



Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

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Four Chaplains Ceremony a Success

On Sunday, February 3rd, our Post conducted its annual Four Chaplains Ceremony in our Post hall. Once again, we were honored to have four local clergy members stand-in for our Four Chaplains - Pastor Christopher Chantelau of Grace Lutheran Church, Rabbi Robert Weiner of Temple Beth Am, Pastor Dan O'Brien of Calvary Bible Church, and Rev. John Wilson of St Patrick's Church. This year's ceremony was opened with the presentation of our nation's colors by the Living History students of Yorktown's Mildred Strang Middle School suited up in different military period uniforms with their teacher Chris DiPasquale. Chris took a few moments to educate the audience of the significance of the different uniforms and periods in US history. Our National Anthem was sung beautifully by Alyssa Martin, the daughter of one of our key SAL Squadron members, Paul Martin. Our audience included Supervisor Ilan Gilbert, Councilmen Vishnu Patel and Tom Diana, Town Clerk Diana Quest, Town Judges Gary Raniolo and Sal Lagonia. Other distinguished guests included Westchester County American Legion Cmdr Tom Boddie and members of Peekskill Post 274, VFW Post 8328, the Korean War Veterans Chapter, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 137, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 49, and 16 members of our own Post were also in the audience.

This ceremony honors the memory of four US Army chaplains - each from different faiths and backgrounds, who came together on the fateful night of February 3, 1943. They were on board the US troopship, USAT Dorchester, with 898 fellow soldiers crossing the icy North Atlantic that night. A German submarine torpedoed the troopship and in 20 minutes the ship was lost. In those short minutes these men of faith handed out life vests to their shipmates - when the life vests ran out, they gave up their own knowing full well the price of this act. Only 230 of the 902 aboard the ship survived the sinking that night. Survivors told stories of these four chaplains linked arm-in-arm on the deck with their shipmates calming them with prayer as their ship slipped beneath the waves. The story of these men and their sacrifice

was well known following the war with memorials, monuments and even a postage stamp memorializing the event. Our Post strives each year to remind people of the story of these brave men of faith.

Post Everlasting Ceremony

Following the Four Chaplains Ceremony our Post conducted our annual Post Everlasting Ceremony. This ceremony retires by fire the membership cards of those Post members who we have lost in the past year. This gives everyone the chance to say a final goodbye and render a final salute to these Post members. We also open this ceremony to those in the audience to honor a veteran loved one of their own they've lost in the past year. We were honored to have family members of Legionnaires Joseph Larsen, Charles C. Smith, and Frank Tempestilli join us for this final farewell to their loved ones.

In this ceremony our Post honored Legionnaires Allan Abrams, Veronica Dapson, Paul Eiseman, Thomas Hauser, Joseph Larsen, Robert Miller, Robert E. Miller, Charles C. Smith, and Frank Tempestilli. We also honored fellow veterans: Joseph 'Mike' Seig, Vincent Grimaudo, Joseph Maskiell Jr., Felix Zema, and Steve O'Loughlin at the request of members of the audience.

Mid-Winter Conference

On January 25, 26, and 27, the Department of New York American Legion held its annual Mid-Winter Conference at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany, NY. This event is open to all Legionnaires to attend and participate in. The SAL and Auxiliary also hold their conferences during the same dates in neighboring hotels to allow the entire NY Legion Family to participate in the major dinners and ceremonies. The purpose of the conference is to pass info up and down the chain-of-command and keep everyone on the same page with regard to programs and problems. Our Yorktown Post is lucky to have a constant source of this type of

information coming from the NYS Legion with Post member Rich Calbo serving as the Department's Master-at-Arms. This year our SAL Cmdr James Calbo attended the entire weekend of seminars and meetings gaining information to help with our Squadron's operations. Post Adjutant Pat McDonough took a ride up for Saturday's meetings and returned home for dinner that evening. What goes on up there? Classes on preparing the annual Consolidated Reports for our SAL and Post which report everything we do all the way up to the National Cmdr and he reports that to Congress! Public Relations held seminars on tools like Twitter and Facebook for getting your units noticed and word out on events. The NY Press Association seminar discussed websites and newsletters for Posts & SAL Squadrons to build a following and keep their members informed. (Both our Post and SAL now have working websites... and obviously we have a newsletter to read!). Membership, charities, Post/SAL operations,.. there were all sorts of classes for many subjects. Of course, with this many Legion members together the visiting dignitaries also come around like the next National Cmdr candidate from Texas who stopped in most classes to speak for a minute.

Who attends this event? Legionnaires, Sons, and Auxiliary members from Posts and Counties across New York from L.I. to Northern and Western NY were there. Ideas are exchanged and new friends made at these things. Pat McDonough bumped into a Legionnaire from a Bronx Post and in talking learned the veteran that our Post had done a Rendering Honors for the previous night was a member of his Post. A week later our Post received a letter of thanks from this Post for seeing their member off with this ceremony. Next year maybe a few of us can drive up together and enjoy the day learning things that we can bring back to our Post to use.

Girls and Boys State News

Just about 6 years ago our Post launched a committed effort to fund and organize a Boys State program each year. We committed the funds to send one boy each year and thanks to member donations we were able to send two if we had more candidates apply. One Post member, Bob Gorsuch, and his wife Marcia made a very generous donation of \$500 to this new Boys State program and an additional \$500 to start a Girls State program back in 2016. Every year our 1st Vice Cmdr Bill Goss reaches out to area high

schools: Walter Panas, Lakeland, Yorktown, and Kennedy Catholic to let them know about both of these valuable programs. Through Bill's dedication and perseverance our Post has been able to sponsor one or two boys to Boys State each summer. Unfortunately, despite Bill's best efforts we have never had a candidate apply for the Girls State program.

This year Bill had excellent success in recruiting one boy, Victor Magaletti, a resident of Shrub Oak who attends Stepinac HS to attend Boys State in Morrisville, NY in June. Bill also has secured two Girls State candidates - Stephanie Bieder who lives in Cortlandt and attends Walter Panas HS, and Joan Anthony from Yorktown who attends Lakeland HS for this summer's Girls State program. Outstanding Job Bill!! Once again... thank you to Bob and Marcia Gorsuch for their donation which enabled us to seek out candidates for this Girls State program!

Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony

Each year the Town of Yorktown has marked Holocaust Remembrance Day with a ceremony at town hall. Each year as word has spread about the ceremony the size of the crowd understandably grew. Last year the town's meeting room was close to capacity for this important day of remembrance. Several members of our Sons of the American Squadron are elected members of the Town Board. At one of the SAL meetings they learned that our Post Hall can hold nearly double what the town meeting room does. As part of our Post's mission to help our community we will open our Post Hall for this Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony which will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd, 2019 at 7 PM with guest speaker Peter Volgyes. All are welcome to attend.

Rendering Honors...

Picture this in your mind. You visit a local funeral home to pay respects to a friend or relative who has passed. While you are visiting they ask everyone to take their seats for a short ceremony by the American Legion. You see a line of veterans file down both sides of the room to meet and face you forming a single row across the front of the room. They remove their hats as one as a prayer and a small reading are made. Again

as commands are uttered, they put their hats on, turn and salute the departed in unison. As this line of 10 to 18 veterans exit, they file past the family in the front, each offering a handshake and a kind word. You leave the funeral home impressed with the American Legion and its respect for the veteran and their families.

Most of you have noticed a drastic increase in our requests for Post members to come for the Rendering Honors ceremony for a local veteran or Legionnaire. Our Post finally has convinced one funeral home (Yorktown Funeral Home) that our Post wants to perform this final ceremony for ALL US veterans in our community. After countless discussions we pointed out that our Post has never declined the opportunity to do this ceremony. Now, they offer this ceremony to the families of veterans in making their final plans. They have found that the families are embracing this opportunity to honor their veteran loved one.

This ceremony only lasts 5 minutes and only two members speak during the ceremony. All the other Legionnaires just file into the room, uncover on command, re-cover, turn to the casket, render a hand salute and turn and file out of the room. The reason we stress all this is simple... our workload has literally quadrupled in this area. We would like to see some new faces join us to man the ranks during the ceremony. Some members respond to every call for this and neglect their own families in the process. Thank you to all who have helped our Post with these Rendering Honors ceremonies recently. You all have seen the deep appreciation first-hand that these families have shown us for this ceremony.

Sad News...

We are sorry to inform everyone of the passing of two Yorktown Post members - Cas Faughnan and Lee DeFrancesco. Cas, a WWII veteran, was last seen catching up with everyone at our Post's Holiday Party in December with his daughter, Mary.

Lee DeFrancesco was a key member of our Post team even though he declined an elected position in the Post. He was a member of our Post Hospitality Committee helping with coffee & cake making all our monthly meetings more sociable. At every event Lee was lending a hand setting up, serving, and cleaning up. Whenever a work party was needed for repairs or clean-up - Lee was there pitching in. In the photos on the board at the Post, Lee is in almost every one of them: the Grange Fair Ceremony; in the parades as part of

our Color Guard; at our Four Chaplains, Post Everlasting, and Flag Retirement Ceremonies as our Post bugler playing our Post's 'special' bugle. 22 Post and Sons members traveled to a Peekskill Funeral Home to Render Honors for Lee. While we don't have an Auxiliary Unit there was an entire row of Post ladies also saying goodbye to Lee as well. These two members helped build our Post from a sleepy one to one of the most active in the County. You both will be missed greatly!

Welcome Aboard...

We wish to offer a warm welcome aboard to three new members of our Yorktown American Legion Post - Irving Breitbart, Alan Lindholm, and John Kearney. Our Sons of the American Legion Squadron also welcomes aboard new members Tom Diana, Matt Slater, and Michael Grace to their ranks.

We hope that all of you will take an active part in running your Post and hope to see you at our events. It's a great way to get to know everyone.

Sick Call

Please keep the following Post family members who are out sick or on the mend in your thoughts and prayers: Larry Armstrong recovering from sick and Gerry Knapp recuperating from knee replacement surgery.

Scouts BSA

3rd Vice Cmdr John McQuillan has been our Post's Charter Organization Representative for our Scouting program for many years and has written this article to educate our Post members on our ties to the local Scouting community.

The Boy Scouts of America is getting into its 109th year. In the early 1990's our Post was asked to sponsor Cub Scout Pack 251 which meets at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School. This Scouting unit now serves boys and girls from Kindergarten through 5th grade. Our Post sponsors their Pack's Pinewood Derby every year providing the trophies for 1st through 4th place and participation medals for each Scout entering one of the handmade cars. Each year some of our Post members attend their annual baking contest, Blue & Gold Dinners, and give talks on what a veteran does.

Also in the 90's our Post decided to co-sponsor Boy Scout Troop 164 with St Andrew's Lutheran Church. This Troop meets at the church but has many of their activities and dinners at our Post. Many Eagle Scout projects have been done to benefit our Post like the painting the outside and inside of the building, the restoration of our Post cannon, and many clean-up projects at the Post. This year Troop 164 is starting a girls troop and our Post will also support them.

In September of 2018 our Post was asked to sponsor a new forming Boy Scout Troop. Scout Troop 1776 was formed with an American Revolution theme with patrol names like the Patriots and Sons of Liberty. Our Post supplied the new Troop with their first American flag and Troop flag so they could start on the right foot. Tom Bodkin, their Scoutmaster, is a former Marine and a Post #1009 member and we thank him for his service. Troop 1776 has helped our Post with clean-ups and flag folding work at their meetings in the Post each Monday.

All of these Scout units participate in Yorktown's Memorial Day Parade and Veterans Day Parade each year. Our Post interacts with other Scouting units each year with our Flag Retirement Ceremony and when decorating veterans graves for Memorial Day. Our Post has benefitted from this interaction with several Scouts doing Eagle Scout projects for our Post like our Post's fence facing the medical building and our Flag Drop-Box for used and worn flags.

Sons of The American Legion Squadron #1009 News

Our Sons of the American Legion Squadron #1009 continues to grow and work towards its goals. In February they held another successful breakfast fundraiser. On St Patrick's Day they went all out and held a wonderful Corned Beef & Cabbage Luncheon which close to 100 people attended. They were helped in the cooking of nearly 90 lbs of corned beef by local celebrity chef Rob Del Balzo who has been on TV several times for his cooking accumen. Rob not only volunteered his cooking skills, he also baked a bunch of Irish soda bread for the event too! Thank you Rob!

This event was a great working success for our SAL unit. The food was plentiful and delicious and they had a full spectrum of things going on at the luncheon. SAL member Bill Gerhardt brought his DJ equipment and provided some quality

entertainment. During the afternoon NYS Assemblyman Kevin Byrnes stopped by to play his bagpipes for the audience. There was plenty of food and the bar had Guinness beer on tap for the event as well.

Congratulations and job well done to everyone who helped make the day such a success. Thanks go to: James Calbo, Ed Lachterman, Paul Martin, Bill Gerhardt, Matt Essell, Ilan Gilbert, Gary Raniolo, Matt Slater, Larry Armstrong, Michael Grace, and Tom Diana.

Post / Squadron Elections

Any Post members interested in running for any Post Officer positions should contact Dave Moskowitz before our April 9th meeting. This includes Officers now serving who wish to run for office again. Dave is just formulating a list for all positions. This way we can identify any positions that have no one running to try to find candidates for them in time.

Post #1009 Upcoming Events

- Tue Apr 2 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM**
- Thu Apr 4 Sons of A.L. meeting 7:30 PM
Nominations of Officers from
the floor.**
- Sun Apr 7 SAL Fundraising Breakfast -
9 AM to 11 AM. \$8 per person.**
- Thu Apr 11 Post General Mtg 7:30 PM
Nominations of Officers from
the floor**
- Thu May 2 Yorktown Holocaust
Remembrance Service 7:00 PM**
- Sun May 5 SAL Fundraising Breakfast -
9 AM to 11 AM. \$8 per person.**
- Tue May 7 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM**
- Thu May 9 Post General Mtg 7:30 PM
Election of Post Officers**
- Sun May 19 Post Spring Brunch -**

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