



Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

Issue #72

June / July / August 2021

New Post Website

Back in March our Post learned that the host for our Post website would no longer support the older coding contained in it. Essentially, that meant our website would be frozen as it appeared on 3/31/2021 with no ability to edit or update it.

Our Yorktown Post has had a simple, but informative, website for over 15 years now. At first many members thought it was a waste of money - but as time passed everyone became used to directing others to our site for information about ordering a Commemorative Brick, renting our Hall, joining our Post, reading our Post's e-Newsletter, or just checking our 'Calendar of Events' for the date and time of one of our Post events. We invite everyone to look at our new website and let us know what you think.

Memorial Day 2021

The 2021 Yorktown Memorial Day Parade was the town's first large event permitted after the roll-back of many of NYS's COVID restrictions.

Our Post was contacted by town officials on what was seen as permission to resume holding parades with the repeal of some COVID restrictions. In our discussion, we decided to invite Yorktown organizations only - to limit the possible crowds to the first public event in over a year. We discussed that residents would be eager to get out again, but also a little fearful. What if 20,000 people packed the streets? Our invitations to marching units announced 'required masks' due to the possibilities of crowds. The regular Memorial Day speeches and ceremonies usually held at the gazebo were also cancelled to avoid having one large crowd in close confines on the field to protect all our residents. Bill Goss, our 2nd Vice Cmdr. and Parade Chairman, had only 2 weeks to put the event together and he did a superb job in such a short amount of time. Great job Bill!!

At Town Hall's ceremonies, our town's elected leaders and many veterans' organizations - Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Korean War Veterans (KWW), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW),

and our Post #1009 Legionnaires and Sons members came together to hear speeches from Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater and NYS Sen. Pete Harckham. Our Post and VFW members followed this with our traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the monuments there. One group that deserves special mention and thanks here for their assistance in making this ceremony the solemn and respectful one we expected was the 10 members of the Yorktown H.S. Band under direction of Ms. Emily Kluga. Ms. Kluga had only a few days to secure permission from the school and School Board to have her students take part in the ceremony. After a year of 'lock-down', to hear our National Anthem and 'Taps' played honoring those who never returned from America's wars and conflicts was very special indeed. Thank you to Ms. Kluga and your wonderful students!

Our Parade stepped off from Town Hall and was joined by other units from the Yorktown FD, Yorktown Volunteer Ambulance Corps, civic organizations, and Scouting units at Front St proceeding down to our Post building. At that point our members and families stepped aside and clapped and cheered those marching by as the units broke off and departed. Countless people came up to our Post's members and thanked us for organizing the parade AND doing it in a 'safe' manner. Thank you to everyone who came out for the day!!

Our Post members were out in force at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Town Hall and marching in the Parade. (below & next page)





Brick Dedication Ceremony

Following the Memorial Day Parade, our Post again conducted our annual Brick Dedication Ceremony at our Post's Veterans Commemorative Park. Our long-time (10 years) Brick Chairman John Gunn and Post Cmdr. John Giacomini started off by thanking everyone for coming out for the dedication after enduring all the COVID shutdowns.

John Gunn informed everyone that during the past year of this COVID pandemic our Post still was fortunate enough to sell 22 new bricks which were recently installed in our plaza. There are now 522 veterans honored with a brick in this beautiful plaza. The funds raised by the sale of these engraved bricks, at only \$100 each, have enabled our Yorktown Post to donate \$26,835 to veteran-related charities as of today.

During this year's Ceremony our Post presented a check for \$600 to James Rathschmidt of 'United for the Troops'. They ship 'Care Packages' to active duty troops overseas which include personal necessities and things like magazines. A second check for \$600 was presented to Paula Miritello of 'My Brother Vinny'. Paula furnishes the apartments of veterans who would not be able to do so, making 'homes' out of bare apartments.



The Brick dedication ceremony also drew a nice turnout.

Flag Retirement Ceremony

On Saturday, June 12th, with a light drizzle of rain falling, 6 Yorktown firefighters lit a small fire in the burn pit behind their Commerce St firehouse. This was the first step in our annual joint US Flag Retirement Ceremony. 19 members of our Post - Terry Deveau, Rocco Salierno, Vincent Faggella, John Giacomini, Al Laughlin, Don Roberts, Bob Kohl III, Larry Armstrong, Carl DiLiberto, Don King, Pat McDonough, John McQuillan, Tom Bodkin, Roger Thompson, Ed Lachterman, Tom Diana, Paul Martin, Matt Slater, and Ilan Gilbert - joined local Scouts and community members as we conducted the short ceremony removing these flags from service. As the firefighters placed the first flags into the fire everyone stood at attention and rendered a hand salute as our bugler played 'Taps'. Following 'Taps' the small crowd continued passing the 800+ flags from the bins, boxes, and bags to the firefighters for placement in the fire.

Anyone wishing to retire a worn, torn, or faded flag can drop it into our Post's flag dropbox for retirement at next year's Flag Retirement Ceremony. The dropbox is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week in front of our Post building. Pass the word to anyone flying a flag that should be retired.

"Flags In"

Last year with COVID shutting everything down, our Post members took over for local Scouts in placing US flags at the graves of all veterans buried across Yorktown. Our Post and SAL members later spoke about it being a humble and thought-evoking thing to do.

This year some Scout units were able to come out and help again with this duty - but some Troops were still not fully functioning. We had another unforeseen problem to deal with. The delay in shipping the flags to our Post. We ordered 8 gross of flags in April as we do usually. Unfortunately, our normal delivery time of 2 - 3 weeks became almost 8 weeks. The flags didn't arrive until June 10th, after Memorial Day!

On June 16th members of our Post met at Amawalk Hill Cemetery and decorated all the veteran's graves there. Our thanks to - John Giacomini, Rocco Salierno, Al Laughlin, Bob Raphael, John McQuillan, Kelly and Matt Slater, Dean Jenard, Paul Martin, Tom Brady, and Don Roberts. Yorktown's 1st Presbyterian Cemetery

was done by Post members John McQuillan and Tom Bodkin with Troop #1776. Shrub Oak's Methodist Cemetery was done by Post members John McQuillan, Jay Gussak, Pat McDonough, and Troop #174 and #164. The East Yard Cemetery was done by Post member John McQuillan. Thank you all for the help with this valuable service!

Summer BBQ & New Patio Dedication

On Sunday, July 25th our Post held our Post Summer BBQ and also dedicated our new Post patio. The patio was donated and installed in May by the members of our Sons of The American Legion Squadron #1009.

During the BBQ our Post took some time to recognize some people. A local Eagle Scout, Benjamin Brown, was presented with our Post's Liborio 'Lee' DeFrancesco Award for his project to enhance the grave of a veteran buried in Amawalk Hill Cemetery. This veteran, James Rushin, was a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen in WWII. When Ben decorated this grave with a flag for Memorial Day he saw only a simple footstone as a legacy to this veteran's noble service in WWII and as one of the NYPD's first black Detectives after the war. Ben upgraded the grave with a new headstone for James and his wife. He added an information kiosk explaining the service and accomplishments of this man. To rededicate the grave, Ben arranged for the US Army to render full honors for Mr Rushin. A great job by Ben. The DeFrancesco Award comes with a donation check of \$500 thanks to the generous Post member and benefactor Ed Donovan and his wife, Mary.

Cmdr Giacomini had publicly thanked our Sons Squadron members who were involved in the planning and installation of the new 'SAL Plaza' at our Post meetings. Cmdr Giacomini presented a plaque to SAL member and patio Project Manager Tom Diana and a bouquet of flowers to his wife, Donna, for all their hard work and dedication in installing the new patio. Tom and Donna were out there clearing the ground and installing pavers several evenings as their version of a 'Date Night'! Thank you Donna and Tom!

The Commander pointed out two non-Post members for Certificates of Appreciation for their help with the project - Brian Raphael, for all his landscaping help and donations; and Yorktown Electric for donating the wiring for lights for the new patio. Our Sons Squadron presented Post Legionnaire John Scavarda and his wife, Carol,

with Certificate of Thanks for their generous donation allowing the Sons to buy picnic tables and umbrellas for use on the new patio.

We are not perfect at our Post - although we hide our mistakes really well (when they are rarely made!). One huge oversight in our rush to thank everyone that day was to forget to recognize our long-time (Oh and I do mean loooong tiiiime!) "Go To" guy - Roger Thompson. While we were laying pavers - Roger was drilling holes through the wall to run power out to the patio. Roger installed all the underground conduit to provide safe, legal power to all parts of the patio - that means climbing in and out of a 2' ditch measuring, cutting, and gluing all the connections in the 90-degree weather back in May. It was due to all of Roger's quality work that the electrician said - "I'll just pull the wires through for 'No Charge' and connect them. All the hard work's already done!". Roger - we can never apologize enough for the oversight - Thank You for the love and devotion you constantly show your Post!



Donna & Tom Diana receive the Post's thanks for the efforts on the new patio. (above)
This is what the project looks like today! (below)



event announcements from now on. Note - this doesn't affect all of those who RSVP on time every time. For you nothing has changed.

September

Now that September is upon us we begin our Schedule of Events again. Our Schedule is available for viewing on our Post website at www.nylegion1009.org and on the last page here.

In September we return to our long-time event of performing the Flag-Raising Ceremony to open the Yorktown Grange Fair on Friday, September 10 at 4:15 PM. Please arrive by 4 PM so we know who is participating. Wear Post apparel and tell the gate personnel you are there for the opening ceremony only - they will let you in for free.

On September 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM NYS Sen. Pete Harkham will hold his Veterans Council meeting at Yorktown VFW #8328. This is open to all veterans. They ask for RSVP's for food to: #914-241-4600, or to bayoung@nysenate.gov.

As of September 1st our Post will also resume our normal rates for renting the Hall for parties. We had discounted the fee to \$340 because of COVID limitations on our Hall's capacity. When the capacity was restored in May we decided to keep the lower rate to hopefully entice more customers to come in and rent our facilities. As of September 1st our rate will return to \$440 per rental. Post #1009 and SAL #1009 members enjoy \$100 off of their rental parties as a benefit of membership in our Post. The discount does not apply to Legion and SAL members outside of our Post.

DD-214's & Discharges

Our Yorktown Post is one of only a few Posts that still perform the 'Rendering Honors' ceremony for veterans at funeral homes. It seems we do too many of these every year. During the COVID year of May 2020 to May 2021 we performed 24 such ceremonies. Since last May - 10 more. The more we do. The more we learn. Recently our Post has been asked by the friends we now have at the funeral homes if we could fold and present the US flag to the families of the deceased. We learned why... the family couldn't prove their loved one was a veteran with a DD-214 or military discharge. Without that document the military won't come to render military honors. No folded flag presented to the family. In two recent



Scout Ben Brown receives our Post's Liborio DeFrancesco Award from Cmdr. Giacomini and Post Benefactor Ed Donovan

One Problem...

For our Post events our Adjutant Pat McDonough sends out the emails and announcements. He then takes all the RSVP's and tallies them up to order the food from our caterer. On event day - he 'works' the door for a smooth running event. Sounds like an easy, peaceful job (one of many he holds!), right? For our Summer BBQ, we had 15 RSVP's by the morning of the RSVP deadline. That is reason to cancel the event or lose money on it. A rare email 'name-dropping' the 15 people that had RSVP'd kick-started more RSVP's. The next day we were safely at 45 RSVP's. Pat added 10 slots more to the headcount for the caterer for the food order - in case of any late RSVP's. Friday and Saturday the late RSVP's came in bringing our headcount to the 55 we had ordered food for. Whew, that worked out! On the day of the event - we had 66 people show up! 4 people that RSVP'd actually didn't come, so we could have had 70 people at the event that only 45 had RSVP'd on time for.

WE CAN'T RUN EVENTS LIKE THIS!! The people who attended all noticed the long line for food service. We were lucky we didn't run out of food - but just barely.

At the Executive Committee meeting in August this problem was discussed and a corrective policy was approved for all Post events from now on. Our \$10 per person events will remain \$10 per person up to the RSVP deadline. **Anyone RSVP'ing after the deadline, or just showing up at the door, will now pay \$20 per person.** This new policy will be printed on all the

instances - one a Post member, the other a former Post Commander from years ago in the Bronx - their families couldn't find the paperwork before the wake. They brought photos to the funeral home hoping that would satisfy as proof. No, it doesn't. Our Post responded to perform our Rendering of Honors ceremony. In these two special cases we brought with us donated casket flags and presented them to the families during our ceremony.

Our Post is required to have a copy of our member's DD-214 or military discharge on record to maintain our tax-exempt status. We never have everyone's - but in one instance, a distraught family called us because their family member was a Post member and had passed. They had no idea where or how to find their loved one's DD-214. They were told by the funeral home that no military honors are done without one. Luckily, this member was a conscientious one and had supplied our Post with a copy of his DD-214. Our Post emailed a copy of the form to the funeral home. Problem solved.

If you are not sure if we have your documentation please feel free to contact Adjutant Pat McDonough #914-953-6807 or email him at post1009@nylegion1009.org. We can verify if we have it, or arrange to get it from you. Once we have it make sure your family knows we have it too! You can also bring your original DD-214 or military discharge to the County Clerk in White Plains where they will keep a copy on file there for you or your family to get when needed.

Membership...

Our Post closed out our 2021 Membership year in June with a 97.4% member renewal rate. We had 113 of 116 Legionnaires renew their memberships last year. Since the beginning of our 2022 Membership year on July 1st we have had 51 members pay their 2022 dues. That leaves 62 Legionnaires not renewed yet. All Post Legionnaires can send in your dues of \$47 now and you will receive your 2022 card back from the Post. In September our Post hopes to do a recruiting mailing to local veterans to ask if they would like to be a part of our Yorktown Post. Talk up membership with your friends as well.

Our SAL #1009 members can also begin sending in your dues of \$25 (\$15 if under 18 or dual members) to the Post. Last year our SAL Squadron finished with 22 members out of 24 renewed for the year.

Engraved Brick Orders

Our long-time Brick Chairman John Gunn has two important pieces of information for everyone. First, the deadline for any new brick orders is now December 31, 2021. Our brick engraver vendor in NJ is experiencing major production delays which is forcing our Post to change the deadline for any new brick orders. Our usual 60-day processing time is now 120-days. In order to guarantee installation in our plaza for Memorial Day 2022 we need the order forms in to the Post by 12/31/2021.

John is our original Brick Chairman. He took the position in 2013 and has done a remarkable job with the program. John announced that he will step down from the job next Memorial Day after 10 years doing it. We appeal to our membership for someone to come forward to take over his duties helping local veteran related charities. This job entails accepting brick orders (22 last year over 12 months) and placing the brick orders with our vendor one or two times a year ensuring delivery prior to Memorial Day. It requires minimal computer skills (or you can ask others for help with this part). While John does the public speaking at the Brick Dedication Ceremony - others in the Post can perform this public speaking function if it is something you are not comfortable with.

Please consider volunteering to keep this worthy program going until we fill the entire Park with engraved bricks - helping veterans with every brick we sell. There is a sad possibility is that this program will end next Memorial Day.

Welcome Aboard...

We would like to wish a warm Welcome Aboard to new Post Legionnaire Dominic Bucciero. We hope you'll stop by and visit for one of our meetings or events to get to know some your fellow Post members.

Our Condolences...

We are sorry to inform everyone on the sudden passing of Post #1009 Legionnaire Michael Laughlin. Mike was last seen at our Summer BBQ with his wife, Mellissa. Our best wishes go out to his family especially his parents, fellow Post Legionnaire Al Laughlin and his wife, Pat.

American Legion Post #1009
Schedule for 2021-2022

September	2	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	7	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting -- 7:00 PM
	9	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM
	10	Fri	Grange Fair Flag-raising Ceremony at 4:15 PM ?
	16	Tue	Birthday of The American Legion
	19	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast
TBA	Sun	TEAM Bike Ride Time TBA?	
October	TBA	Sat	VA Food Pantry Collection – Two ACME Supermarkets From 9 AM to 1 PM.
	5	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	7	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	10	Sun	Yorktown Street Fair 11 AM to 5 PM
	14	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM
	17	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast
November	2	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	4	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	TBA	Wed	TJ Elem School Vets Day program – 9 AM
	11	Wed	Veterans Day Ceremony at Town Hall – 11 AM
	11	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM
	14	Sun	Veterans Day Parade – Lakeland H.S. Form-up at 1:30 PM
21	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast	
December	7	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	2	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	12	Sun	Post Christmas Party 1:00 PM (Meeting Cancelled)
	19	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast
January	4	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	6	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	13	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM
	16	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast
February	1	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	3	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	6	Sun	4 Chaplain's Service 2:00 PM with Post Everlasting Ceremony following
	10	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM
20	Sun	SAL Fundraiser Breakfast	
March	1	Tue	Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM
	3	Thu	SAL Squadron meeting – 7:30 PM
	10	Thu	Post General Meeting – 7:30 PM - form Election Committee
	13	Sun	SAL St Patrick's Day Fundraising Luncheon – 12 noon to 3 PM ?

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