

**POST 77 MEMBER, CITY COUNCILMAN
JEFF MONROE, WRITES ABOUT HIS VISIT
WITH LOCAL WORLD WAR II VETERAN
THOMAS GILBERT**

Thank you to the Yolo County Veteran's Coalition and Post 77 for allowing me to be a part of the Visiting Our Veteran's Project. As a veteran myself, I would like to share with you what I have learned from one World War II veteran during these visits.

Thomas Gilbert is currently living at Alderson's Convalescent Home in Woodland. Thomas was drafted into the Army Air Corps upon turning 18 in 1942. After basic training, Thomas was sent to McClellan Air Base where he learned the skills necessary to be a Radioman/50 Cal gunner on a B-17 bomber.

On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), Thomas landed in Naples, Italy. He laughed when he told me it was his experience in Naples that drove him to smoking. His unit took cover in a train tunnel during a bombing raid. "I don't mind telling you I had the jitters. When a buddy handed me a cigarette I gladly took it."

Thomas joined the 5th Bomber Group, 463rd shortly thereafter in Foggia, Italy. He told me that the 463rd bombed targets in Germany, South Russia, Bulgaria and "everything in between." The bombing runs were done in a large circle. After bombing a target, the formation would land at a temporary base to reload and then fly on to the next target. Usually they bombed three to four different targets during a mission. One of the locations where they stopped routinely to reload was Odessa, Russia.

Thomas said his plane was named "Lady Be Good" and had ten men assigned to it. Though most of the war was difficult, there were moments when laughter somehow carried them through. He recalls a time when a six-inch piece of shrapnel landed on the lap of one of the other gunners. He said there was a German word on it, "Strob," which was the actual name of the guy whose lap it landed on. Thomas laughed, "That piece of metal had his name on it."

Thomas flashed back to the time when an Italian mother tried to talk him into marrying her daughter. He said he high tailed it out of there.

Thomas also recalled a tragic incident that occurred after his plane took heavy damage over Germany. The

pilot ordered that all equipment be thrown overboard to lighten the load. They threw out the guns, ammo and any spare parts they could find. The belly gunner cupola was heavily damaged, so they tried to release it. They hammered on it relentlessly. Finally, one of the new guys jumped on it and it fell from the plane taking the airman with it.

Thomas still can remember the close bond between his fellow airmen. He sang a song to me that they would sing on bombing runs to relieve the stress. The song follows the tune of a German Marching song named Lili Marlene:

"Oh Mr. Truman won't you send us home.

We've conquered Naples and liberated Rome.

We've subdued the master race and opened up plenty of shipping space. So won't you send us home and let the boys at home see Rome."

Thomas Gilbert's older brother, Robert, made the ultimate sacrifice. He was killed while fighting in the Battle of the Bulge.

America must not forget the deeds of our warriors.

Post 77 member Jeff Monroe



Corbin Smith, Commander
Dave Isbell, 1st Vice Commander
Albert Castillo, 2nd Vice Commander
Terry Parkhurst, Immediate Past Commander
Gary Leach, Adjutant
Ron Gee, Assistant Adjutant
Warren Meyer, Financial Officer
Steve Waldeck, Treasurer
Vince Olvera, Sergeant-at-Arms
Gil Garcia, Chaplain
Zeke Plocher, Service Officer
Ray Redmill, Clubroom Chairman
Frank Eakle, Athletic Committee Chair
Larry Schapiro, Historian
Homer Swigert, Executive Committee
Dave Kauderer, Judge Advocate

EVENT CALENDARS

March 2008

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1st & 2nd | Legion Area meeting at Post 167, Red Bluff |
| 6th 7:00 p.m. | Yolo County Veterans' Coalition meeting at West Sacramento VFW |
| 9th 10:00 a.m. | Legion District swearing-in-ceremony of new members at Fair Oaks Post 383 |
| 11th 7:30 p.m. | Law Enforcement Awards Night |
| 15th 6:00 p.m. | Post's American Legion 89th Birthday Corned Beef & Cabbage dinner, \$12. (All invited) |
| 19th 7:00 p.m. | Executive Committee meeting |
| 25th 7:30 p.m. | Membership meeting (Nomination of officers for 2008-09) |

April 2008

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 3rd 7:00 p.m. | Yolo County Veterans' Coalition meeting at Post 77 |
| 8th 7:30 p.m. | Firefighters Award Night |
| 16th 7:00 p.m. | Executive Committee meeting |
| 22nd 7:30 p.m. | Membership meeting (Second reading of nominations for new officers) |
| 26th 10:00 a.m. | Members of Post 77 march in the Winters Youth Day Parade |

May 2008

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 26th 11:00 a.m. | Post 77 Memorial Day ceremony, Woodland Cemetery |
|-----------------|--|

MISCELLANEOUS GOINGS-ON

The last issue of the State Legionnaire newspaper, sent to all members, had a prominent article about Post 77, including two photographs. You can find it in the January/February California Legionnaire at page 4 or at www.calegion.org... Thanks to chef John Benedict for cooking the fine cuisine at the Feb. 9th annual Past Commanders dinner... When the electricity went out in parts of Woodland on Jan. 23rd, the Woodland Little League Board of Directors was left in the dark at their meeting room. As the Post Hall still had lights, we invited the Little League officials over that same evening to resume their meeting... Post 77 Commander Corbin Smith had a kidney removed in an operation on Feb. 22nd. Now he has even more energy than the high level he did before that medical procedure... We have had visitors at the Post from American Legions throughout the United States. Recent visitors have come from: Penn Yan, New York; Sanford, North Carolina; Bigfork, Montana; Albert Lea, Minnesota; and Stoystown, Pennsylvania... It looked like a Las Vegas buffet but it was the huge food tables at the Post Clubhouse during the Super Bowl football game. There was everything from steak and Ruben Ramos's well-known and tasty shrimp salad to desserts of all kinds. Even fans of the losing New England Patriots team could find something at the food tables to make them happy... Taylor Grose, from the Boy Scout troop sponsored by Post 77, has earned his Eagle award, scouting's highest attainment. On March 9th, 2 p.m., Boy Scout Adam Scardaci will also receive his Eagle at the Woodland Boy Scout cabin, 515 Lincoln Ave. Ian Dougerty's Eagle court of honor will take place at the scouting cabin on March 8 at 2 p.m.. Their names will be added to the plaque hanging at the Post of all Troop 68 Eagle scouts. Congratulations to them... February 9th was the annual destruction of unserviceable flags. As usual, it was held at Plainfield Station, where hundreds of flags were burned following the procedures instituted by the American Legion in 1937 as the ceremony for disposal of unserviceable flags... The Yolo County Veterans Service Office is now preparing a history, by lead researcher Kristina Maggi, of the approximately 300 veterans from Yolo County who have died in war time while in the Armed Forces from World War I to the present. This includes about ten servicemen who are not on the monument in front of the Yolo County Courthouse. One surprise has been a deceased veteran from Yolo County who served in the United States Armed Forces campaign in Siberia at the time of the Russian Revolution. I hope to find out more about that military campaign and report back to you with details. The full volume should be ready by Veterans Day 2008... Background on some American Legion charities: "The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund" was established shortly after the 9/11 attacks. It helps pay college costs for children of service members killed on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001. "The National Emergency Fund" was created in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille in 1969 to provide funds to Legionnaires hurt by natural disasters. "The American Legion Endowment Fund" was established in 1925 and is still used today to provide grants to military families in need and to support rehabilitation programs for veterans. The "Child Welfare Foundation" provides grants for projects and programs that "contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children." All good work done by the American Legion... Post 77 members hit the streets, Main Street, Woodland, in particular, on Feb. 18th to put up U.S. flags for Presidents' Day... The Post 77 website can be found at www.yolopost77.com.

Vince Olvera, Sergeant-at-Arms

AUXILIARY

March 2008

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 4th 7:00 p.m. | Regular meeting |
|---------------|-----------------|

April 2008

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1st 7:00 p.m. | Regular meeting |
|---------------|-----------------|

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY
APRIL 10, 1919.



Maria Hernandez-President
Janet Lough-First Vice President
Mary Lavorico-Second Vice President
Carolyn Smith-Secretary/Treasurer
Ashley Hernandez-Sergeant at Arms
Mary Cogburn-Past President

If you have any questions about the Post 77 Women's Auxiliary or would like a ride to an Auxiliary meeting, call Mary Cogburn at 662-0624 or Maria Hernandez at 661-2210.



Post 77 member Don Plank consults his secret recipes book under “fantastic” for the corned beef main course at the March 15 Post annual St. Patrick’s Day dinner. Lines will probably begin to form for tickets to the dinner. So, get yours soon!

FOUR-STAR CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE MEAL EXPECTED FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION’S 89TH BIRTHDAY

At the end of World War I, veterans of the Allied Expeditionary Force held a three-day caucus in Paris, from March 15 – 17, 1919. At that caucus, the American Legion was founded. Celebrate the American Legion’s 89th Birthday at Post 77. Enjoy a corned beef and cabbage dinner prepared by Post 77 member Don Plank on Saturday, March 15th, at 6:00 p.m. This year, Don is adding to the menu the old secret recipe mustard from the long-closed famous Dutch Miller Saloon of Knights Landing. . Joining Don in chef duties will be Evelyn Webb, Patty Schapiro, Gary Leach and Dave Isbell.

Relive the old days with us on March 15. (And if anybody knows about “old,” it’s Don Plank.) The dinner, with salad and dessert, is only \$12. As an added attraction, jokes and humor will be provided by that World War II comedian himself, Warren Meyer.

To reserve a seat at the table, call the Post Monday-Friday between 1 - 9 p.m. at (530) 662-9772.

100 PERCENT OR BUST

We are very close to 100% of our 2007 – 2008 membership goal. If you haven’t paid your dues yet, please do so A.S.A.P. If you have misplaced your renewal form, just send a check for \$33.00 to the Post, write “Membership” or “Dues” somewhere on the check (or words to that effect), and I will take care of your renewal.

The next District Six meeting will be held Sunday, March 9, 2008, 10:00 a.m. at Fair Oaks American Legion Post 383, located at: VFW Center Township Post 6158, 8990 Kruithof Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. In addition to the regular meeting, an initiation ceremony will be conducted. Any members who have not been initiated are encouraged to attend. RSVP to Gary Leach, (530) 724-0324, before March 8th to allow time for certificates to be prepared.

Gary Leach, Post 77 Adjutant

PLANNED ENHANCEMENT OF WOODLAND VETERANS MONUMENT ON BEHALF OF ALL WHO HAVE SERVED

A joint effort of American Legion Post 77 and the Yolo County Veterans Coalition is being undertaken to significantly improve the Veterans Memorial at the Woodland Cemetery. Additions will include:

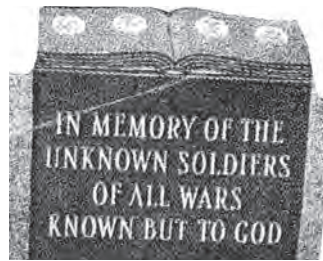
- Centerpiece of black granite
- Two granite benches
- Two new flag posts
- Emblems of each Service to be installed on the wall
- Bronze art work of helmet and folded flag
- Cement work and lighting

The estimated cost of this project is \$16,289. We are in the process of collecting contributions. The work will be done by volunteers. You can help by sending in a check showing your support of this project to Woodland Cemetery Monument Project, P.O. Box 1195, Woodland, CA 95776.

Contributions of \$500. or more will be memorialized on a plaque mounted on the monument listing the names of the donors or in memory of a departed loved one.

We are planning to start work this summer, with completion by Veterans Day 2008. Please help us provide our community with this fitting monument honoring your service and that of all other veterans who also gave of themselves so that we may live free in this great country.

Corbin Smith, Commander





American Legion
 Yolo Post 77
 523 Bush Street
 Woodland, CA 95695

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT #55
 WOODLAND, CA

Return Service Requested



Football fans gathered throughout the Post Hall on Super Bowl Sunday to root for their favorite team.

HAVE A FRIEND JOIN POST 77

Do you have a friend, relative or neighbor who has been in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves? Please ask them if they would become a member of Post 77, which would help support our patriotic and community activities. If I can help you with that, give me a call, Dave Isbell, First Vice Commander, at (530) 219-3174. Thanks.

CRABFEED HIT A “HOMERUN”

The annual baseball crab and shrimp dinner fundraiser was a success in raising funds to pay for some of expenses of the Post 77 baseball team for the upcoming season. The Post Athletic Committee members pass on a big thank you to those who attended and those who helped at the dinner.

Frank Eakle, Post 77 Athletic Committee Chair

“SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION”

Post 77 is exploring the possibility of establishing a Squadron of the “Sons of the American Legion” in Yolo County. There is a sign-up sheet in the clubroom. Call Gary Leach, Post Adjutant, at 724-0324, if you have questions. Here are the criteria from the American Legion manual for who is eligible: “Membership in the Sons of The American Legion is limited to “All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World War I, World War II, Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section I, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.”