

GRAF-O'HARA  
VFW POST 423



ANN ARBOR  
MICHIGAN

*Commander's Report* - Doug Brinker



Commrads,  
Welcome to 2019, the year of Hope! As we bring in another year of celebrating your successes and our Post 90th Anniversary we take time to reflect all the sacrifices made to reach 90 years as a VFW post. I extend a personal debt of gratitude to all my past Commanders and other past Officers who faithfully and with a dedicated heart have helped carved our journey. We, as a Post are exceptionally lucky to have you as members. Your membership and friendships are and always will be priceless. Any organization is built from developed relationships and such is the foundation for us to continue to serve our comrades for generations to come. As Commander, my vision is to have 100 new members which means quite a bit of work to do but I believe we can conquer. I have three steps to make this happen. First, a committed membership committee who will help me reach out to all organizations including Student Veterans of America campus Directors in Washtenaw County. The second, is sharing all great things our post has completed recently including a new roof, lighting, patio and walkways to our storyboards. These are

extensive accomplishments that each of you as an investor to our post can be proud of. Finally, we grow best by having new leaders make a solid commitment to serve on the board or working committees each year.

These first 6 months I have learned more about myself and many of you which I didn't know things about years past. I've also felt listening to your concerns has helped me in many areas including at work. I work for and serve you the membership and am humbly grateful. We are not in any way finished to make our late Founders Graf and O'Hara proud of their legacy in which our post is named after.

In the coming months, a focus I am cheering you to adopt, is to bring another member who wants to attend but cannot because they're no longer able to drive. We have remaining, our WWII comrades who should spend their last leg of their earthly journey with us their fellow comrades but cannot if they don't have a lift. While you're out in your travels and you see another veteran have an application with you and make small talk to identify if they would like to join. Just asking if they want to join may be what they have been wanting and waiting to hear.

Our Post wouldn't be successful without great officers who give great guidance so that we can continue to serve you the members. Our

immediate Past Department Commander Matt David our immediate Past Post Commander Dea, Jr. Vice Wayne Doyle, Sr. Vice Anthony Lewis, Chaplain John Kinzinger a Past Post Commander current 6<sup>th</sup> District Chaplain and current post Surgeon Horace Frazier. Not to forget my dedicated Trustees Winter, Ward and Matte. They work extremely hard to keep our Post in good standing with district, department and national. Our Post would be lost without Home Board Chair and a Past Post Commander Bob London. We entrust so much that Bob makes the very best recommendations that benefit our awesome Post. Then there is our Auxiliary who do so much behind the scenes and ensures that we are fed each meeting. They give of themselves unconditionally and are the first and last to the Post many times.

In closing, as 2019 brings new ideas, new beginnings for many and allows us to serve our fellow Comrades in Arms for Washtenaw County and those deployed defending our freedom each day take time to get to know your fellow comrade at the post better be vigilant for those who've lost Hope and let's take Graf O' Hara Post 423 to new heights in 2019 and beyond. Honored to Serve, Serving to Honor,

Commander Doug Brinker  
US Navy, US Army Medically Retired

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*Cub Scouts Military Appreciation*

Jr. Vice Commander Wayne Doyle



This was the troop's first "Military Appreciation" event.

Post Members in attendance: Bob London, Vance McCrumb, Wayne Doyle, William Matte,

Mark Rosiek

Uniformed Military: LTC Coxen (Active, UM PhD student), CPT Bergman (Active, UM Masters Student), SGT Subudom (National Guard, EMU Bachelors Student).

I counted approximately 50 people there in total; members, scouts, and parents (although it was rather like counting a flock of sparrows). Scouts ranged in age from about kindergarten to 7th grade.

Scouts began with Pledge of Allegiance, Scout Pledge, then they asked the panel questions ranging from what kind of food do we eat, to did we get to shoot a bazooka.

Following the questions, they wrote letters to the troops that LTC Coxen will send to her old unit overseas. SGT Subudom let them put on his flak vest and rucksack, and LTC Coxen had them doing pushups and situps. Vance brought pictures of his dog from back in the day, including a dog that liked helicopter rides.

423 is the sponsor for this troop and the troop leader presented the Post with the Charter for this year. Bob London accepted it on behalf of the Post.

I asked one of the troop leaders how they are funded. He said only from dues, which are about \$30 per year. Commander, the next time you speak with Seth, you might ask if he has any unfunded needs that we can pitch in with.

Their next big event at the post will be the pinewood derby race which Seth said is a major highlight for them. He is extremely thankful for the Post's continuing support.

Jr. ViceCommander, Wayne Doyle Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, (RET)



*Jack McClary 100 Years Young*

Jack McClary ,celebrated his 100th birthday last year in November. The Post hosted his birthday party and the Auxiliary, led by Cathy London with assistance from other Auxiliary ladies planned, prepared the food and decorated the Post for Jack's party. There were about 80 family, friends and Post members in attendance. U.S. Representative for Michigan's 7th Congressional District, Tim Walberg, spoke of Jack's WWII service as an Artillery Army Captain in the mountains of Italy during some of the most brutal fighting of the European Theater.

Jack worked alone for days and at times weeks at or behind the enemy's line. He operated with minimal support with two directives—don't get captured and don't fall back. Jack called in artillery fire with a precision that disrupted enemy attacks and saved the lives of his fellow soldier. For this, Jack was awarded the Bronze Star, our nation's fourth highest award.

Jack also received a birthday card from President Trump.



### *Home Board Report*

Bob London

A new year already and 2018 brought numerous improvements and enhancements to our Post. Two Eagle Scout projects were completed. A fire pit area with paver brick was designed and installed by Boy Scouts 12-18 years old. The pavers were donated by Krull Construction Company. Bob then moved the brick to the Post for installation. The second Eagle Project was to design, organize and install paver brick around the helicopter, cannon, truck



and tank. Pavers for this project were donated by Fendt Builders Supply Company. Sand and limestone were donated by Niethammer Trucking. Bob hauled the sand to the Post for the Scouts to begin their project around each of the information boards. Both projects were implemented and completed between July & November with tremendous success. If you haven't had the opportunity to view these exceptional Post additions please take time to look at them and thank the Scouts for their excellent work.

A new roof was installed on both buildings by Rapid Roofing Company. New Led lighting is

being installed January 11th for the large parking lot along with the handicap lot and LED replacement lights along the front of the building. Vance and others put new Led lights in the barn and cleaned the inside of barn.

Snow removal will now be done by McIntosh Grounds and Maintenance, donating their services for one dollar this year thanking us for our service to the country and keeping us safe. We are extremely grateful to them for this wonderful donation this year.

Benches around the fire pit were refinished, painted and decals put on the benches for each branch of service by Don Miller and Chief George Perrault. I know there were other projects done over the year. I can't think of them all but everything was greatly appreciated towards improving our Post.

In closing, hopefully you were able to see the inside of our building during the holidays after the VVA and VFW Auxiliary put up lights, trees and decorations for the annual Children's Christmas Party and others to enjoy for their events. Many thanks to everyone that contributed to improving our Post through out the year. Bob London

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*Auxiliary President* Hello from your Auxiliary.

Wow can you believe it is 2019 and the Post just celebrated 90 years?



2018: Great participation in the annual poppy

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and is ready to get back to the grindstone. Here are some things that the Auxiliary accomplished in

sales with the number of children participating, doubled from previous years.

We awarded Cathy London the Volunteer of the Year award. Riley London was presented with the Youth Volunteer of the Year award and several children were recognized for their participation in the annual poppy sales.

We had our Fall Craft Show in September raising \$700 to assist veterans and their families. In December many members and their families enjoyed our annual Christmas Party with each of the families receiving gifts, donating gifts to Toys for Tots and hand making greeting cards to send to our troops. Most recently we enjoyed our 90<sup>th</sup> celebration of the VFW Post. Everyone sharing stories, enjoying dinner, and enjoying each other's company.

In 2019 we will continue to support our Post in their mission and support our Auxiliary in any way it needs. We will also begin to plan for the Auxiliary 90-year celebration. I look forward to completing my last year as President and continue to support the Auxiliary and Post by using my time, talent and treasures.

Respectfully,

Debra H Neal  
Auxiliary President

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*Graf-O'Hara Website*

If you haven't visited the Post's website please do so. Our web address is [www.vfw423.org](http://www.vfw423.org). There is a lot of information on our site and some of the key pages are;

- Online calendar
- Post Officers pictures and bios
- Auxiliary Officer pictures
- Ernest Graf picture and history
- Frank O'Hara picture and history

- Taps page that list recently passed members. Scroll down on the Taps page and you will find a section called Fallen Comrades. There will you see pictures and Bio links.

The Post history is being researched and will be on our website in the near future.

If you have some thoughts on how we can improve our website please let the Commander know.

*Post Newsletter*

Our plans are to publish at a minimum a newsletter once a quarter. The goal is to eventually have one once a month. If someone has an idea for a title let me know. My contact information is at the bottom of this page.

The header on the newsletter includes a picture of the Post building/grounds. My thoughts are to have a seasonal header. Currently its a fall scene to be follow with a winter (snow), spring and summer scenes.

In the future I hope to have a page(s) page for the Auxiliary as well as their activities. To view who their leaders are visit our site and click on About Us > Auxiliary.

Email your Microsoft Word articles, suggestions and creative criticism to [dogman2@reagan.com](mailto:dogman2@reagan.com).



**OFFICERS**

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- Commander - Doug Brinker
  - Sr. Vice - Tony Lewis
  - Jr. Vice - Wayne Doye
  - Quarter Master - Matt David
  - Chaplain - John Kinzinger
  - Judge Advocate - Bob London
  - 1 Yr. Trustee - Ralph Winter
  - 2 Yr. Trustee - William Matte
  - 3 Yr. Trustee - Clint - Ward
  - Surgeon - Horace Frazier
  - Service - Officer Matt David
  - Adjutant - Matt David
  - Home Board - Bob London

*Images from our 90th Anniversary Party*

**AUXILIARY OFFICERS**

- .....
- President- Debra Neal
  - Sr. Vice President Regina Leidel
  - Jr. Vice - Jill Grim
  - Sec/Treasurer-Deb Spenser
  - Chaplain - Karen Court
  - Guard Jill Grim
  - 1 Yr. Trustee - Karen Court
  - 2 Yr. Trustee - Jill Grim
  - 3 Yr. Trustee - Mary Davie