

January - March 2018 News Letter



The American Legion – Patchogue Post 269
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Patchogue Post 269
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Commanders Corner

Comrades

We are continuing to send out the minutes to the Membership meetings via email. This allows us to save time at the meeting, but more importantly gives the information of what went on to all those who were not able to attend. This is a positive step forward and will allow more members to be involved and up to date. If you are not getting the minutes, please send an email to alpost269@aol.com so we have your email and can send you all our information.

In November, we started a new and innovative idea for the Membership meetings. We know that many cannot attend the meetings, either because they do not live close enough or have illnesses that prevent it. In order to address that issue, we started conducting an experiment with live Video Conferencing during our meeting. This allows members to be at home and still listen, watch, and participate in the meetings. All that is required on the members' side is a computer with speakers. If you are interested in attending the meetings from your home, please send an email to alpost269@aol.com so we can get the setup information to you. This is a free service and there is no cost to either the Post or anyone at home. We also are recording the meetings and can make it available for viewing after the meeting.

We are in the final push for the annual Membership renewal. In each of the last two years, we have exceeded our Membership goals and increased in membership. That's a great sign that the Post is active and involved. If you know other veterans who are eligible, let them know about us and encourage them to come down and join. And if you haven't already renewed your membership for 2018, we strongly encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

The Post was very active over the Veterans Day holiday. Not only did we have the usual Veterans Day Ceremony, but we also provided a

Color Guard at Meadowbrook Pointe Condo complex for their gathering. The First Baptist Church reached out to us to do a Flag Folding Ceremony at their sermons on the Sunday following Veterans Day. We were glad to oblige them and were able to do the ceremony at both of their sermons that day. It is important to note that this is the first time the Post has worked with the First Baptist Church. This signifies that we are getting noticed in the community.

We are continuing to be active with other organizations such as Missing in America Project, Joseph Dwyer Veteran Peer Support group, Student Veterans of America, Patriot Guard Riders, and others. As I have said many times, and firmly believe, our best results will be achieved when we work together with other organizations and form solid partnerships where it makes sense.

Before Veterans Day, several members from the Post visited classes at the South Ocean Middle School and talked with the students about our experiences in the military and what it has meant to us. The principal of the school was very pleased that we requested to do this. In talking with him afterwards, we will be setting up a Flag etiquette and Flag folding class for the students. The principal also said that he would work with putting us in touch with the principal of Saxton Middle School so that we can do the "Vets in the Classroom" at that school also.

In December, we completed the fundraising for the restoration of the two M1902 Field Guns. We presented a check for \$9,000 to the Village of Patchogue on behalf of the Post.

I have been having a lot of conversations and discussions for new ideas of how to increase our out-reach to Veterans and the community. I think it is very important to improve and enhance our standing in the community, and with all Veterans.

I encourage all of you to come join in and help. It's a great way to get some personal satisfaction and have some fun at the same time.

Starting in March we will be starting the Officer nomination process for the 2018-2019 term. If anyone is interested in an Officer position, please contact Jon Ralph or George Egan.

For God and Country
Jon Ralph – Commander

1st Vice Commander Corner

2017 turned out to be a busy and fun year for the Post, with members participating in all of Patchogue's Parades and Ceremonies, Blue Ridge Condos Flag Day Ceremony, Long Island Ducks Veterans Recognition Day Baseball games, Post 269 Veterans Appreciation BBQ, Patchogue/Medford High School's 1st Annual Veterans Recognition Baseball game, The Veterans Appreciation Day Luncheon at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Patchogue and much more.

It is so important for members to participate in these events if they can, not only for the public to view the various Veterans Organizations at parades and events and to show their appreciation but in hope that our greatest resource "our young people" learn from these events.

I am looking forward to 2018 and hope to see a lot more members at our monthly meetings and at scheduled events. With that said I would like to wish all our readers a Happy and Health New Year.

For God and Country
Jose J. Bou
1st Vice Commander

Membership Corner

I want to thank everyone who has paid their dues. As of the last transmittal from County Membership Chairman we were at 81.46% of our goal. National still has to update our records with 12 more paid

which should bring us to 88% paid.

New York Department Bylaws reads as follows:

A member whose dues for the current year (2018) has not been paid by January 1st shall be classified as delinquent. If dues are paid on or before February 1st the member shall be automatically reinstated. If the member is still delinquent after February 1st the member shall be suspended from all privileges.

It is imperative that you get the dues paid. You can pay online at www.legion.org or send them to the Post.

For God and Country
John Matuszak – Past Commander
Membership Officer

Historian Corner

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs into law the original GI Bill, or Serviceman's Readjustment Act, ushering in monumental changes in U.S. Society. Higher education becomes democratized after 8 million veterans go to school on the GI Bill, get better jobs, buy houses in the suburbs and raise families. For every dollar spent on educating veterans, the U.S. economy eventually gets \$7 back.

On July 21, 1983, the American Legion announces its sponsorship of an independent study of the exposure to Agent Orange on Vietnam War veterans. Congress receives the results of the "American Legion-Columbia University Study of Vietnam-era Veterans" in 1989.

On May 5, 2011, the National Executive Committee authorizes establishment of The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) to promote emergency communications and disaster preparedness, engage youth in math and science and facilitate public

communications with our nation's federally licensed amateur radio operators who are veterans. TALARC membership opened free for members of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of the American Legion who are FCC licensed ham radio operators.

Dates to remember:

- 1) Jan 1, 2018 – New Year's Day
- 2) Jan 15, 2018 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 3) Jan 27, 1973 – Vietnam War cease fire
- 4) Jan 30, 1968 – Start of the Tet offensive
- 5) Feb 1, 2018 – National Freedom Day
- 6) Feb 12, 2018 – Lincoln's Birthday
- 7) Feb 14, 2018 – Valentine's Day
- 8) Feb 16, 2018 – Chinese New Year
- 9) Feb 19, 2018 – Presidents Day
- 10) Feb 22, 2018 – Washington's Birthday
- 11) Feb 23, 1945 – U.S. Flag raised over Iwo Jima
- 12) Feb 24-28, 1991 – Operation Desert Storm
- 13) Mar 15-17, 2018 – American Legions 99th Birthday
- 14) Mar 19, 2003 – Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom

For God and Country
Jose J. Bou - Post Historian

Echoes From The Heart

Now the Holidays have passed. I hope all our members enjoyed the friendship and love shared with their family and friends.

Being that this is being written during the first week of January, I started to think how many of us made a New Years Resolution? How many of us are planning to become a better person?

Do any of us match to the below list?

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| • Dedicated | * Respectful | * Committed |
| • Positive | * Passionate | * Enthusiastic |
| • Flexible | * Hardworking | * Trustworthy |
| • Inspiring | * Considerate | * Teamwork |
| • Helpful | * Reasonable | * Patient |
| • Creative | * Confident | * Friendly |
| • Prepared | * Professional | * Proactive |
| • Focused | * Supportive | * Reliable |

How much of this list describes you? I compared myself and found I need a lot of help. To become a better person in 2018 I need a tremendous amount of soul searching. If you grade yourself below 15 of this list of 24, you, like me, also need some help.

Remember it is a resolution and I hope some of us will make it.

For God and Country
Tom Bergin
Past Post Commander

Community Activities

On November 9th, we visited several Social Studies classes at South Ocean Middle School and talked with the students about our experiences in the military and how it has helped us during our lives and careers. It is important for the students to understand what it has meant to us to have served. The teachers were extremely glad that we did this, and the students enjoyed it a lot. In talking with the principal several days later, he said it was very well received. He brought up the idea of doing a Flag etiquette and Flag folding set of classes in the spring. He also said he would help us to do the Vets in the Classroom at Saxton Middle School next year. He said he would like to see this become a yearly event.

We again held the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Four Corners in Patchogue. The ceremony was very well attended by the community. All three commanders of the local Veterans Organizations gave speeches as well as Mayor Pontieri and other dignitaries.

There were many other events during the Veterans Day time frame, including St. Joseph's College, Calverton National Cemetery, Emanuel Lutheran Church, and Color Guard at Meadowbrook Pointe. We were also asked to participate in a ceremony at the First Baptist Church. They requested that as part of their ceremony honoring Veterans if we would be willing to perform a Flag Folding at their services. We were glad to oblige them and did the Ceremony at both of their services that day. This was the first time the Post has worked with the First Baptist Church and we are glad they reached out for our support. We will be trying to work with them in the future. They have a significant number of veterans in their congregation.

On November 18th, we attended an Eagle Scout Court of Honor and presented the award to Eagle Scout Frank Fischetti IV.

The Post also was a co-sponsor for the Veterans Art Exhibit held at the Artspace on Terry Street in Patchogue. We look forward to doing more of that in the future.

The Post participated in the annual Christmas Parade in Patchogue. This was a great parade and the community really turned out for it.

Members of the Post went to Calverton on December 16th to help with the Wreaths Across America and placing wreaths at the headstones in the cemetery. We also participated in the dedication of new headstones for three Union Veterans of the Civil War in the Union Cemetery on Waverly Avenue in Patchogue.

And finally, on December 11th, we presented a check for \$9,000 to the Village of Patchogue for the restoration of the two cannons. The Village Board was very appreciative of our efforts to help restore these important WWI era guns.

Recent Events

The Post continues to be very involved with the Missing in America Project. The purpose of the Missing in America Project is to locate, identify, and inter the unclaimed remains of American Veterans. Members of the Post attended interment ceremonies on October 17th, November 16th, and December 14th and 21st at Calverton National Cemetery.

Several members of the Post also continue to attend the NOA ceremonies at Calverton. These ceremonies are conducted on the second Wednesday of the month at 10 AM at Calverton. This is a joint ceremony between the officials at Calverton National Cemetery and the Patriot Guard Riders. The purpose of the ceremony is to read the names of all veterans interred in the last month with No One in Attendance. The idea is that no veteran should be interred alone and without family.

We received a call of a woman who had her father's casket flag but it had become unfolded. She asked if we could re-fold it for her which of course we were glad to do.

We are also continuing our monthly community meetings in coordination with the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support project. This is a monthly coffee hour and is open to all veterans and their families. It is held at the Post on the third Saturday of every month between 10 and 11 AM. Come down and get acquainted and visit with your fellow veterans.

On December 15th, we held the annual Salute to Departed Comrades at the Post. The ceremony started with some appetizers, a nice fire in the fireplace, a few speeches, and concluded with a champagne toast to our Departed Comrades. This has become a yearly event at the Post and we hope many of you will come down next year to remember those who have passed away.

Upcoming Events

During these winter months, we will have a short lull in activities. While we will not have a lot of community events, we will still be busy with a lot of planning.

On February 11th, the annual Four Chaplains – Back to God Ceremony will be held at the Long Island State Veterans Home at 2PM. We encourage all of you to attend this ceremony.

We will also be looking forward to the annual St Patrick's Day Parade which is the next large community event.

On the planning side, we will be busy planning for the Flag etiquette and Flag folding classes we will be giving in the spring. We will also be starting the planning for a fundraiser that we need to do.

We will be working with the Village of Patchogue to create the plaque for the two cannons and getting the Post ready for the springtime activities. The dedication of these two guns will probably be done on Memorial Day.

The Village of Patchogue has planted a sapling from the 9/11 Survivor Tree in the park in front of the Post. The Survivor Tree is a pear tree that survived the World Trade Center attack. Saplings from the tree are being donated to various cities and organizations. There will be a dedication ceremony, probably on Memorial Day also.

Starting with the March membership meeting, we will be having nominations for Officer positions. If anyone is interested in an Officer position with the Post, either elected or appointed, please contact Commander Jon Ralph or Service Officer George Egan. The election of Officers will be held at the May membership meeting. All members are encouraged to get involved and participate.

General Information

The Post is asking for volunteers for our Color Guard and Firing Detail. We haven't had one for many years, so it is time to again start it up. This will be a great way to get involved with the Post and would be good for the community also.

We have finally gotten the Constitution and By-Laws approved. The Post approved them at our November Membership meeting. After that, we obtained the approval from Suffolk County and then submitted them up to the Department of New York. After several emails and a conference call, we were able to make all of the required changes to satisfy the Department. We have received their sign-off so we finally have a completed Constitution and By-Laws in effect. We wish to thank the members of the Committee for their hard work and efforts to get this completed.

We also completed the Veterans Monument Identification project. The final version was sent up to the Department of New York. We also submitted it to the National organization. You can see the monuments by going to legion.org/memorials and looking through the New York entries. The document has also been placed on our website in the "Veterans Memorials" page under the "Major Projects" tab. We would like to thank Harry Jantz for his hard work in making this project happen.

We would like to ask all of you to please provide us with your email addresses if you have email. As many of you have already seen, we have started providing the minutes from the Post Membership meetings via email in advance of the meeting. It will also provide the information about what we are doing to the members that cannot make the meeting and hopefully encourage more participation. So please just send an email to alpost269@aol.com and we can make sure we have your email on our list. An added benefit to having all of your email addresses is that it will reduce our expenses. Being able to

distribute notifications and this newsletter electronically will cut down on the printing and postage expenses. As a point of interest, it costs about \$1,800 per year to print and mail the four newsletters that we produce every year. We are hoping to distribute the newsletter in electronic format and try to reduce our costs. Any money that we save can be used to help and enhance our programs and community outreach.

We receive many flyers during a month about various Veterans events. It was suggested that we put together an email containing those flyers and distribute it out to the Members. This was a good suggestion and we will be acting on it very soon.

We are still working on opening the Post for a Blood Drive. Pauline King has a contact at the American Red Cross and is reaching out to them to see if this is feasible and what it would take to make it happen.

We will be inviting other businesses and local community groups to come and give presentations to our members on activities or information that would be important for our members to hear. We are hopeful that we can get a representative from AARP to come talk about their efforts and programs relating to consumer protection and combating fraud and online scams. This is something that we have all faced and encountered. We are also reaching out to the Long Island State Veterans Home to see if they will give a presentation about their programs. They may have programs and events that will be of interest and benefit to our members.

We will be working with Patriot Mobility to get the final stair lift donated and installed so that the entire Post will be accessible.

If any of you have ideas or a subject you would like to hear about, just let us know and we can try to make it happen. The more involvement we have with the community will provide a benefit to both the Post and the community.

Outside the Post is the Grand Army of the Republic statue. There is a separate project being run by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to restore that statue. Our Post has been assisting that group and will provide any help that they need. That group is forming a new Camp named Richard J. Clark which is the name of the original GAR Camp here in Patchogue. Many of the people forming this camp are members of our Post. Given that there is a relationship with many of them, and the fact that the statue is outside our Post, we have agreed to allow their Camp to use our Post for their monthly meetings.

Post Everlasting

Thomas Felice, a member of the Post for 34 years, passed away on October 10th. Members of the Post performed the Post Everlasting ceremony at Robertaccio Funeral Home.

Edward Halverson passed away in December. Members of the Post performed the Post Everlasting Ceremony on December 3rd.

Post Membership Meetings

Membership meetings are held at the Post on the second Monday of the month at 8 PM. The next three monthly meetings are: February 12th, March 12th, and April 9th. The Board and Officers meetings are held at the Post on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. Members are welcome to come and listen. Auxiliary meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month. SONS meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 8 PM.

The Dugout at the Post

The Dugout is open Fridays from 7-11 PM and Sundays 3-7 PM.

Drop in and hang out for a while for some drinks, conversation, and friendship. Don't forget, it really is YOUR POST, so come in and visit with friends.

Public Relations and Social Media

Events, photos, and other information are always available on our Facebook page. You can get photos of the Post and pictures from all of our various events by looking in the Photos section of the Facebook page. Important announcements and event information are also available on our Website. Our Website has a resources page with phone numbers and links to many Veteran support groups as well as links to several crisis hotlines. We also maintain a Blog section for commentary and an Articles tab for published articles. Make sure to check the Events section of both our Facebook page and our Website so you can keep up to date with the latest information.

The URL's for our Facebook and Web sites are:

<https://www.facebook.com/American.Legion.Post.269>

<http://alpost269patchogue.wix.com/patchogue-alpost269>

<https://www.facebook.com/American.Legion.Auxiliary.Patchogue.269>

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, call Tom Hall or Jon Ralph. Remember, this isn't my newsletter, it's YOURS!!!!, so if there is something you would like to see included, tell us.

The American Legion

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For God and Country

