bill Crawford didn't pursue glory; he did his duty and then swept floors for a living. No job is beneath a Leader. If Bill Crawford, a Medal of Honor recipient, could clean latrines and smile, is there a job beneath your dignity? Think about it. No matter what task life hands you, do it well.

Life is a Leadership Laboratory: All too often we look to some school or PME class to teach us about leadership when, in fact, life is a leadership laboratory. Those you meet every day will teach you enduring lessons if you just take time to stop, look, and listen. I spent four years at the Air Force Academy, took dozens of classes, read hundreds of books, and met thousands of great people. I gleaned leadership skills from all of them, but the person I remember most is Mr. Bill Crawford and the lessons he unknowingly taught. Don't miss your opportunity to learn.

Jim Moschgat, who himself would become a distinguished fighter pilot following his graduation from USAFA, concluded his article by noting: “Bill Crawford was a janitor. However, he was also a teacher, friend, role model and one great American hero. Thanks, Mr. Crawford, for some valuable leadership lessons.”

Mr. Crawford retired from the Army in 1967 as a Master Sergeant. After his years at USAFA as a jani-

tor, he retired and returned to his small hometown of Pueblo. Against all odds, there are four other Medal of Honor recipients from Pueblo. He died in March 2000 at age 81 and is interred at the United States Air Force Academy Cemetery — the only U.S. Army-enlisted man buried there. He rests in good company near my friend and a fellow POW, Col. Bill Gauntt.

There were 16.1 million American Patriots who served in World War II, but just 473 of them were awarded the Medal of Honor. Most of those awards were made posthumously. The last of the surviving European theater recipients, Army T/Sgt Charles Coolidge, died in April 2021. The last of the Pacific Theater recipients, Marine CW-4 Hershel “Woody” Williams, died in June 2022.

I have met most of the living Medal of Honor recipients, and, like Bill Crawford, they are a strikingly humble lot and quick to credit all those with whom they served, and for whom they wear that Medal today.

MSgt Crawford, your example of valor — a humble American Patriot defending your fellow warriors and Liberty for all above and beyond the call of duty, and in disregard for the peril to your own life — is eternal. “Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

**Semper Vigilans Fortis Paratus et Fidelis
Pro Deo et Libertate — 1776**



References:

*Profiles of Valor: MSgt William Crawford
Life lessons in leadership from a humble janitor*

By Mark Alexander

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**Submitted by Ron Jackson, Member
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