

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Of the United States

HAROLD ZULZ
Post Commander

RUDOLPH MAUER
Senior Vice Commander

CARL SWEET
Junior Vice Commander

KARL F. HAFNER
Adjutant

WILLIAM H. VOGEL
Quartermaster



GRAF-O'HARA Post No. 423
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

January 12, 1931

Graf-O'Hara Post #423 V.F.W. U.S.A.
Dear Comrades:-

Imagine Commander Pommerening's request for a brief history of the local Graf-O'Hara Post #423 since its inception. The writer with only two days and a memory without audit complies as follows:

It almost seems like yesterday but goodness knows--twelve years have elapsed since this "He-man's" organization has functioned. It is deplorable that accurate dates and names cannot be assembled in chronological order. Like kaleidoscopic pre-vues of the modern "talkies", the writer's memory recalls comrades and events in a vague and rather haphazard manner.

Shortly after the war in 1919 the field men of the V.F.W. of the Detroit Area invaded Ann Arbor as a worthy locality to plant the seeds of V.F.W.ism. A real rally and Pow-Wow was held at the Michigan Union and Lo. and Behold! two local posts were chartered. The Richard Hall Post embraced all rehabilitation student veterans from out-state attending the University of Michigan. The other post, without a name, elected officers and designated a later meeting to adopt a name. Comrade Emil Schlenker was elected the local post's first commander. Comrade "Bert" Foster by telephone notified the Commander elect to that effect and requested his immediate appearance. The Commander's big problem was to reorganize past disciplined veterans into an organization when they already tasted the freedom "Sweets" of a discharge and recklessly abandoned all desires for all forms of discipline or organization.

At this time, the writer would like to try and complete a roster of the veterans active in this first assembly. Those early days bring to my mind compound thoughts of the following: "Doc" Alway, Frank and John Bavier, "Otto" Berger, "Rob" Berger, "Cook" Bucholz, Herman Becker, "Bill" Vogel, Louis Brokow, "Honey" Barth, "Fritz" Clark, "Connie" Church, "Lornie" Chatterton, J. Donahue, Dimattia, "Droop" Donnelly, "Bill" Enkemann, "Spitz" Eibler, "Bill" Gogalis, "Bert" Foster, "Friday" Finnie, Harold Hood, Carl Hafner, "Al" Hertler, "Mary" Icks, O. Kreger, A. Knapp, E. Kranich, "Dunk" Keebler, "Jenks" Kehoe, "Nord" Kuster, John Kokenakes, "Pete" Lehman, "Sticks" Law, J. Marz, "Buck" and "Jake" Markey, "Sun" Murray, "Babe" McMahon, "Dutch" Morehardt, Courtney Maulbetsch, D. Kendall, J. Nimz, John O'Hara, "Bob" and "Chuck" O'Neil, John Osborne, Ray Perkins, Howard Parks, O. Quinn, Loren Reeves, "Billy" Sunday, Harry Saunders, "Ernie" Schlenker, Adolph

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Schneeberger, "Al" Shiplock, "Bif" Schaible, Carl Sweet, Clarence Schaller, C.A. Slear, "Ansc" Schmidt, Ross Stofflet, Loren Secor, L. Thurber, "Spike" Thompson, "Jack" Simpson, Geo. Welker, Clarence Walker, "Osk" Wehner, "Pat" Walsh, "Dick" Ward, "Cotti" Weinman, John Youngbauer, Harold Zulz and many, many more important "Buddies". What a nucleus to fundamentally start anything!

When you analyze those names of German and Irish extraction and the self-evident manner in which the various comrades would choose between the name of "Graf" and "O'Hara" for a post name--you also can visualize that a joint compromise of a joint name of "GRAF-O'HARA" was the only logical conclusion for the adopted name of the post. Two honorable names typifying American citizenship of the highest order. "Gander" Ernest Graf a fearless soldier who gave his life at Romagne, without an enemy, with countless friends, gave us the first half of our post name. Frank "Slim" O'Hara, a fighting marine who gave his all on that fateful Armistice Day just before 11:00 o'clock in 1918, fittingly completes the name of our Post. Let us live up to their ideals.

Many were the local post's activities and the outstanding respect for the constant stream of soldiers who "had gone west", was most noticeable.

However, the hysteria of just another organization was not sufficient to keep the Post intact and consequently the Post drifted into a period of depression or let us say "a dark age". During this period of seven years, the honesty and integrity of Quartermaster Wm. Vogel cannot be too highly commended. The funds were held intact and, when the urge to again organize, came, there were not only funds available, but the veterans found a common cause for comradeship. They realized that there were old fires to be rekindled. They were afraid without organization that old acquaintanceship would "fade out" forever. Your present post is another beginning with a fundamental understanding of "tried and true" "buddies" who talk a "common language". The comradeship that "blood" has put together; let no one dare tear assunder.

In conclusion, 1931 is outstanding. Your commander "Scully" Pommerening deserves every comrade's support. Let our departed comrades be proud we are "carrying on".

Respectfully submitted,

Comrade *Ernst H. Schlenker*

Past Commander.

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Following is a list of those men who have been Commanders of Graf-O'Hara Post No. 423, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Comrade Emil Schlenker
Comrade Oscar Wiener
Comrade Dr. G. G. Alway

Comrade L. H. Lau

Comrade Carl Lehman

Comrade Harold Zulz

Present Commander is William Pommerening.