

Lest We Forget needs recruits for conflicts classes

By **JOHN MATUSZAK**
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Lest We Forget, the veterans' organization that has presented lecture courses on World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars, is looking for those interested in participating in a course on America's modern conflicts, from 1975 to the present.

Lest We Forget is teaming up with the Whirlpool Corp. Veterans Association to organize 10 classes to be offered at Lake Michigan College from March 15 through May 17.

LWF President Don Alsbro said that previous classes have been well-attended, and his group thought it was time to focus on the experiences of veterans over the last 40 years.

The groups are seeking veterans from operations in Iraq in 1980; Beirut, 1982-84; Grenada, 1983; Libya, 1986; Panama, 1989; Desert Storm, 1990-91; Somalia, 1992-93; Haiti, 1994; Bosnia, 1995; Kosovo, 1999; Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, 2011 to present; the 9-11 attacks; and Operation Iraqi Freedom, from 2003 to the present.

Dwight Blackledge, an Army veteran and current Reserve officer, and a Whirlpool employee, will be helping with the project. The Los Angeles native is a 2005 West Point graduate as a field artillery officer and instructor.

He served in Iraq from March 2007 to May 2008 in

the first unit that was part of the surge of 20,000 troops to bolster security in the country.

Blackledge, an information systems leader in product development for Whirlpool, will help participants prepare for their presentations.

Alsbro said they are looking for between two and six veterans to participate in each class.

One possible recruit is a local veteran whose unit captured Saddam Hussein, Alsbro said. He's also like to include women veterans to provide their perspective.

Blackledge is part of the Whirlpool veterans' group. The participants have taken part in a D-Day landing reenactment with Lest We Forget. They also assist with the annual Steelhead Triathlon and organize Veterans Day events.

The group also has a mentorship program that helps returning veterans adjust to civilian life, Blackledge said.

Blackledge added that working with the older veterans is an opportunity to bridge gaps between generations.

The bond between veterans "transcends conflicts and time periods," Blackledge said. "We all believe in the same ethos."

Alsbro would like to have volunteers sign up by the end of November. Those interested can contact him at 921-7176 or at dealsbro@comcast.net.

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