



# **“For God And Country”** **December 2021 POST 3 NEWSLETTER**



## **Meeting Schedule For December 2021 – January 2022**

Organization	Location	Time	December	January
<b>Legion Post 3</b>	<b>Elks Lodge, 5910 S 58th</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>12/14/2021</b>	<b>01/11/22</b>
<b>Auxiliary Unit 3</b>	<b>Elks Lodge, 5910 S 58th</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>12/14/2021</b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
<b>SAL Squadron 3</b>	<b>Post 3 Office, 123 South 84th</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>12/09/2021</b>	<b>01/13/22</b>
<b>ALR Chapter 3</b>	<b>Denton Legion Club</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>12/11/2021</b>	<b>Normal Date &amp; Time</b>
<b>40 &amp; 8 Voiture 103</b>	<b>Elks Lodge, 5910 S 58th</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>12/21/2021</b>	<b>01/18/22</b>
<b>8 &amp; 40 Salon 832</b>	<b>The Legacy, 72nd &amp; Van Dorn</b>	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>12/04/21</b>	<b>Normal Date &amp; Time</b>
<b>8 &amp; 40 Salon 92</b>	<b>Elks Lodge, 5910 S 58th</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>No Meeting</b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
<b>Buddy Check</b>	<b>The Foundry, 211 North 14th</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>12/22/2021</b>	<b>01/22/22</b>
<b>VA Coffeehaus</b>	<b>Auld Pavilion, Antelope Park</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>12/17/2021</b>	<b>01/21/22</b>

# **Commander's Call**



## **Fellow Legionnaires:**

This year is almost history, and I am very proud and can say with confidence that Post 3 is very much alive and active in the business of the American Legion. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your service and sacrifice to defend our nation. You have allowed this country to continue to enjoy the freedoms and privileges that are so very often taken for granted. I work with an organization that does its very best to take care of individuals, like you, who have taken such wonderful care of us when needed. Please remember that you are supported and loved by a grateful nation.

The Holiday is supposed to be a time of joy and happiness, good will and good cheer. Families come together to share and bask in the glow of the Christmas spirit and often to reunite after a busy year. Sadly, for many in Lincoln, especially our "golden age" citizens, Christmas is, at best, just another day on the calendar. They have nowhere to go or no one to share Christmas with them. At worst, it's a day of gloom, sadness, loneliness and clearly not of good cheer. But it shouldn't be that way! Everyone should be able to share in the Christmas spirit, if only briefly.

As we prepare to celebrate this upcoming holiday and what it means to each of us, we need to reach out in a small way and to brighten the lives of these forgotten citizens.

Everyone should be included at this special time, even if only for a day. Donate money or your time to the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign, volunteer at a charity that helps these people or give food or money to the Food Bank. There are many ways to help our fellow citizens.

Don't forget about our veterans, especially those who are homebound and visit them or invite them to a meal. Remember we are all citizens of Lincoln, and we all stand together. This is what Christmas is all about.

I want to remind everyone to remember our service men and women who are away from their families during this Holiday Season. Pray for them and their families.

I would like to thank each of you for being a member of the largest veteran's organization in the world, The American Legion. As a member, you are responsible for touching the lives of many people that you don't know and most likely will never meet. While it is one thing to be a large and working Post, we must realize that it is not a time to back off on our commitment to those principles that the American Legion stands for.

We are not at 100% on membership and since membership is key to our success, we still need all non-paid members to renew and yes, we need new members.

We have 978 members paid as of this writing. We are currently at 72.8% of our 2022 goal. We need 366 more to make 100%. So, we have some work to do. If any of you know anyone that has not paid as of this writing, please remind them to renew and/or recruit a new member.

Thank you for your selfless service to our Country. May you have a joyful holiday season knowing how much you are appreciated.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gerry Wolf  
Post 3 Commander

# Notes from the Adjutant's Desk



**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!**

**A BIG THANK YOU** to those who have renewed for 2022. National shows that as of today we have 978 paid, about 72% of our 2022 goal.

Again, if you have sent in your 2022 dues payment and have not received your 2022 card, please call, and let us know. This is the only way we know that you have not received your 2022 card.

Last item on 2022 renewals, those who have not been credited for paying their 2022, should have received a second dues notice during the last week of November. Again, if you know you have paid your 2022 dues, just throw the notice away. Due to lag times with the mail and processing at National, some memberships are not credited before the next cutoff date for a renewal notice.

Where is your DD214 or Discharge Papers? And does your family know where to find it?

We keep getting a late request for Military Honors, without the DD214, this can cause the military branch not to be able to carry out your request, as they must have a DD214.

I cannot over stress this. NOW is the time to be sure that your family knows your wishes. You can help your loved ones with your request for Military Honors by doing some simple things now.

If you desire Military Honors during your memorial service, you need to talk with your family, so they know your wishes. Your DD214 or discharge papers, are the key piece in requesting Military Honors that are provided by DOD personal. You can find answers to many of your questions on the VA's web site. The VA's site will help with requesting a VA grave head stone, how to request burial in a National Cemetery, etc. Feel free to call the office for assistance with this effort.

I hope all took time to remember our VETERANS on Veteran's Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This was a special day this year, as it was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tomb of the unknown soldier.

Have a great Christmas and New Year's, and be safe. Thanks again for renewing with POST 3 and THE American Legion.

The office will be closed starting on Thursday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> through the end of December.

Ed Schnabel  
Adjutant

# **LINCOLN CBOC/VA NEWS**



**The VA is requiring the use of blue paper masks, no cloth masks. They will provide a mask for you and they are giving Covid shots.**

**FLU shots:** If you have a doctor's appointment, you should be able to request a flu shot during your visit. Walk IN's are also welcome. Again, dates and times will vary by the Clinic you go to for your VA care.

**Just a note, if you have old meds you would like to get rid of, you can now drop them off in the Pharmacy waiting area. There is a locked BLUE drop box where you can deposit your old, out of date meds. Get them out of your homes and out of our kids' hands.**

**If by chance you do not have a current VA ID card you can request one while you are in the clinic. You will need to have some form of ID that will allow them to double check your identity. You can use a state issued driver's license and/or state issued ID card.**

**The process is done by video computer link. Ask any VA clerk and they will show you where the room is for this video computer link.**

**You can also get help to enroll in the VA system, etc. by using this computer link.**

**Waiting areas, two on the main floor and two on the second floor have NEW NAMES.**

**They are named Reception Area A or Reception Area B. Reception Area A is to**

**the left and Area B is to the right of the main entrance.**

**The nurse / staff will come to the reception areas and call you by your name. Try and be in the reception area about 15 minutes prior to your appointment time.**

**Lastly, if you would like to give calls to veterans, the VA has a new program: Compassionate Contact Care Volunteer Program. This would involve calling or receiving calls to talk with veterans. Details are still being worked out. This is another way to volunteer, but you would have to come to a clinic or hospital to do so.**

**Remember, the VA will only be there for us if we use its services. If we do not use them, the government sees it as a service not needed here and will cut funding for the Lincoln CBOC. The government funds each CBOC / hospital based on the number of veterans signed up for services in its service area. They, the veterans, do not need to be using the VA for their medical needs, just need to be enrolled in the VA Health Care System.**

**Funding is based on foreseen needs, not current needs, thus we need to talk with our fellow veterans to be sure they are enrolled in the VA system. There are many veterans who could receive medical service but have never signed up for this benefit of our service. Again, it is the old story, use them or lose them.**

**Thanks for your service.**

**Ed Schnabel**

**Lincoln VAG member (Veteran Advisory Group)**

**Lincoln VA American Legion Representative for Nebraska**



## **Post 3 ALR Director's Remarks**



**Greetings Riders and all,**

**Well, Turkey Day is behind us, and Santa will be here before we know it. Not much happening with your American Legion Riders.**

**We completed our "Lack of Cents Challenge," with two riders amassing over 8,000 miles. Our two riders had several sponsors and as a result of those pledges, we were able to make a donation of over \$500 to the American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation (CWF). As you may already know, the CWF was established in 1954 as a repository of funds from individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country. Their foremost philanthropic priority is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys, projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth.**

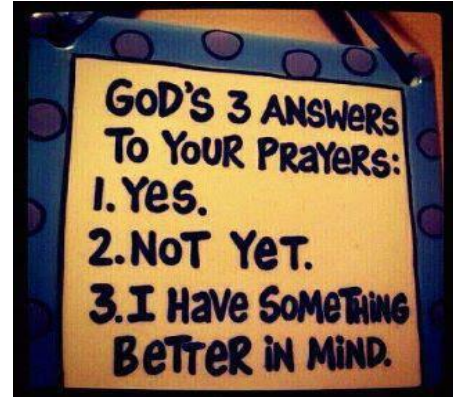
**Again, thank you to our wonderful sponsors for their pledges and to our Riders for supporting this charitable effort.**

**Our next meeting will be our Holiday Party, and will be held on Saturday, December 11th, at 2pm. We will be having a "Chinese Auction" gift exchange, but the most important item on the schedule is the election of officers for 2022. I hope to see as many Riders as possible on the 11th.**

**Until next time,  
Ride (and drive) Safe!**

**Bruce Gubser  
Director  
Lincoln Chapter 3, ALR**

# **The Chaplain's Remarks**



Times have changed. Any given person seems to take it as given their right to state their opinion, no matter the physical, mental, or spiritual harm to their fellow human beings. Is that really so? How does that pan out through the scheme of things, especially from a spiritual perspective?

In case you hadn't released it, the Lord IS a bit miffed at His most beautiful creation, human kind. After all, humans are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). In the past, after keeping His end of bargains He forged with His notable creation, mankind usually stepped out of their responsibilities to enjoy their fleshly pursuits. Remember His people released from Egyptian captivity (Ezekiel 29:14), giving the Decalogue in the desert at Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:4), gaining the promised land but not getting rid of those condemned by God (Deuteronomy 9:5), and Jesus' sacrifice in Jerusalem (Matthew 12:7)?  
( Courtesy of bing.com )

More essentially, how do we, who claim our rightful place as His church—the *Ecclesia* (Greek) for the “called out” to serve Him—measure up to assisting God in bringing our once favored nation back to its proper fold, like sheep once lost, and now found by their shepherd (John 10: 16)?

What are we to do to help bring our nation back to its proper status with God? How about...sorrow...repentance...forgiveness...regarding our sins against God? More importantly, something substantial **MUST** be done to stem the tide of those little Anti-Christ's (1 John 2:22) —followers of Satan, with or without their willing cooperation—who may take the form of various leaders, family, pastors spreading Apostasy (i.e., false Gospel of Christ), or who-knows-what to work their evil amongst us.

Ssssoooo...let it begin with you, who call yourself a Christian, a disciple of Christ, a Lutheran, a Baptist, an Episcopalian, a Methodist, a Catholic, a Hebrew, an Islamic, or whatever religious persuasion you claim. In the eyes of the Lord, though, only those who trust in Him—by faith—will come to not only receive His forgiveness but walk among one's fellow humanity as one of God's followers in truth and behavior (Hebrews 11:1, 3). Thus, we may heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Rev. Dr. William Jackson

Lincoln ALP 3 Chaplain



## Post 3 Honor Guard



In the month of November, the Honor Guard rendered “Honors” at 10 Legion funerals and was asked to assist at 4 VFW funerals. We also appeared in the Lincoln Veterans Day Parade, conducted a dignified Flag retirement, and appeared at 7 Veterans Day ceremonies. In calendar year 2021, the Honor Guard has rendered “Honors” at 152 combined funerals and appeared at 31 civic functions.

## November 2021 TAPS



LEGIONNAIRE	WAR ERA	BRANCH	YEARS
Earl C. Bridger	Korea	Army	40
Alfred R. Campbell	WW II	Army	59
Robert E. Jeffries	Vietnam	Army	7
Leslie D. Sabalka	WW II	Navy	56

## American Legion Post 2 Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Christmas seasons is here and Post 3 has stepped forward with excellent support from our members, our Auxiliary Ladies and our Legion Riders.

Thank you to all listed below who volunteered to ring bells supporting the many great local causes of the Salvation Army.

### Monday 29 November at Williamsburg Hy-Vee

11am to 1pm Ron and Paula Hindmand

1pm to 3pm Bill Speilman and Stan Fraas

### Wednesday 1 December at Hobby Lobby

American Legion Riders from 11am to 7pm

Mike Streeter

Ed Muggy

Ron Bevard

Kathy Enlow

William Smisek

Ray Paulson

John Brehm

Mary Brehm

Carl Fitzke

Brad Christian

John Stevens

Lori Gubser

Bruce Gubser

### Thursday 2 December at Williamsburg Hy-Vee

Legion Auxiliary Ladies

11am to 1pm Barb Skillman & Lori Gubser

1pm to 3pm Jeanie Harris & Nancy Vallis

3pm to 5pm Lynne Wild & Barbara Michail

5pm to 7pm Shirley Horstman & Carol Nelson

### Wednesday 8 December at Williamsburg Hy-Vee

11am to 1pm - John Ottoson

1pm to 3pm - Steve Bartos

3pm to 5pm - Brendan Moore

5pm to 7pm - Dave Timmerman

### Thursday 9 December at Williamsburg Hy-Vee

11am to 1pm - Angela Hutchins

1pm to 3pm - John Trayer

3pm to 4pm - Jack Sibert

4pm to 5pm - Rev Dr. William Jackson

5pm to 7pm - Wade Graft and Jerry Wolf

**THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT!**

Ron Hindmand



**Regular Meeting of American Legion Post 3  
Lincoln Elks Lodge #80 and also on ZOOM  
November 9, 2021**

Commander Gerry Wolf opened the November 9, 2021 meeting of American Legion Post 3 at 7:00 PM at the Lincoln Elks Lodge 80 with 17 Legionnaires present. The meeting was also being made available on Zoom.

Steve Bartos read the minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting; and they were approved without correction.

Adjutant / Finance Officer Ed Schnabel gave the financial report for the month ending October 30, 2021 showing a balance on hand of \$49,617.77. The report was filed for review.

Ed went on to report that several members of the post met yesterday morning to formulate a budget for the current year. Ed explained the various items of income and expense which comprised the budget of \$63,551 and moved its adoption.

During discussion, Ed Muggy indicated that the post needed to spend more money because the Legion Riders appeared to be spending more than Post 3. He also suggested we should come up with some fundraisers to do so. Fred Craigie pointed out that the Legion Riders were a program of the American Legion and that money donated by them for charitable purposes are reportable on the Post 3 Consolidated Post Report.

Following a non-debatable motion by Jack Sibert and a proper second, the discussion on trying to separate and compare the types and amounts of donations made by Post 3 and the Post 3 American Legion Riders was tabled.

The original motion to adopt the proposed budget was then passed without dissent.

Veterans of the various war eras were asked to stand and be recognized.

Vice-Commander Gubser reported for the American Legion Riders. Bruce indicated that he and another Rider had completed the Lack of Cents challenge and that he had ridden 5329 miles. He also reported that the Riders had participated in an event honoring a Civil War soldier in Plattsburgh and had about 10 Riders participate in the Lincoln Veterans Parade on Sunday.

Bruce also reported for the Legion Riders. He indicated that the riding season was slowing down and that the "Lack of Cents" fundraiser was going to end this month.

Dr. Jackson spoke on Buddy Checks in his Americanism report.

In Vice Commander Hindmand's absence, Commander Wolf gave Ron's report on Salvation Army Bell Ringers. It appears that members of the American Legion Family will be covering various locations for 4 full days. The Commander commended Ron for the way the schedule was organized this year.

Ed Schnabel reported that once again Post 3 prepared for the Oratorical Contest with no contestants appearing to compete. He indicated we would have try a few things a little differently next year to garner some interest and support from our local educators.

The Commander reported that the Memorial Squad remains busy and was scheduled to participate in several Veterans Day activities on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Commander also reported that Post 3 conducted an honorable flag retirement ceremony earlier in the day. About 10 Legionnaire's were present for the ceremony and flag disposal. Jack Sibert and Dave Timmerman were recognized for making most of the preparations and Dave was thanked for allowing the ceremony to be conducted on his property.

**(Minutes – Continued)**

**Brendan Moore reported for the Sons of the American Legion. He indicated that they were at about 90% of goal in membership and would meet this coming Thursday at the Post 3 business office. He also indicated that the Squadron had purchased two patio heaters for the Victory Park apartments.**

**Brendan also reported that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier would celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Veterans Day.**

**The Commander reported that POW / MIA Liaison Wes Newton continues his 1-year deployment to the Mexican border in Texas. He did, however, read a report that Wes had submitted.**

**Wade Graft reported that Voiture 103 of the 40/8 would meet next Tuesday. He also spoke on the Nurses' Training Raffle being conducted and invited the Legionnaire to participate.**

**Nathan Thedford reported on the Pine Lake Park clean-up activity taken on by Post 3 this year and thanked everyone who had come out to help. He indicated that the frequency of the work details would diminish now that the summer season is coming to an end.**

**Commander Wolf expressed our appreciation to the Elks for treating us veterans to hamburgers tonight in honor of Veterans Day week.**

**Commander Wolf reported on a request from Unit 3 President Barb Skillman to help the Auxiliary with a Food Basket Project.**

**Commander Wolf addressed the issue of an ongoing recommendation from the state and national organization for local posts to incorporate and mentioned that one of the benefits would be to protect our individual members. Steve Bartos added a few comments explaining that Post 3 and the corporation would really be one-and-the-same and that incorporation would not affect the way the post operated. The current post officers each year would also become the corporation board of directors that year. As now proposed, the September Post 3 meeting would also serve as the annual meeting of the corporation.**

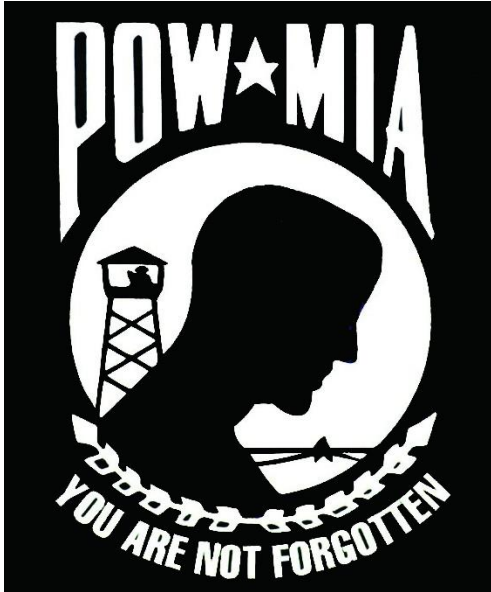
**Upon motion by Bartos and a proper second, the post authorized the submission of Articles of Incorporation to the Secretary of State.**

**Commander Wolf mention the upcoming VA Coffeehaus and the monthly Buddy Check on November 22. Brendan Moore commented on the Veterans Walk from Memorial Stadium to Veterans Memorial Gardens. The Lincoln Wreaths Across America ceremony will be held at Wyuka Cemetery on December 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**Chaplain Jackson read TAPS, and the meeting was closed in proper form at about 8:00 PM.**

**Steve Bartos, Recorder**

# **Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Ross Thompson)**



**WASHINGTON –** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Army Tech. Sgt. Ross H. Thompson, 50, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Nov. 10, 2021.

In late 1941, Thompson was a member of the Finance Department, U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFE), when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December.

Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Thompson was among those reported captured when USAFE forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese.

They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March and then held at the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war.

According to prison camp and other historical records, Thompson died Dec. 10, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery, in Common Grave 917.



## **Medal of Honor Sgt. George Lovell Banks, 15<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteer Infantry**

**By James Gindlesperger, historical author**



As would be expected under the conditions of the steep terrain, the battle at Missionary Ridge was not going well for the Union army. A frustrated Major General Ulysses S. Grant ordered Major General George H. Thomas's Army of the Cumberland to attack the center of the Confederate line. On Thomas's order, 60 regiments advanced under heavy artillery fire from the top of the ridge. One of those regiments was the 15<sup>th</sup> Indiana.

Under the cover of choking gunsmoke, the 15<sup>th</sup> Indiana was among those that advanced, unauthorized and unexpected, as it would turn out. They soon encountered heavy fire that caused the men to drop face down to the ground, made muddy by heavy rains the day before. Major Frank White screamed above the din, "Men, for God's sake, forward!"

Color-Sergeant George L. Banks leaped to his feet without hesitation, waving the regimental colors and exhorting his men to follow him. Banks had already suffered a relatively minor but painful wound to his left hand, and before he could lead his men very far he was struck in the chest by a minie ball. Stunned, he was knocked to the ground, his already tenuous grip on the flag relaxing. Unable to move, he felt someone grab the colors as he tried to force air into his lungs. Banks could not discern who it was that picked up the flag, but he was able to see the man fall almost immediately. Before Banks was able to fully regain his senses, three more men would carry the colors. All three would also fall. Of the four who took the colors after Banks received his second wound, two would be killed and two wounded badly.

As Banks slowly regained feeling in his body and felt his senses returning, he assessed his second wound. He immediately recognized that the bullet had taken a fortuitous path, passing through two letters and a novel that he had stowed inside his coat. The wound, which would have been fatal had it not been for the presence of the novel and letters, was bloody and painful but one that would still allow him to stand and move forward.

Still a bit shaky from the effects of his wound, he made his way to the side of the last man to have picked up the flag. He caught up with the colors just as the unfortunate man fell. Banks hastily reached for the staff, grasping it just before it reached the ground for the fifth time in the charge. Hoisting the flag once again, he urged those around him to follow him to the top of the mountain.

Approaching the ridge, Banks and the rest of the 15<sup>th</sup> Indiana dropped to the ground when they saw the rebel guns trained on them. As soon as the volley was released, Banks rose to his feet, with the rest of his company doing the same. Before the Confederates could reload, the Federals reached the summit, with Banks leading the way. As he began to plant the colors he received a third wound, this one to the head. Of the eight regiments in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 2nd Division, IV Army Corps, Banks's bullet-riddled flag was the first to be planted on the parapet. The unauthorized assault forced Bragg to retreat, ending the battle for Chattanooga.

Banks would recover from his wounds and live to age 84. On September 28, 1897, he was presented with the Medal of Honor for his actions at Missionary Ridge.

# Post 3 and Lincoln Veterans Parade, 11/07/2021





# **Post 3 Dignified Flag Retirement, 11/09/2021**





# **Veterans Day, 11/11/2021**

Some members of the Honor Guard provided a Flag seminar and Flag folding ceremony at 4 assisted living facilities, a school, and a church group. Some of the visited facilities either did not take pictures or failed to forward pictures to me. Below are some of the pictures provided.



Truce in the Forest, by Fritz Vincken  
Readers Digest, January 1973, pp 111-114

It was Christmas Eve, and the last desperate German offensive of WWII raged around our tiny cabin. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door...

When we heard the knock on our door that Christmas Eve in 1944, neither Mother nor I had the slightest inkling of the quiet miracle that lay in store for us. I was 12 then, and we were living in a small cottage in the Huertgen Forest, near the German-Belgian border. Father had stayed at the cottage on hunting weekends before the war; when Allied bombers partly destroyed our hometown of Aachen, he sent us to live there. He had been ordered into the civil-defense fire guard in the border town of Monschau, four miles away.

"You'll be safe in the woods," he had told me. "Take care of Mother. Now you're the man of the family."

But nine days before Christmas, Field Marshal Von Rundstedt had launched the last, desperate German offensive of the war, and now, as I went to the door, the Battle of the Bulge was raging all around us. We heard the incessant booming of field guns; planes soared continuously overhead; at night searchlights stabbed through the darkness. Thousands of Allied and German soldiers were fighting and dying nearby.

When that first knock came, Mother quickly blew out the candles; then, as I went to answer it, she stepped ahead of me and pushed open the door. Outside, like phantoms against the snow-clad trees, stood two steel-helmeted men. One of them spoke to Mother in a language we did not understand, pointing to a third man lying in the snow. She realized before I did that these were American soldiers. Enemies!

Mother stood silent, motionless, her hand on my shoulder. They were armed and could have forced their entrance, yet they stood there and asked with their eyes. And the wounded man seemed more dead than alive. "Kommt rein," Mother said, finally. "Come in." The soldiers carried their comrade inside and stretched him out on my bed.

None of them understood German. Mother tried French, and one of the soldiers could converse in that language. As Mother went to look after the wounded man, she said to me, "The fingers of those two are numb. Take off their jackets and boots, and bring in a bucket of snow." Soon I was rubbing their blue feet with snow.

We learned that the stocky, dark-haired fellow was Jim; his friend, tall and slender, was Robin. Harry, the wounded one, was now sleeping on my bed, his face as white as the snow outside. They'd lost their battalion and had wandered in the forest for three days, looking for the Americans, hiding from the Germans. They hadn't shaved, but still, without their heavy coats, they looked merely like big boys. And that was the way Mother began to treat them.

Now Mother said to me, "Go get Hermann. And bring six potatoes."

This was a serious departure from our pre-Christmas plans. Hermann was the plump rooster (named after portly Hermann Goering, Hitler's No. 2 man, for whom Mother had little affection) that we had been fattening for weeks in the hope that Father would be home for Christmas. But, some hours before, when it was obvious that Father would not make it, Mother had decided that Hermann should live a few more days, in case Father could get home for New Year's. Now she had changed her mind again; Hermann would serve an immediate, pressing purpose.

## **(Truce in the Forest – Continued)**

While Jim and I helped with the cooking, Robin took care of Harry. He had a bullet through his upper leg and had almost bled to death. Mother tore a bed-sheet into long strips for bandages.

Soon, the tempting smell of roast chicken permeated our room. I was setting the table when once again there came a knock at the door. Expecting to find more lost Americans, I opened the door without hesitation. There stood four soldiers, wearing uniforms quite familiar to me after five years of war. They were Wehrmacht - Germans!

I was paralyzed with fear. Although still a child, I knew the harsh law: sheltering enemy soldiers constituted high treason. We could all be shot! Mother was frightened, too. Her face was white, but she stepped outside and said, quietly, "Froehliche Weihnachten." The soldiers wished her a Merry Christmas, too. "We have lost our regiment and would like to wait for daylight," explained the corporal. "Can we rest here?"

"Of course," Mother replied, with a calmness, born of panic. "You can also have a fine, warm meal and eat till the pot is empty." The Germans smiled as they sniffed the aroma through the half open door. "But," Mother added firmly, "we have three other guests, whom you may not consider friends." Now her voice was suddenly sterner than I'd ever heard it before. "This is Christmas Eve, and there will be no shooting here."

"Who's inside?" the corporal demanded. "Amerikaner?"

Mother looked at each frost-chilled face. "Listen," she said slowly. "You could be my sons, and so could they in there. A boy with a gunshot wound, fighting for his life, and his two friends, lost like you and just as hungry and exhausted as you are. This one night," she turned to the corporal and raised her voice a little, "This Christmas night, let us forget about killing."

The corporal stared at her. There were two or three endless seconds of silence. Then Mother put an end to indecision. "Enough talking!" she ordered, and clapped her hands sharply. "Please put your weapons here on the woodpile, and hurry up before the others eat the dinner!:

Dazedly, the four soldiers placed their arms on the pile of firewood just inside the door: three carbines, a light machine gun and two bazookas. Meanwhile, Mother was speaking French rapidly to Jim. He said something in English, and to my amazement I saw the American boys, too, turn their weapons over to Mother. Now, as the Germans and Americans tensely rubbed elbows in the small room, Mother was really on her mettle. Never losing her smile, she tried to find a seat for everyone. We had only three chairs, but Mother's bed was big, and on it she placed two of the newcomers side by side with Jim and Robin.

Despite the strained atmosphere, Mother went right on preparing dinner. But Hermann wasn't going to grow any bigger, and now there were four more mouths to feed. "Quick" she whispered to me, "get more potatoes and some oats. These boys are hungry, and a starving man is an angry one."



## **(Truce in the Forest – Continued)**

While foraging in the storage room, I heard Harry moan. When I returned, one of the Germans had put on his glasses to inspect the American's wound. "Do you belong to the medical corps?" Mother asked him. "No," he answered. "But I studied medicine at Heidelberg until a few months ago." Thanks to the cold, he told the Americans in what sounded like fairly good English, Harry's wound hadn't become infected. "He is suffering from a severe loss of blood," he explained to Mother. "What he needs is rest and nourishment."

Relaxation was now beginning to replace suspicion. Even to me, all the soldiers looked very young as we sat there together. Heinz and Willi, both from Cologne, were 16. There German corporal, at 23, was the oldest of them all. From his food bag he drew out a bottle of red wine, and Heinz managed to find a loaf of rye bread. Mother cut that in small pieces to be served with the dinner; half the wine, however, she put away, "for the wounded boy."

Then Mother said grace. I noticed that there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, "Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest." And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home.

Just before midnight, Mother went to the doorstep and asked us to join her to look up at the Star of Bethlehem. We all stood beside her except Harry, who was sleeping. For all of us during the moment of silence, looking at the brightest star in the heavens, the war was a distant, almost-forgotten thing.

Our private armistice continued next morning. Harry woke in the early hours, and swallowed some broth that Mother fed him. With the dawn, it was apparent that he was becoming stronger. Mother now made him an invigorating drink from our one egg, the rest of the corporal's wine and some sugar. Everyone else had oatmeal. Afterward, two poles and Mother's best tablecloth were fashioned into a stretcher for Harry.

The German corporal then advised the Americans how to find their way back to their lines. Looking over Jim's map, the corporal pointed out a stream. "Continue along this creek," he said, "and you will find the 1st Army rebuilding its Forces on its upper course." The medical student relayed the information in English.

Now Mother gave them all back their weapons. "Be careful, boys," she said, "I want you to get home someday where you belong. God bless you all!" The German and American soldiers shook hands, and we watched them disappear in opposite directions.

When I returned inside, Mother had brought out the old family Bible. I glanced over her shoulder. The book was open to the Christmas story, the Birth in the Manger and how the Wise Men came from afar bearing their gifts.

Her finger was tracing the last line from Matthew 2:21, "...they departed into their own country another way."

**Merry Christmas  
to  
Soldiers  
everywhere  
who can't be  
with their  
families.**



## **Become a Member of The American Legion**

Do you want to help your community and fellow Veterans by becoming a member of the American Legion? Would you want to help recruit a new member? If you can certify that you served at least one day of active military duty since December 7, 1941, and were honorably discharged or are currently serving honorably, you are eligible. Complete the application below and send it with a check in the amount of \$46.00 to:

**American Legion Post 3**

**123 South 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite L**

**Lincoln, Ne 68510**

**The American Legion Membership Application**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date of Birth) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone Number) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip) \_\_\_\_\_ (Post #) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(E-mail) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female (Gender) \_\_\_\_\_ (Dues) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty since December 7, 1941 and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.

**Please check appropriate service era and branch of service below**

<input type="checkbox"/> Global War on Terror	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army
<input type="checkbox"/> Gulf War	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Navy
<input type="checkbox"/> Panama	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Air Force
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanon/Grenada	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Marines
<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Coast Guard
<input type="checkbox"/> Korea	<input type="checkbox"/> Merchant Marines (WWII only)
<input type="checkbox"/> WWII	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Conflicts	

30-009 \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name of recruiter \_\_\_\_\_



To renew or transfer to Post 3, you only need to sign below and mail this and a check for \$46 made out to "American Legion Post 3" to the address listed above. If you have already renewed for 2022, and want to transfer to Post 3, only sign below and return the bottom portion to us.

***YES! Please transfer my membership to Lincoln American Legion Post 3***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Membership Number





**American Legion Post 3  
123 South 84<sup>th</sup> St. Suite L  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
(402) 466-3958**

**Post3legionlincoln@gmail.com**

**<https://lincolnpost3.org>**

**2021 - 2022 Post 3 Officers**

**Commander – Gerry Wolf – Cell: 402-417-8230**

**First Vice Commander – Bruce Gubser – Cell: 402-470-1700**

**Second Vice Commander – Ron Hindmand – Cell: 254-291-1514**

**Adjutant & Post Service Officer – Ed Schnabel – Cell: 402-480-8542**

**Chaplain – William Jackson – Cell: 402-613-9774**

**Please submit any announcements or items for the monthly newsletter to the Adjutant for approval. All requests must be received one week before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.**

