



Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

Issue #66

January / February 2020

Four Chaplains Ceremony

Each year our Post pauses on 'Super Bowl' Sunday to conduct our annual Four Chaplains Ceremony in our Post Hall. The story of the 'Immortal Four Chaplains' was a well-known one following WWII. Close to 100 monuments and stained-glass windows were created to honor the faith, courage, and sacrifice of these four US Army Chaplains. The US government issued a postage stamp with their image on it. Just in our area there are three memorials to them. There is a bronze plaque at Belmont Park in Queens, a bronze plaque in Manhattan by Grant's Tomb, and a stained-glass window at the chapel at West Point.

On February 3rd, 1943, the US Transport Ship Dorchester was part of a convoy crossing the North Atlantic enroute to Greenland. On board the Dorchester were 902 soldiers and sailors including four Army chaplains - Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clarke V. Poling, Dutch Reformed. Just after midnight, a German submarine attacked the convoy and torpedoed the Dorchester. The ship sank into the icy Atlantic in just 20 minutes. During those crucial minutes these Four Chaplains calmed their shipmates and handed out life-vests. When they ran out of life-vests the Chaplains gave up their own to save four more souls, knowing full well the consequences of this action. Survivors reported seeing and hearing the Four Chaplains linked arm-in-arm with their shipmates praying as the ship slipped beneath the waves that night. Of the 902 on board the ship only 230 survived the sinking. Stories of the four men of faith and their courage crossed the country. Congress honored them with a one-time-only post-humous Special Medal for Heroism because their actions didn't qualify them for the Medal of Honor.

Our Yorktown Post continues to honor and remember these heroic Four Chaplains each year and educate our community about this nearly forgotten story. We were honored this year to have four prominent local clergy 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 Msgr. Joseph Giandurco of St Patrick's Church. We were fortunate to have over 80 people join us in our Hall for this ceremony. NYS Sen. Peter Harkham, Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater, past-Yorktown Supervisors Ilan Gilbert and Michael Grace, Town Board members Tom Diana and Vishnu Patel, along with Yorktown Judges Gary Raniolo and Sal Lagonia, Town Clerk Diana Quast, and Highway Supervisor Dave Pananelli took the time to join us for this event. The crowd contained our SAL #1009 members, Legionnaires from Mt Kisco Post 136 and Ossining Post 506, Yorktown VFW members, Korean War Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 49 members.

Several years ago, our Post had updated this ceremony adding a projector and slideshow highlighting the story as Post Cmdr. John Giacomini tells it. This year the Post unveiled a 75" flatscreen TV on the wall above and behind our speaker making it easy to highlight the story's points. We thank everyone who came out to help us honor these veterans of faith and the great story of their bravery. If you missed it this year - join us next February to learn the details of this inspiring American story.



Post Everlasting Ceremony

Following our Four Chaplains Ceremony on February 2, 2020, our Post conducted our annual Post Everlasting Ceremony. This ceremony is our Post's final farewell to those Post Legionnaires who have passed on during the past year.

We open this ceremony up to those in attendance to add a veteran loved-one they have lost in the past year as well. This has helped this important ceremony grow larger each year.

This year our Post honored Legionnaires: Liborio "Lee" DeFrancesco, Casper Faughnan, Raphael Garcia, Louis Saraceno, Lawrence Iuso, Alexander Nardone, Thomas Reynolds, and Thomas Northey. We also honored: Vincent Grimaudo, Vincent Caporale, Anthony Capitelli, Clifford Brunelli, Patrick Pitrello, Irwin Levenson, Lee W. Briggs, Lou Muro, and Gerard Salamone.

During the ceremony when each name is called, a family member or Post Legionnaire, comes forward to present the membership card with the veteran's name. These cards are added to a WWII Army helmet where they are then retired by fire as a bugler plays 'Taps'. It is a solemn and moving ceremony.

NYS Sen. Harkham's Veterans Advisory Committee

On Thursday, January 30, 2020 our Post opened our Hall for our 40th District NYS Sen. Peter Harkham to hold his quarterly Veterans Advisory Council meeting. Approximately 50 veterans attended the meeting. There was a judge from the Bronx courts who presides over the veteran's court that was created there. The judge explained that minor crimes by veterans can be moved from regular criminal courts to these veteran courts which look less to punishing the veteran but more towards treating them. The minor criminal acts might be due to PTSD, alcoholism, drug problems, or just lack of adjusting back to the civilian world. At these meetings the floor is opened for questions that if unable to be answered that night, the Senator will get the answer and present it at the next Council meeting.

Our Post had asked about a grant request we had filed 4 years ago with his predecessor for possible help making our Post bathrooms ADA handi-capped accessible. We had never heard anything further about the grant request. Sen. Harkham informed us that in the annual state

budget negotiations it was decided that state funds would not be given to non-profits, but to the state's municipalities because of past financial mis-handling incidents.

At the meeting's close, Sen. Harkham announced that he will again sponsor buses going up to Albany for Vietnam Veterans Day on or around 3/29. Look for more details to come about this trip.

Post Upgrades Continue

Just since mid-December our Post has seen some much-noticed improvements. Our regular 'Happy Hour' guests every Friday night have been enjoying food served from two old green tables in the dark back corner of the bar. Just before Christmas a brand-new 6-foot counter with wooden cabinets and track lighting above it was installed along the back wall of the bar. Everyone raved about this beautiful new serving-area addition! Thank you to John Giacomini, Carl DiLiberto, Rocco Salierno, Al Laughlin, and Roger Thompson for all their work bringing this into existence!

~~After years of suggestions~~ our Post invested in and installed a 75" flatscreen TV in our Post Hall at the end of January. Thank you to John Giacomini, Carl DiLiberto, Pat McDonough, Bob Raphael, and Al Laughlin for all the work with this upgrade! Two days later, we used its position, above and behind our podium, to show a slideshow detailing the story of the Four Chaplains. This show was clearly visible from the rear of the Hall and everyone was blown away by the clarity and color the TV provided over our usual projector slideshow. A week later, our Post installed quality speakers in our Hall and bar with a digital receiver. Thank you to John Giacomini, Al Laughlin, Bob Raphael, and Pat McDonough for all this work! This new upgrade allows us to provide music in the Hall, the bar, or both during parties and rental events. The very next day, everyone enjoyed this new music feature in our Hall during the SAL Fundraiser Breakfast. The system we have allows music to be played from digital devices (iPhone/iPad, computers, etc.) via a Bluetooth connection. Now birthdays, anniversaries, and other events can have photos running on the big TV as a slideshow. If music is forgotten, then our Hall speakers can fill that void. Meetings can now run PowerPoint presentations behind the podium for everyone to follow along. Our Yorktown Post is becoming a modern meeting place!

‘Lee’ DeFrancesco Award...

Our Post received a letter recommending a local small-businessman for our Post’s ‘Liborio DeFrancesco Award’. Joseph Giuliano, owner of Yorktown Pizza & Pasta, learned that a local veteran was visiting two aged and infirm veterans once a week bringing them meals from Mr. Giuliano’s restaurant. Mr. Giuliano waived the fees for these meals for nearly 12 months and even added a bit more food for the hospice nurse that was caring for one veteran. Our Post was already well aware of Mr. Giuliano’s generosity in our community. For over two years our Post has ordered pizza for our monthly meetings from Joe, often getting a discount or something thrown in for free. Yorktown Pizza & Pasta has been a helping the Chamber of Commerce, the Yorktown Lions, and our local schools when help was needed.

Our Post cancelled our February monthly meeting and instead decided to have a ‘pizza party’ over at Yorktown Pizza & Pasta on Thursday, February 13th. Our plan was to present Joseph Giuliano with our ‘Liborio DeFrancesco Award’ for his service to these veterans. 17 Post Legionnaires and 3 SAL members attended our little pizza party and presented the award with a wonderful check generously donated by Post member Ed & Marie Donovan. Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater also presented a certificate to Joe from the Town of Yorktown. Congratulations Joe! Well deserved!

Post Apparel

At every event we attend our Post members are easily identifiable in our Post jackets and shirts. It is easy to find your fellow members and it is quite impressive to see 15 or 20 Legionnaires in uniform filing in for a ceremony or event.

We will be sending in an order for apparel following our March meeting. Two Post members want to order Post jackets so anyone wishing to order one also should attend the meeting and try on other members jackets for a correct size and fit.

Our Post keeps a supply of Post shirts on hand in the office in case anyone wants one. They are \$25, and we have many sizes in stock. Several of our members have been asking us to order long-sleeve Post shirts to wear in the cooler months. We will order our Post shirts (golf-style) in a long-sleeve version for the price of \$28 each. We will

also order a sample dress shirt with the Post logo in case that is something people wish to see before ordering.

Last but not least - our Post picked up twenty of the NYS American Legion 100th Anniversary edition baseball caps at the January Mid-Winter Meetings. The caps are of excellent quality and have been selling fast. We currently have 6 left, and they are going first-come, first served. If no one wants them, we will offer them to neighboring Posts for their members.

SAL #1009 News

Our Sons of the American Legion Squadron continues to do well in everything it does. Their membership goal for the 2020 year was 20 members, and as of February 1st they have 22 paid members for 110%. They are the first Squadron to attain 100% in Westchester County. The SAL hosted another Fundraiser Breakfast on Sunday, 2/09, where 50 people attended. Everyone enjoyed the food, the company, and the background music from our Hall’s new music system and speakers.

Our SAL’s Veterans Banner program has officially kicked off. These 5-foot tall banners will be displayed along Commerce St in Yorktown, or E. Main St in Shrub Oak, from Memorial Day through Veterans Day. To order and create your own Veteran Banner you can go to the SAL #1009 website at (www.sal1009ny.org). The price is \$250 per banner for one season of display. For an additional \$100 the banner can be displayed for an additional season. The price may seem steep, but \$100 of each banner’s fee will be going to the veterans-related charities our SAL have chosen to support. This means that every banner displayed is honoring a veteran and helping other veterans at the same time!

The banners for this coming display season can be ordered up until April 15th to allow enough time for their production and installation so check out their website for the details.

Membership Renewals

Our Post has sent a final letter from the Post to the last 10 Post Legionnaires who have yet to renew their membership for the 2020 year. These members have already received renewal notices from National HQ in July, September, November, and again in January without responding. It is hard to understand why we don’t

get a response after all this expense and effort. Our Post is the most active Post of Westchester County's 46 Posts. We are the only Post that has a newsletter to keep our members well informed. We are only one of six Posts with an active website to advertise and educate our members and community about what we do as a Post.

Please take this moment to drop your dues off at the Post, or you can renew online at Legion.org.

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

Post #1009 Upcoming Events

Thu Mar 5 SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM
Sun Mar 8 SAL 9th District Meeting at Post #1009 at 11 AM
Wed Mar 11 County Legion meeting at Post #1009 - 7:30 PM
Thu Mar 12 Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM
Sun Mar 15 SAL St Patrick's Day Fundraiser Luncheon at 12 noon
Thu Apr 2 SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM
Sun Apr 5 SAL Fundraiser Breakfast 9 AM to 11 AM
Tue Apr 7 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM
Thu Apr 9 Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM
Sun May 3 SAL Fundraiser Breakfast 9 AM to 11 AM
Tue May 5 Executive Comm Mtg 7:00 PM
Thu May 7 SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM
Thu May 14 Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM
Sun May 17 Post Spring Brunch - 11 AM
RSVP's required.

Post #1009 Memorial Week Events - TBA

Yorktown Post #1009

235 Veterans Road, Yorktown Hts, NY 10598
(914) 962-2843 www.nylegion1009.org

Who can be buried in a VA national cemetery?

Veterans, service members, spouses, and dependents may qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery, as well as other benefits, if they meet one of the requirements listed below.

One of these must be true. The person qualifying for burial benefits is:

- A Veteran who didn't receive a dishonorable discharge, or
- A service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training, or
- The spouse or minor child of a Veteran, even if the Veteran died first, or
- In some cases, the unmarried adult dependent child of a Veteran

When a veteran family member passes, the family is tasked with finding their loved one's DD-214, or other qualifying paperwork, to prove qualification for military honors at the cemetery, or for burial in a National cemetery. This is a tough thing for a family to do when they are grieving. Post member Don Roberts alerted us that veterans can file form VA 40-10007 - 'Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in V.A. National Cemetery' before your time comes. In effect, you would prove your eligibility now and they would provide you back papers to keep with your Will and burial plans for when your time comes. This pre-determination would ease the burden on your family and let them know your final wishes.

Westchester County's Annual Home Expo

Our Post has received several hundred FREE tickets for our members and anyone else to attend the 39th Annual Home Expo at the Westchester County Center on Saturday, March 21st, and Sunday, March 22nd, 2020. If anyone wishes to get tickets, just stop by our Post bar any Friday evening between 5 PM and 8 PM and pick them up from the bartender. If you can't get there contact Adjutant Pat McDonough to arrange for pick-up of tickets. These tickets are for anyone. They will save you from paying the \$10 admission fee at the door, so pass the word to anyone who might want to go. If the tickets are not used then they are wasted.