



Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

Issue #65

October / November / December 2019

Veterans Day Week Events...

Each year our Post is invited to many different events during the week of Veterans Day. This year was no different. Our Post took part in 8 separate ceremonies or events during that week.

Monday began the week with our annual visit to the students at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School where we talked with the students while they all made Veterans Day cards for veterans at the Montrose VA Hospital. Post Legionnaire John Gunn coordinated this visit and took along fellow Post members Tom Einwich, Rocco Salierno, Cmdr. John Giacomini, Robert Kohl, and Pat McDonough to talk with the students. This is always a fun morning with the students.

On Friday, November 8th, our Post travelled to Salem Hills Rehabilitation in Purdy's to take part in their Veterans Day Ceremony and the recognition of their resident veterans. We always have an enjoyable visit there and the veterans really appreciate the visit. Thank you to Cmdr. John Giacomini, Tom Einwich, Tom Brady, Pat McDonough, and SAL #1009-member Dean Jenard for making this visit a fun and successful one.

At 2 PM on Sunday, 11/10, our Post members took part in the Veterans Day Parade in Shrub Oak. Our Post had 17 Legionnaires - John McQuillan, George Hansen, Rocco Salierno, Tom Brady, Al Laughlin, Ken Blish, Vincent Faggella, Mike Laughlin, Terry Deveau, Italo Dan Greco, Larry Armstrong, Patrick McDonough, Rich Calbo, Carl DiLiberto, Larry Qualter, John Scavarda, and Rich DeSilva take part in this event. Our SAL Squadron really came out for this with 11 members marching - James Calbo, Gary Raniolo, Ilan Gilbert, Ed Lachterman, Bill Gerhardt, Matt Essell, Dean Jenard, Matt Slater, Tom Diana, Michael Grace, and Jay Gussak. We had Tycho and Duncan Force as our bannermen too!

On Veterans Day our Post started early at 9 AM attending the Hudson Valley - NY Presbyterian Hospital's Veterans Day Ceremony. This short ceremony was almost double the size of last year's and we brought quite a group - Cmdr. John Giacomini, Carl DiLiberto, Tom Brady, Tom Einwich, Bob Raphael, Ernie Weiting, Rocco Salierno, Bob Kohl, Rich Calbo, Larry Qualter,

Vincent Faggella, Al Laughlin, Pat McDonough and SAL member Ed Lachterman. We made a mad dash to Yorktown Town Hall where we assisted the Garden Club of Yorktown at 10 AM with their Blue Star Monument dedication ceremony. This monument honors those who are serving, have served, and those who will serve in our country's armed forces. Thank you to Legionnaires Larry Armstrong, Tom Brady, George Hansen, Italo Dan Greco, Rocco Salierno, Ken Blish, Al Laughlin, Vincent Faggella, Carl DiLiberto, Cmdr. John Giacomini, Tom Einwich, Bob Raphael, and Pat McDonough and to SAL #1009 members - Ilan Gilbert, Matt Slater, Ed Lachterman, Paul Martin, Larry Armstrong, and Tom Diana for attending this ceremony.

Most of these Post members stayed for the 11 AM Veterans Day Ceremony conducted by VFW Post #8328. A sizeable group of our members then travelled over to the Jefferson Village Veterans Day ceremony held at 1 PM over in the Village. 1st Vice Cmdr. Carl DiLiberto joined with his fellow Vietnam Veterans of America over at Lasdon Park on Rt-35 at 2 PM to conduct a Veterans Day ceremony there.



Post Improvements Continue

During the months of October and November our Post was the beneficiary of two wonderful projects which have really improved our Post's 'curb appeal'. Scout John Delvecchio of Troop 238 at St Elizabeth Seton church took on the expansion of our engraved Commemorative Brick plaza as a project for Eagle Scout rank. He and his fellow Scouts from Troop 238 and their technical advisor SAL #1009 member Tom Diana added some 300 blank bricks in an expansion of our brick plaza. This will help our Post to continue to raise funds for veterans-related charities through our Commemorative Brick program each year. Thank you John and Tom!

Our Post building is a nicely painted, well-maintained, but easily forgotten looking one. We've always wanted some fixture or detail that would let everyone know we are an American Legion Post. In late November SAL #1009 member Paul R. Martin III painted our Post's front door. Many of you are thinking, 'Oh yeah, that'll help!' with a little sarcasm in your mind right?! Well, we mean Paul *PAINTED* the door. Paul is a recognized artist and creative mind, and he painted a US flag on our front door that is getting a lot of attention from passersby daily on Veterans Road, especially at night when our lights are on it! We have been hearing wonderful comments from all the families attending the school in our building and from recent rental customers. Thank you Paul for the wonderful piece of art you created for our Post! Of course, we encourage everyone to come on by and take a look for yourself at the improvements to your Yorktown American Legion Post. We think you'll approve.



Veterans Commemorative Bricks

Each year we are fortunate to have several new Legionnaires join our Post. These new members may not be familiar with the ongoing programs we have running in our Post so we will highlight one or two programs in each issue to keep everyone informed of all the great work our Post does.

In 2013 our Post reconstructed our flagpole plaza and replaced the grey paving stones there with simple red bricks to increase our curb appeal and dress the place up. This was one of the first improvements to our Post infrastructure in decades and the expense was debated. Our then-Post Commander Gerry Knapp suggested that we could have the new bricks engraved and sold to honor the military service of local veterans and Post members. The funds from the sales of these engraved bricks would cover the expense of upgrading the plaza and anything above that could be donated by the Post to help veteran-related charities. The response to this program has been amazing. Each engraved brick is sold for \$100 to commemorate living and deceased veterans and their service to our country. Our Post members can buy a brick for themselves at the reduced price of \$90. This is the seventh year of this program and we are close to breaking 500 engraved bricks in our Commemorative Park Plaza. Under Chairman John Gunn's guidance our Post has been able to donate \$24,135 to our veterans-related charities. This ability to donate an amount like this was never possible before this program was begun by our Post. Pass the word and make sure you get your brick in our plaza. This is something that everyone in town is proud of and often visit.

NYS Sen. Harckham's Veterans Advisory Council

NYS Senator Peter Harckham has been holding a quarterly Veterans Advisory Council meeting to get feedback from veterans regarding veteran's issues in his district and across the state. His last meeting was in Peekskill in October and our Yorktown Post will be hosting his next Advisory Council meeting in our Hall on Thursday, January 30th, 2020 from 6 pm to 8 pm. All veterans and Post members are welcome to attend. Attendees are asked to RSVP to Sen.

Harckham's office at # (914) 241-4600 or (845) 225-3025 to allow them to plan on enough seating and food for the meeting. The meeting is free so pass the word.

Rendering Honors...

Almost all of our Post members know of our 'Rendering Honors' ceremonies from seeing the email announcements and previous articles here. This has become a large part of our Post's services this past year and our Post members take this very seriously. When the Yorktown Funeral Home has a veteran who has passed come in - they offer our ceremony to the deceased's family. Many families accept the offer of this ceremony. Two recent ceremonies illustrate the dedication of our Legion members to this ceremony. One week, our Post received 2 separate ceremony requests for the same evening. Both wakes being conducted at the funeral home that night were for US Veterans. 16 of our Post members in matching jackets and caps filed into one wake and performed the ceremony. Upon filing out of the 1st room we immediately formed up and then filed into the second room to perform the same ceremony flawlessly for the 2nd veteran. People in the hall and lobby saw our member's dedication and thanked everyone as we were leaving.

Very recently, our members were called to perform a Rendering of Honors one evening. Upon arriving in the lobby of the funeral home - one dedicated Legionnaire checked to see which room we would be going in to. He discovered one veteran we were there to honor, but he also saw a 2nd name he recognized as being a Post member. The 2nd veteran was Korean War veteran and Post #1009 Legionnaire Ralph Garcia. Ralph had only his daughter and son-in-law with him. We stopped, introduced ourselves, and apologized for not knowing of Ralph's passing. We asked if we could perform this ceremony and final salute for our fellow Post member and they agreed. 15 Post members performed the ceremony for the 1st veteran with a large crowd of family in the room. The 15 of us filed out, reformed, and filed in and performed a second Rendering Honors ceremony for Ralph and his two family members.

Our Post wants to do this ceremony to honor every US Veteran for their service to their country. We have NEVER SAID NO to a funeral home or family's request for this ceremony. We have changed the time of the ceremony to work around other events we have going on at the same time. Join us for this ceremony when you can,

and pass the word of it to other veterans and their families so they can request this ceremony when the time comes.

How Are We So Active?

15 years ago our Post was sleepy one with only 8 to 10 members attending meetings. The word about our few events each year was passed pretty much by word of mouth. We decided to start up our Post website and collect member's emails to get word out about events and meetings quickly and cheaply. We've gone from 15 emails for our Legionnaires back then to 96 for our Legionnaire's and 22 for our SAL members now. We also have about 15 more who just want our Post e-Newsletter via email. Our regular emails and announcements have enabled our Post meetings to having 21-25 members in attendance each time. All our Post events have benefitted from these regular announcements. While we rely on emails for our primary way of getting the word out - we still mail our e-Newsletter in paper form out to our non-email using Post members to keep them informed on what is going on with their Post.

Our Post recently switched to a commercial email system because of the number of emails we send. This corrects our Post emails from going into our member's 'Spam' folders by mistake (a long explanation about email Spam laws would be required here!). With this new system we took a look at all the emails we have and have cleaned out a lot of the ones from members who left us in various ways years ago. We also installed a link on the bottom of every email which will allow anyone who wishes to sign-up directly for the emails through the system. This is less work for us (Yay!) and guarantees the email address is correct because the person puts it in themselves. We just wanted to let you all know that your Post is striving to be better every year even in areas we have been doing well in for years. We're always trying to do better!

Post Holiday Party

Our Post Holiday Party was held on Sunday, December 15th at 1 PM and it was a pleasant success with 43 members of our Post family in attendance. That's not as high as last year and we learned that was due to this e-Newsletter not going out on time in late November. Many members simply need that email or paper

reminder! There was a wonderful luncheon prepared by Theresa Capizola with Penne Vodka, chicken parmesian, roasted potatoes, sausage & peppers, meatballs, pork loin with saurkraut, mixed vegetables, and salad - which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. All afternoon people were stopping at various tables and catching up with people they hadn't seen in awhile. Cmdr Giacomini arranged for a DJ for music and we even enjoyed a short visit from Santa Claus! Before the afternoon was over we held the drawing for our Post's Holiday 50/50 Raffle. Pete Simone, a new Post member, was the lucky winner of the \$257 prize which we're sure was helpful right before Christmas. The door 50/50 of \$106 was won by Keri McDonough. We had several consolation prizes again this year thanks to Troop 1776 - two live wreaths and two poinsetias! Congratulations to Pete, Keri, and all our winners! Thank you to everyone who attended the party and participated in the raffle. You all made this event the success it was! See you next year.

Welcome Aboard...

We wish to offer a warm welcome aboard to our newest Post members - Jose Hernandez, Saul Gussak, and David Goldberg who joined us this Fall. We hope that you all 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.

Membership Renewals Now Due

The American Legion's membership year starts on January 1st and goes until December 31st. The Legion mails out several reminders starting in August trying to get everyone to renew before their membership expires. We have a great Post and in recent years we have met or exceeded our membership goal of 'one more than last year'!

Post Membership Chairman Carl DiLiberto has embraced the new online renewal system which lets us mark our members as paid in the national database - saving everyone from getting those annoying bills after having paid their dues. There is also no longer any 5-6 week delay after we mail it in to Headquarters. As this issue goes to press we currently have 106 members paid so far with 17 not renewed yet. We don't look to embarrass anyone by posting names here. Won't

you open your wallet and see if you have your 2020 card in it. If not, drop us a check for \$47 payable to the Post with a note with your name on it and we'll do the rest. We strive for 100% renewing each year because we offer so much to do as a Post we don't know why veterans don't want to be associated with our great Post!

SAL #1009 members are also up for renewals at this time. There are 23 members in SAL #1009 and 18 have already renewed. We just need the remaining 5 members to renew for 100% for 2020. The dues are still only \$20 for the year for members. Won't you renew now? If anyone is unsure about their status - just email or call Post Adjutant Pat McDonough at 914-953-6807.

Four Chaplains Ceremony...

Our next Post event will be our annual Four Chaplains Ceremony which will be held on Sunday, February 2nd, 2020 at 2 PM in our Post hall. This ceremony honors the dramatic story of 4 US Army Chaplains on board the US troopship, Dorchester, in February of 1943. At 12:55 in the morning of February 3rd the troopship was torpedoed while crossing the icy North Atlantic and sank within 20 minutes. During these critical few minutes these four Chaplains, each from a different faith and background, calmed their shipmates and handed out life-vests. When they ran out of vests - they gave away their own knowing full well the cost of this action. Of the 902 persons onboard that night only 229 survived the sinking. Survivors told of the four Chaplains linked arm-in-arm on the deck of the ship leading their shipmates in prayer as the ship slipped beneath the waves. This four brave men of faith were nationally honored with a Congressional Medal, a postage stamp, and many monuments and stained glass windows across the country. As time passed, people forgot the story of these inspirational men and their actions. Local monuments are still located at Belmont Park in Queens and at the plaza at Grant's Tomb in Manhattan as well as a stained glass window at West Point. Join us for this short, multi-media, remembrance ceremony as The American Legion and our Post work to educate all veterans and our community of the story of these Four Chaplains. We hope to see you all there.

Special Occasion or Event?
Our Hall is Available for Rent
Post & SAL Members enjoy discounted rate

2020 Post Everlasting Ceremony

Each year immediately following the Four Chaplains Ceremony our Post conducts our annual Post Everlasting Ceremony. This short ceremony is our final goodbye to those Post Legionnaires who have passed on during the past year. We invite their families and fellow veterans to attend as we retire their membership cards by fire and render a final salute. In recent years we have opened this ceremony to allow non-Post members in attendance to add their veteran loved one's name to those being honored.

This year our Post will be honoring Post #1009 Legionnaires: Liborio DeFrancesco, Casper Faughnan, Ralph Garcia, Lawrence Iuso, Alexander Nardone, and Thomas Reynolds. Please join us for this solemn final salute to these veterans.

SAL News

Our Yorktown Sons of the American Legion Squadron has been busy since the start of this year. They have continued with their Fundraising Breakfasts on the first Sunday of each month from 9 am to 11 am. This allow them to raise funds for their veteran-related charities. Each breakfast is only \$8 per person for a wonderful breakfast.

The Squadron has researched and is moving forward with another fundraising program which they will have running before Memorial Day. They will be selling Veterans Banners which will be displayed from the lightposts along Commerce St in Yorktown and also along East Main St in Shrub Oak. People can select the section of town so that they can see it in the area they live in. The banners are \$250 each and they will be displayed on the poles from just before Memorial Day through to just after Veterans Day. At the end of the display season the banners will be lowered and either returned to the purchaser or they can elect to pay an additional \$100 for the banner to fly for a second season. All funds raised by the sale of these banners after expenses will be used for donations to our SAL's veteran-related charities. The banners will have the name and photo of the veteran and the military information of their service. Anyone interested in purchasing one of these new Veterans Banners can go online to see the banners and add your name for a future order when the proposal is approved. The site page is: <https://militarytributebanners.org/current-programs/new-york/yorktown-ny.html>

Post #1009 Upcoming Events

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| Sun | Jan | 5 | SAL Fundraiser Breakfast at Post 9 AM - 11 AM |
| Tue | Jan | 7 | Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM |
| Thu | Jan | 9 | Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM |
| Thu | Jan | 30 | NYS Sen Harckham's Veterans Advisory Council meeting at Post #1009 at 6 PM. |
| Sun | Feb | 2 | Four Chaplains Ceremony - 2 PM |
| Sun | Feb | 2 | Post Everlasting Ceremony Immediately following Four Chaplains ceremony. |
| Tue | Feb | 4 | Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM |
| Thu | Feb | 6 | SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM |
| Thu | Feb | 13 | Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM |
| Tue | Mar | 3 | Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM |
| Thu | Mar | 5 | SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM |
| Thu | Mar | 12 | Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM |

Yorktown Post #1009

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DOD Expands Commissary, Exchange, and Recreation Eligibility

This is reprinted from the VA's Vantage Point blog explaining changes to VA benefits.

The Department of Defense is proud to expand commissary, exchange, and morale, welfare, and recreation retail eligibility to: Purple Heart recipients, former Prisoners of War, All veterans with service connected disabilities, and Individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Dept of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

The DOD, VA, and Dept of Homeland Security are collaborating to implement the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 for those who will be eligible for this benefit on January 1, 2020.

Facilities like these will be open to the newly eligible patrons starting on January 1, 2020:
 Commissaries
 Military Service Exchanges
 Golf Courses
 Bowling Centers
 Recreational Lodging
 RV Campgrounds
 Movie Theaters and more!



Below: Our Post members attend Hudson Valley Hospital's Veterans Day Ceremony.



Above - GQ's Men of the Year!? No, it's just our own Bob Raphael, Cmdr. John Giacomini, Al Laughlin PPC, and Ken Blish PPC at the County's Department Commander Dinner in Mt Kisco.
Below - Post members at our Post Holiday Party.



Above - additional Veterans Day Parade photos.
Top right- Post members at the Blue Star Monument Dedication on Veterans Day

