



O'Brien POST #177

P. O. Box 177, Eureka, MO 63025

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FEBRUARY-
MARCH 2012
Volume 9, Issue 1

Post meetings held the 1st Thursday of each month in the Community Center at 7:00 p.m.
All members are invited to attend.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEB. 2	Four Chaplains Day Post Meeting, Community Center	7:00 p.m.
FEB. 8	Boy Scouts of America founded	
FEB. 23	U. S. Marines raised flag on Mt. Suribachi (Iwo Jima, 1945)	
MAR. 1	Post Meeting, Community Center	7:00 p.m.
MAR. 10	American Legion Birthday Party Community Center	6:00 p.m. Cocktails 7:00 p.m. Ceremonies & Dinner
MAR. 11	Daylight Saving Time begins	



COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

If you have not renewed your 2012 membership dues please pay them as soon as possible. Officially, you are delinquent and will be dropped from the rolls of our Post. We would like to keep you as a member. The American Legion year begins July 1st, not January 1st.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are glad to have 2 new members transfer in December and January. Thomas Eggers is an Army veteran and Gary Leaders an Air Force veteran. Both served during Vietnam. Please be sure to welcome them.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Saturday, March 10th, we will have our annual Birthday Party. Cocktails will be served at 6:00 p.m. and the festivities will begin at 7:00. **Please phone in your reservations to Wes Becker at 636-938-6689.** There is a \$5.00 charge per person with beer and soda at no cost.

It has been approved by the membership for our Color Guard to act as the Honors Rifle Squad one day per week at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. The Post will receive \$100 per burial for this service. Obviously this would be a great help financially to the Post. If any member would like to join this team, the Post will provide a complete uniform, training, etc. Please contact the Captain of the Guard, Ken Allison, or

the Adjutant, Gregg Kitson, of your desires to join this vital team. It is an honor to provide this service to our deceased comrades. **We need your help** to make this program a success!!!

FROM THE EDITOR

This is the first newsletter since 2004. We plan to publish the letter bi-monthly. To help keep costs to a minimum we are asking **ALL MEMBERS** to provide the editor with a current email address where the letter may be forwarded. Also the newsletter is now on our website which address is below. For those of you that do not have email, please let me know and we will make certain that you receive your newsletter via mail.

POST WEBSITE

Our Post website is up and running thanks to our new webmaster, Don Ford.

www.eurekapost177.org

If you have any content to add, i.e. pictures, articles, etc., please forward to Don at Don.bette@yahoo.com.

Also, our baseball teams have a website at:

<http://eurekalegionbaseball.com>

TAPS

Norman Brueckner
Merrill Schneidewind
Hargis Smith

Please submit any announcements or items for the newsletter to Ken Allison, Editor.
Requests must be received by the 15th to be in the current bulletin.

HISTORY

50 Years Ago – John Baron joined the Post.

20 Years Ago – Pete Frisella and Bill Blakemore joined the Legion. Ken Allison transferred from Ohio post.

10 Years Ago - Lance Bauer joined the Post. Budget of \$7,500 was set for the baseball team.

O'Brien Post 177 received its Charter on October 27th, 1919. It is one of the oldest organizations in the community and in the American Legion. The American Legion was formed in July, 1919.

The name of the Post was selected to honor the memory of the late Marine Corporal Leo P. O'Brien, son of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick O'Brien. Corporal O'Brien was born February 28, 1893 at Byrnesville, Missouri. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on August 1, 1917 in St. Louis and received his recruit training at the Marine Base, Parris Island, SC. He sailed for France with the Third Replacement Battalion aboard the USS Von Stuben on February 5, 1918, and was promoted to the rank of Corporal two days later.

Corporal O'Brien participated in action against the enemy in June, 1918, in the Chateau Thierry Sector. He was killed in action by gas on July 31, 1918, while fighting in the Soissons Sector with Company F, 5th Marine Regiment. His medals and decorations include: Victory medal with Aisme-Marne Battle Clasp, Defensive Sector Clasp with two Bronze Stars, and the French Fourragere. He was buried in the American Cemetery at Ploisy, France, disinterred in May, 1921, and is now buried in the National Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis County, Missouri.

In the early stages of the organization, meetings were held in a variety of locations; in homes, Justice of the Peace Court, Town Pool Hall, Eureka High School, Times Beach Community House, Post Home on Old Highway 66, and the old Powder Magazine in a field west of Eureka. In March 1955, 11.47 acres was purchased from Ed Sutter located on Bald Hill Road where construction of a new Post Home was begun on October 22, 1956. Completion and dedication was in April, 1957. Members put in long hours finishing the

building, installing a flag pole, and building the parking lot. Due to their inability to maintain the property, this building and property was sold to the City of Eureka on June 12, 1984, which now serves the community as the Eureka Community Center.

In 1948, the Post started an annual carnival to raise funds for community activities. Today this activity is known as Eureka Days and has come to be a very popular event annually.

Membership has fluctuated over the years from a high of 216 in 1972 to a low in recent times of 101 in 1988. Today, for the year 2012 our current membership is 114.

CURRENT ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

Jason Chase
Andrew Hendel
Sam Heu
Dan Mater
Keith O'Fallon
Gary Reed
Tyler Roberds
Matthew Wyne

FEBRUARY & MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2/10 Robert Hallahan
3/2 John Pryor
3/7 Andrew Casey
3/11 Carlos Carrillo
3/13 Bobby Blandford
3/16 Jerry Huddleston
3/24 Jerry Cierpiot
3/27 Robert Frye



POST OFFICERS

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The *Dorchester* left New York on January 23, 1943, en route to Greenland, carrying the four chaplains and approximately 900 others, as part of a convoy of three ships (SG-19 convoy). Most of the military personnel were not told the ship's ultimate destination. The convoy was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters *Tampa*, *Escanaba*, and *Comanche*.



Coast Guard Cutter *Escanaba* (WPG-77) rescues *Dorchester* survivors.

The ship's captain, Hans J. Danielsen, had been alerted that Coast Guard sonar had detected a submarine. Because German U-boats were monitoring sea lanes and had attacked and sunk ships earlier during the war, Captain Danielsen had the ship's crew on a state of high alert even before he received that information, ordering the men to sleep in their clothing and keep their life jackets on. "Many soldiers sleeping deep in the ship's hold disregarded the order because of the engine's heat. Others ignored it because the life jackets were uncomfortable."

During the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, at 12:55 a.m., the vessel was torpedoed by the German submarine *U-223* off Newfoundland in the North Atlantic.

The torpedo knocked out the *Dorchester's* electrical system, leaving the ship dark. Panic set in among the men on board, many of them trapped below decks. The chaplains sought to calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation of the ship, and helped guide wounded men to safety. As life jackets were passed out to the men, the supply ran out before each man had one. The chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many men as they could into lifeboats, and then linked arms and, saying prayers and singing hymns, went down with the ship.

As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets.

—Grady Clark, survivor

According to some reports, survivors could hear different languages mixed in the prayers of the chaplains, including Hebrew Jewish prayers and Latin Catholic prayers.

In all, 230 of the 904 men aboard the ship were rescued. Life jackets offered little protection from hypothermia, which killed most men in the water. The water temperature was 34 °F (1 °C) and the air temperature was 36 °F (2 °C). By the time additional rescue ships arrived, "...hundreds of dead bodies were seen floating on the water, kept up by their life jackets."