



# Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

Issue #63

June / July 2019

## Bob Graham's Funeral...

Two years ago, our Post was contacted by a young lady who wanted to have some veterans attend a 95<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Bob Graham, a veteran in a local nursing home. 4 or 5 of our members joined a handful of other veterans in wishing this WWII US Marine Raider veteran a Happy Birthday. The 25-year-old young lady who organized this was Beth Regan who was a visitor to the nursing home who had gotten to know Bob and his wife, like family.

A few weeks ago, a request went out over the internet across the country and around the world about a 97-year-old WWII US Marine Raider with no family who had passed away in Yorktown, NY. A young woman was afraid that he would only have a handful of people at his funeral and she thought a decorated WWII Marine deserved more. The Marine was Bob Graham, and the young woman once again was Beth Regan. The internet request was passed back and forth thousands of times in 3 days to veterans, veteran's groups, politicians, and city government employees. It was picked up by local and major TV news stations up and down the East Coast. Our Post received texts and emails from veterans in Washington DC, Legion members in Rockland County, and from the Department of New York American Legion Commander Gary Schacher himself asking if we knew about this funeral. We replied... our Post, of course, would be in attendance.

On the day of the funeral several police motorcycles led the motorcade; half a dozen fire departments had fire trucks along the route and had suspended a US flag over E. Main St between two ladder trucks. A band of pipes and drums led the hearse up to the church where NYPD pallbearers carried Bob into St Elizabeth Seton church. Our Post had 23 members in attendance joining the over 200 veterans and first responders lined up in front of the church. A detail of US Marines played Taps and fired a rifle salute for Bob outside the church. As the funeral cortege departed Yorktown - there were children and parents on the overpasses over the Taconic Parkway holding American flags bidding Bob farewell. Beth Regan, that young lady with a heart of gold, was able to use the technology of

today to inspire and organize a beautiful farewell tribute for this WWII veteran. Our Post felt that Beth's actions deserved some type of formal recognition and we wrote up a recommendation to the Department of New York American Legion for Ms. Regan to receive the Department's Red, White, and Blue Award for her organizing this farewell. We'll keep everyone updated on our plans in the coming weeks to recognize this wonderful young lady for her actions.

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## Spring Brunch

Our Post's Spring Brunch was held on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM in our Post hall. We had 42 people attend and enjoy the delicious meal prepared by Theresa Capizola. In recent years we've switched over to using our 8 foot long rectangular tables for seating at these functions because it is more conducive for conversations across the tables. The larger round tables kind of hindered that ability to talk. Everyone really enjoyed catching up with everyone and our 'old' and 'new' members got the chance to know each other a little better. Thank you to all who attended the Brunch and hopefully we'll see more of you next time!

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## 2019 County Convention

On Saturday, June 8, 2019, our Post joined a dozen other Legion Posts at Peekskill's - Captain Oliver C. Chase Jr. Post #274 for the 2019 Westchester County American Legion Convention. The Post of the Year award actually went to Post #274 this year, and deservedly so. Their Post is clean, newly updated and freshly painted. They too have gone from a sleepy, inactive Post to an active one with an active Auxiliary Unit and are looking to add a Sons of The American Legion Squadron soon.

Our Yorktown Post received the John F. Walsh Membership Award for exceeding last year's membership total of 118 - we closed out the year with 122 members for this year! This honor is a credit to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr Carl DiLiberto our Membership Chairman, Cmdr John Giacomini, and all our Post members who are active around town

at all of our events. We present a friendly, active bunch of Legionnaires who enjoy the community work we are doing. This easy-going manner makes it easier for other veterans to approach us everywhere about joining our Post.

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## Lobby Photo Boards

6 or 7 years ago Pat McDonough put up a nice display of Post member photos to entertain and educate people as they entered our Post building. The 3 large display panels have 'Before & After' pictures of a bunch of our Post members. The 'before' is a picture while you were serving... boot camp graduation, or just one in uniform while you were in the service. The second picture is 'after'... of now, at a Post meeting or event. We all enjoy a good chuckle when we see who's been added and how they've changed over 20, 30, 40... 50 years!? What we really noticed when we put the display up was that visitors all stopped to look at this display. They don't recognize anyone's 'before' picture, but often see a neighbor or relative from the 'after' picture!

Recently, Pat noticed that the boards are badly in need of some updating and he will be reaching out to members for those old photos to scan and return for the display. Pat will then get a quick photo in our Hall at some event or meeting for your 'after' picture. Join us in making this display as up-to-date and all-encompassing as possible. Hey... it is your Post after all!

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## Memorial Day Week Events

The week leading up to Memorial Day has evolved into one of the busiest for our Post and our members. This year our Post was involved with 7 events in 8 days!

### **\*\*Somers Middle School Living History Day**

On Wednesday, 5/22, Cmdr Giacomini, Al Laughlin PPC, Tom Einwich, and Frank Troia travelled over to Somers Middle School for their Living History Day event. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year our Post members were in attendance and they enjoyed being with the first responders, veterans, and dignitaries who took part in the ceremonies and demonstrations there. Keep this in mind if you'd like to see it next year. Our own SAL Chaplain, Bill Weinecke (dressed as George Washington in picture below) coordinated this event for the students there, and fellow SAL

member Paul Martin manned a WWII display and tent at the school that day also.



### **\*\*Fleet Week Invite**

On Friday, 5/24, our Post Chaplain & WWII veteran, Tom Einwich, was invited with an aide - Cmdr Giacomini, by the 'Mended Sword' organization for a tour of the Navy ships in NYC for Fleet Week. They enjoyed a long, 12-hour day of unprecedented access and 'Meet & Greet's' with the personnel onboard the USS New York and 2 other ships. We may invite this organization to speak to our Post membership at a meeting next Fall.



### **\*\*Jefferson Village Memorial Day Ceremony**

On Friday, 5/24 at 11 AM, a crowd of 150 residents, guests, and local elected officials attended a Memorial Day wreath-laying ceremony at Jefferson Village. At a reception afterwards a Post #1009 member played Taps before a few words from Yorktown Supervisor and SAL #1009 member Ilan Gilbert and then Post Adjutant Pat McDonough. Many thanks to Post member Rocco Salierno for helping to put this event together for the residents and veterans living there.

### **\*\*Flags-In at Cemeteries Across Yorktown**

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Cmdr John McQuillan mobilized local Scouts and enjoyed the help of SAL members also as over 900 US flags were installed to decorate every veteran's grave across Yorktown for Memorial Day. Thanks to all who came and helped out with this.

### **\*\*Poppy Fundraiser**

On Saturday, 5/25, for four hours 23 of our Post members and 4 of our SAL members set up tables outside Turcos, DeCiccoc, and the ACME Supermarkets in Shrub Oak and Yorktown handing out the traditional red poppies and collecting donations for our Post programs. With our friendly volunteers at these locations in 4 hours we collected \$4,600! These are the funds we need to budget sending 2 Boys to Boys State(\$1,100); 2 girls to Girls State (new this year - \$900); our Honor Flag program; and support the 100 boys and girls in our Scouting units(1 Cub Scout Pack; 2 Scout Troops of Boys + 1 new all-girls Scout Troop which began this Spring - costing \$1,200-\$1,500 annually). So you can see the importance of this vital fundraising event. Thank you to: Tom Einwich, Al Laughlin, John Giacomini, Rich DeSilva, Rocco Salierno, John Gunn, Dave Moskowitz, Bill Lewis, Terry Deveau, Ken Blish, Frank Troia, Bob Raphael, Rich Calbo, John McQuillan, Larry Armstrong, Carl DiLiberto, Don Roberts, Tom Brady, Steve Rice, Ed Augustine, Vinnie Faggella, Dan Greco, Pat McDonough, and SAL members James Calbo, Ed Lachterman, and Matt Essell. We even had extra help from Larry Armstrong's two grandsons - Tycho & Duncan Force and Carl DiLiberto's grand-daughter - Alexis Gajda. That's probably the help that put us over the 'top' that day!! Great Job everyone and Thank You All!

### **\*\*Yorktown Memorial Day Parade**

Our Yorktown Post alternates with the Yorktown VFW with organizing and running the annual Memorial Day Parade. Before last year's Memorial Day Parade, the town had moved the war monuments from the front of Town Hall into the park down behind Town Hall's parking lot, where the 'Old Put' train used to turn around. The ground there was uneven last year and everyone stood up on the hill looking down at the wreath-laying ceremony below. This year, the town asked us to encourage all attendees to come down into the newly planted and cleaned up park. It took a little effort to get people to do it, but the ceremonies there looked quite impressive with the massive flagpole in the center, 6 flagpoles in

the background flying the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine flags. On the hillside you could easily see the town's 3 war monuments during the wreath-laying ceremony. All the veterans organizations formed up in groups around the gravel circle, with the Yorktown Fire Department on one side and our premier Yorktown HS Band easily heard from the hillside overlook. The sunny ceremony this year was a nice change from the simple ceremony of years past.

Following the ceremonies there, the parade proceeded over to Jack DeVito Veterans Memorial Park where we heard speeches from Town Supervisor Ilan Gilbert and our guest speaker Brig General Donald Singer. We heard new musical selections from the Mildred Strang MS Band and the Yorktown HS Band. It was a beautiful day with a wonderful turnout.

Looking forward to next time, we need to really insist on having some members who can't march come to Underhill Ave and Front St to help with the parade line-up there. It was tough having one Post member doing the line-ups at both Town Hall and Front St by himself.



### **\*\*Commemorative Brick Dedication Ceremony**

We conducted our 7<sup>th</sup> annual Commemorative Brick Dedication after the Memorial Day Parade to dedicate the 12 new engraved Veteran's bricks installed in the past year. Brick Chairman John Gunn and Cmdr John Giacomini conducted the ceremony and presented

donations to the three veterans-related charities from the funds of these brick sales. \$500 was presented to 'My Brother Vinny' who has helped move over 800+ veterans into residences and supplied them with furniture and all the necessities to make them livable; \$500 to 'United for the Troops' to help them continue their campaign of mailing 'Care Packages' to troops deployed away from home; and \$500 was donated to the Montrose VA Food Pantry to keep it supplied with food for the veterans-in-need who rely on it to survive. Great job everyone!



## It Needs to be Said... Thanks!

It takes a lot of work in the months leading up to the Memorial Day Parade... contacting all the organizations who march, getting the parade permit, arranging for a guest speaker and the sound system for the speeches. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Bill Goss did a wonderful job with all of this and we owe him a great deal of thanks! A big thanks also go out to his family, who all pitched in on parade day - his daughter, Kathleen, grabbed a poppy donation can and collected donations as she walked the parade route. Bill's wife, Kim, gave a big hand in setting up things at the Post, and his son, Bill Jr., was involved helping out as a SAL member... Thank you to the Goss family!!

There was another hard-working group at the Post on Memorial Day - The Yorktown Lions Club. At 9 AM while our members were setting up the Post for the day's parade and ceremonies, our friends in the Lions were there too! Together both groups helped set-up two tents and the tables for the hundreds of hot dogs the Lions cook and serve to parade goers each year. At the end of the day they are exhausted and our Post members are too. Many times we are just too

tired to say it then, but not now... Thank You to the Yorktown Lions for all your help making this, and all, Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades the successful events they have been! We couldn't have done it without you!

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## Post Summer BBQ...

Our Post's Summer BBQ is set for Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 1 PM at the Post. The price is only \$10 per person and RSVP's are required. Please RSVP to Pat McDonough (914-953-6807) by 8/11 if you plan on attending.

This BBQ is held indoors so the A/C can keep everyone cool. We take some time to get to know our fellow members and start to get ready for our schedule of events to begin on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Come join everyone in a relaxing social event before we begin our work again. We hope to see you all there.

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## Welcome Aboard...

We wish to offer a warm welcome aboard to our newest Post member Joseph M. Giordano who came over from Somers Post #1505. We hope that you will join us in taking an active part in running your new Post and hope to see you at our events. It's a wonderful way to get to know everyone.

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## Sick Call

Please keep the following Post family members who are out sick or on the mend in your thoughts and prayers: Gil Kaufmann is in a long-term fight with illness; Larry Armstrong has been sick; wishes for speedy recovery to Joan Roberts, Don's wife, who is recovering from an injury and to SAL member Gary Raniolo recovering from surgery. Get well soon everyone!

**Special Occasion or Event?**

**Our Hall is Available for Rent**

**Post Members Enjoy Discounted Rentals**

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## Flag Retirement Ceremony

At 9 Am on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 19 Post Legionnaires and 7 SAL members joined a dozen Scouts and the Yorktown Fire Department in

conducting our annual Flag Retirement Ceremony at the Yorktown Fire Department carnival grounds. This solemn ceremony reminds everyone of the history of our nation's ensign and the place of importance it holds in every veteran's life. Literally, millions have bravely served their country under its flying colors... and all will one day rest beneath it on the way to their final resting place.

All year worn flags are dropped off at our Post in our convenient Flag Dropbox in front of the Post, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our Post collected over 800 flags again this year and we received about 300 more flags which had been collected by the Montrose FD. All told, 1,100 flags were retired by fire at our ceremony. Thank you to the Yorktown Fire Department for their valuable help in making this safe and solemn ceremony possible. Thank also to: Legionnaires John Giacomini, Al Laughlin, John McQuillan, Carl DiLiberto, Pat McDonough, Tom Einwich, Tom Brady, Bob Raphael, John Gunn, Steve Rice, Vincent Faggella, Rocco Salierno, Larry Qualter, George Hansen, Larry Armstrong, Rich Calbo, Tom Connolly, Terry Deveau, Tom Bodkin; SAL members Tom Diana, Ed Lachterman, James Calbo, Ilan Gilbert, Matt Slater, John Lembke, and Larry Armstrong for taking part in this important ceremony.



## Sons of The American Legion Squadron #1009 News

Our Sons of the American Legion Squadron #1009 finished their business year with a lot to be proud of. They have developed from a group of individuals into a well functioning group. This year saw them start out learning how to turn on our Post stove and not knowing where anything was. By the end of the year they all knew a lot of the procedures for the Post building and they had organized successfully 5 fundraiser breakfasts and a St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Lunch. This

fundraising effort allowed SAL Squadron #1009 to present donations of \$200 to each of the five charities they chose to support this year: 'My Brother Vinny', 'United for the Troops', 'Hudson Valley Honor Flight', the Montrose VA Food Pantry, and The Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter #21. They also generously donated \$500 to our Post to help with our Post programs.

Like the Post they are looking for a break for the Summer months but before they adjourned they wound up their year by electing Squadron Officers for next year: - James Calbo, Commander; Matt Essell, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr; Ed Lachterman, Adjutant; Craig Armstrong, Financial Officer; William Wienecke, Chaplain; and Jay Gussak, Sergeant-at-Arms. Another good team to continue their momentum into next year!

The Squadron finished up on a really strong note with three new members, Rob DelBalzo, Frederick Kanter, and Alan Ortner submitting applications to join the Squadron at their June meeting! The unit has nearly doubled their membership from 12 to 22 in the short 18 months they have been in existence! A big 'Great Job' goes out to every member of the Squadron for all their work this year!



## Membership Stuff...

National HQ's has mailed out the first dues renewal notices to our Post's Legionnaires which means our Post is now accepting 2020 dues. If you can't find your renewal notice, don't worry. Just send a note with your name and your dues and we'll send your 2020 card out immediately. The dues are now \$47 for the year - after a \$2 increase from the Department of New York and then the Post chipping in \$1 to half that increase.

We are awaiting a final vote in August by the National Sons of The American Legion leadership on their request for a dues increase of \$3 to \$5 per year for the SAL members. Our SAL members will be notified when we find out and can pay the new amount of your dues starting in September.

**LATE BREAKING NEWS** - On Wednesday, July 23, 2019, the US Senate and House of Representatives voted and passed the LEGION Act (S-504/ H.R.-1641) which would open membership of The American Legion up to ALL US VETERANS WHO HONORABLY SERVED ON ACTIVE DUTY. This bill would eliminate the periods between the times of war that Congress had identified for The American Legion's charter. This legislation would allow veterans who served during the periods between WWII and the Korean War, the Korean War and Vietnam War, and between the Vietnam War and the first Persian Gulf War in 1990, to enjoy the benefits, camaraderie, and community service as active members of The American Legion.

## Boys State

Our Post sponsored a young high school junior, Victor Magaletti, to attend the NYS Boys State program at the end of June. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Cmdr Bill Goss puts a lot of work into coordinating this program each year and tries to get the boys to speak at our meetings to relate their experience to our Post members. This educates our members about the program and makes it easier for them to inform others about it. Victor sent us this letter of thanks and we're publishing it here for those who are unable to attend our Post meetings.

*Dear Commander Giacomini, Vice Commander Goss and all members of Post 1009,*

*I would just like to say thank you again for giving me the opportunity to attend Boys State New York, 2019 at SUNY Morrisville. While there I learned many things about our Government's structure and how to lead others by showing respect and setting a good example. Good communication (verbal and listening skills) was also a critical component of the process. During the second day, I was elected as one of the county legislators for the county of Schiberling. In this position I created and stated my opinion on other legislation that were put forth by my peers. I was also elected in a second role as the commissioner of sustainability and economic development for the City of Mitras. Overall, I believe that Boys State has helped me grow as a young man: physically, mentally and morally. Thanks again for giving me this amazing experience that will help me become a better citizen and leader. If you need any help at the Post, please don't hesitate to give me a call. Respectfully,  
Victor Magaletti*

## Post #1009 Upcoming Events

- Tue Aug 6 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM
- Sun Aug 18 Post Summer BBQ - 1 PM.  
Price \$10 per person.  
RSVP by 8/11.
- Sat Aug 24 Honor Flag Ceremony - 10:45 AM  
Meet at Post to walk over.
- Tue Sep 3 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM
- Thu Sep 5 SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM
- Fri Sep 6 Yorktown Grange Fair  
Flag-raising Ceremony - 4 PM
- Wed Sep 11 County Legion meets at 7 PM  
At Yorktown Post #1009
- Thu Sep 12 Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM

## Yorktown Post #1009

235 Veterans Road, Yorktown Hts, NY 10598  
(914) 962-2843 [www.nylegion1009.org](http://www.nylegion1009.org)



## We Love You Both...

But Veterans 'Razz' each other... it's what we do best! Our Post Chaplain Tom "The Kid" Einwich and our SAL Chaplain Bill Wienecke had this photo taken at a recent event and the jokes started immediately!  
"Look the West Point Class of 1775 Reunion!"  
"13 Stars on the flag?! How about two.. one for you, and one for me!"