

LEGION

NEW YORK



WINTER
January 2014
Vol. 1. No. 1



T R I B U T E
PNC Richard M. Pedro

*This inaugural issue is
dedicated to the memory of
Richard M. Pedro.*

LEGION NEW YORK

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Issue 1, No. 1

Winter

January 2014

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE From new website to more pro-active voice

Department Commander Kenneth Governor has not only been bringing a message of relevant change in his visits around the state, but also has, with Adjutant Jim Casey, taken steps to beef up communications in response to the Membership Committee's strategic plan to attract and retain members.

Among those steps:

- launch of a new Department web site.

- increased publicity in conjunction with county visitations.

- creation of Department Commander's Award of Excellence to recognize outstanding efforts in the field.

- a more pro-active voice on issues of the day that affect veterans and men and women in uniform.

-- Robert Stronach, Dept. PR chair

DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES NEW WEB PRESENCE

www.nylegion.org

THE AMERICAN
LEGION
the world's largest veterans organization

JOIN NOW RENEW

HOME ABOUT DEPARTMENT NEWS & EVENTS MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS & SERVICES RESOURCES CONTACT

Commander Ken Governor travels with 'Service First' message. (Walk of Heroes in Endicott/Doug Malin)

FULL STORY

Why Join the Legion?

We're brothers and sisters in arms. You — we — can make a difference in living SERVICE FIRST. Your membership provides vital support to veterans services, lobbying efforts, and outreach in local communities. You get exclusive member discounts, have access to scholarships and programs, and receive 12 issues of American Legion Magazine. And then there's the camaraderie.

MORE

Your Legion At Work

Legionnaires Remember Pearl Harbor
DEC 07

Schumer: Vets Not Aware of Tax
Benefits DEC 06

Veterans to Receive Cost-of-Living
Increase DEC 05

'Service First' Theme for Leaders' Visits
NOV 30

Did You Know?

The American Legion changed the course of history — writing the original GI Bill. We remain committed to making sure that all veterans receive the benefits they deserve for the sacrifices they've made to America.

ON THE COVER

The Convention Parade was a highlight of the annual Department Convention, held in July at Niagara Falls. Even though marching units stepped off to sunshine, the parade was cut short as dark clouds and blustery winds swooped down. Photo by R. Stronach

LEGIONNAIRE TESTIFIES ON VETERAN SUICIDE EPIDEMIC CALLS IT 'UNNOTICED KILLING FIELDS' RIGHT HERE AT HOME

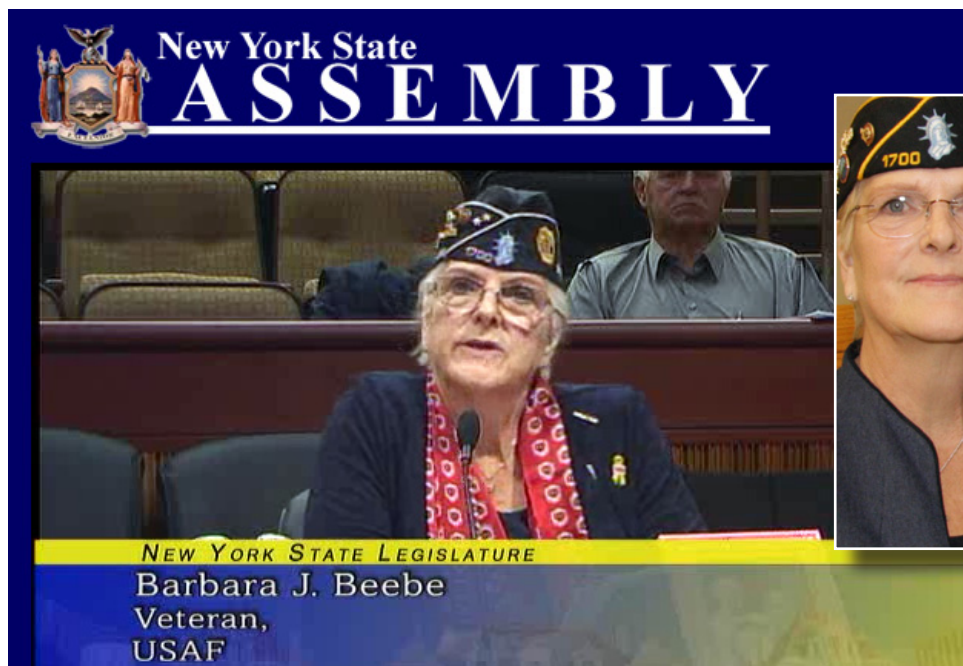
ALBANY -- Legionnaire Barbara Beebe told a New York State Assembly hearing Oct. 8 that she was there to speak on behalf of those who can no longer speak for themselves -- the rapidly growing number of veterans who are dying at their own hands.

"Suicide is an epidemic," said Beebe, an Air Force veteran, former Broome County Legion commander, and immediate past 6th District commander. Her son, an Air Force and NY Army National Guard veteran, took his own life earlier in the year. Staff Sgt. Bruce A. Beebe had served in Honduras, Germany and Afghanistan.

The hearing was conducted by the Committees on Veterans Affairs and Mental Health, and the Subcommittee on Women Veterans.

Referring to veteran suicides as "unnoticed killing fields" right here at home, Beebe cited a study in the American Journal of Public Health: "Preliminary figures suggest that being a veteran now roughly doubles one's risk of suicide. For young men ages 17 to 24, being a veteran almost quadruples the risk of suicide."

She pointed to a report in the New York Times: "For every soldier killed on the battlefield this year, about 25 veterans are dying at their own hands." The previous year more than 6,500 veteran suicides were recorded, she said, which is more than the total number of American



servicemen and women killed in Afghanistan and Iraq combined since those wars began.

She lauded the Veterans Administration (VA) for its a crisis hotline and suicide-prevention coordinators. The effort, she said, is "chipping away at a warrior culture in which mental health con-

cerns are considered Sissy."

She pointed to another New York Times quote: "We refurbish tanks after time in combat, but don't much help men and women exorcise the demons of war... We enlist soldiers to protect us, but when they come home, we don't protect them."

Beebe said that what's

being done is not enough, and called for more "awareness and intervention." She asked legislators to do two things. First, keep funding and supporting programs and groups that reach out to veterans -- such as Yellow Ribbon ceremonies, Family Care Programs, Suicide Prevention Programs, Job Fares, public service announcements about post traumatic stress and suicide prevention. Then step it up. If there are mass media campaigns for smoking cessation, not drinking and driving, and not texting while driving, then there needs to be a similar effort for suicide prevention among veterans -- from the symptoms of creeping post traumatic stress to the better choice of seeking help.

Beebe removed her Legion cover and said: "Now I'm a mom. Put your feet in my shoes and you'll know where I'm coming from."



Department Commander Ken Governor greets 10th Mountain Division soldiers at Fort Drum. Photos by Doug Malin.

LEGION LEADERS SHOW SUPPORT, GET TASTE OF TRAINING

FORT DRUM -- New York American Legion leaders got a taste of the 10th Mountain Division's unique combat training at Fort Drum during their visit to Jefferson County Oct. 5.

They took a ride in a Humvee IED simulator.

"It simulates convoy operations facing the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)," Department Commander Kenneth Governor said. "The IED explodes, rolling the truck. Soldiers extract themselves and take up defensive positions while chaos is breaking out all around them."

He added: "All they did for us was turn us upside down, but the soldiers get the

realistic training as if it were actually happening."

Next was a shooting range. "It was straightforward, almost like a video game, with enemy soldiers attacking your position. The computer automatically scores the shooter's results."

There also was an artillery simulator with call-for-fire training. "As an artilleryman, I would have loved to have called in a mission," Governor said, "but there was a class in progress."

What really impressed him was the medical battlefield, filled with "very lifelike dummies" displaying an array of wounds and injuries. "Soldiers enter the battlefield, again chaos reigns

with machine gun and small arms fire going on, and some kind of explosives going off. Soldiers take up defensive positions, clear the area and then work on the wounded."

Governor, along with a group of Legion Family members that included Department Auxiliary President Barbara Corker and Sons of the American Legion (SAL) Detachment Commander John Chang, also got to visit the memorials to 10th Mountain Division soldiers killed in action.

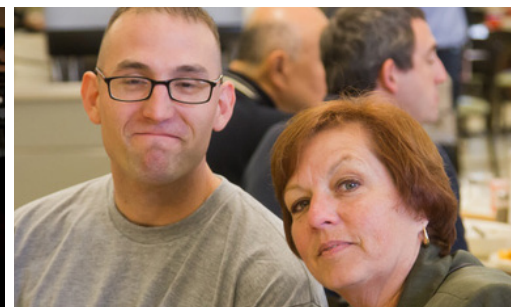
"They are located across from the Headquarters in a very dignified and solemn setting," Governor said. "A new large memorial (was) donated by the Fort Drum civilian

workforce... You immediately recognize the significance of the monuments to families whose loved ones' names are inscribed and who made the ultimate sacrifice in the most deployed division in the United States Army. You not only recognize the ongoing effect on immediate families, but also the brotherhood of the division and the veteran kinship. It choked me up, as it's a vivid reminder of the cost of freedom and that we are a country currently at war."

Another highlight of the Fort Drum tour was getting the opportunity to dine with soldiers who came to meet the Legion Family members on their day off.



Ken Governor, Joe Barilla, Barb Corker and Ed Lupian try out the shooting range.



Soldier and Barb Corker shared lunch.

NY OFFERS TO PAY GI DEATH BENEFITS DURING SHUTDOWN

The Department of New York in October offered to help cover death benefits for Empire State families of fallen service members that were suspended during the government shutdown.

"We will advance families the money they need to bring their loved one home and laid to rest," Department Commander Kenneth Governor said in announcing the offer.

That would include family travel expenses and burial costs.

He said it was "outrageous" for the Department of Defense to withhold death benefit payments.

"Families are in shock and pain when a loved one makes the ultimate sacrifice for our country," Governor said. "We can't let Washington politics add to their grief and distress."



TOPS IN AMERICANISM
New York walked off with the Americanism trophy at the National Convention for having the best children and youth, and family assistance programs in the entire American Legion. From left: Department Commander Ken Governor, then-National Commander James Koutz, Department Americanism Chair Ed Mallicoat, 2012-13 Department Commander Tim Van Patten, and Department Adjutant James Casey. Photo by Doug Malin.

COST-OF-LIVING CUT A 'SLAP IN THE FACE'

ALBANY -- The American Legion strongly opposed a cost-of-living cut for military retirees in the budget bill passed by the Congress in December, New York Department Commander Kenneth Governor said.

The one percent cut in the annual cost of living allowance for retirees under age 62 will have "a devastating and long-lasting impact by reducing retired pay by nearly 20 percent at age 62," Governor said. "Most estimates put the eventual loss of income at around \$70,000 on the low end and over \$120,000 on the high end."

"While there are things to applaud in the budget bill," the Department of New York commander said, "one thing is certain -- cutting retirement benefits is a slap in the face of the men and women who sacrificed for their country, ready at moment's notice to put themselves in harm's way. As much as some may want to compare military service to a civilian job, we know there is no comparison."

"They're balancing the budget on the backs of our military and veterans who are already being asked to do more with less."



SALUTE FOR CENTENARIAN
National Commander Daniel Dellinger and Department Adjutant James Casey salute 100-year-old Elmer B. Moje during the commander's official visit to western New York Oct. 15 at Stephen S. Sikora Post 1322 in North Tonawanda. Dellinger joined Department Commander Kenneth Governor in presenting the Department Commander's Award of Excellence to Moje, a World War II army veteran who served in Africa and Europe. Moje lives on the family farm in Wheatfield, Niagara County, and is a 69-year member of Tonawanda Post 264. Photo by Doug Malin.

IRS REVISES POSITION ON DD-214, THANKS TO LEGION

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has been conducting audits of American Legion Posts and fining some of them -- up to \$1,000 a day -- for not having records of DD-214s (the military separation document proving honorable service). The IRS has now revised its position on the DD-214 requirement in section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code -- thanks to American Legion efforts.

Now DD-214s are only required if an agent "possesses information that contradicts documentary information provided (by the veterans service organization) or if the organization fails to satisfy a reasonable request..." If an agent requires proof of membership eligibility, he or she will first request four sets of documents (such as member list with status as veteran or service member, policy for determining

eligibility, membership card, or dues structure and classes of membership) before requesting DD-214s or other discharge documents.

The American Legion felt it was being wrongly targeted, resulting in the passing of three resolutions during the 2013 National Convention in Houston last summer that called upon Congress to look into the IRS' field investigations into Legion posts. Lawmakers wrote

letters to the IRS asking why inspectors were asking posts to provide discharge papers or service records during reviews of their tax-exempt statuses.

National Legion staff and legal representation met with four IRS officials during which time the Legion asked that the IRS agree to change its internal regulations and guidance to comply with the above three resolutions.

LEGION RIDER JOINS 'WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA' TRIBUTE



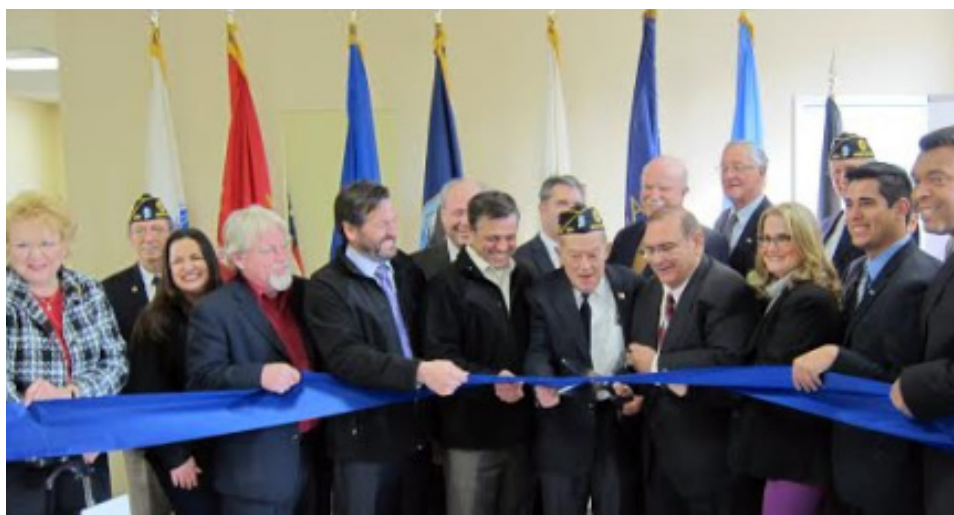
Legion Rider Carlos Varon renders salute at "Wreaths Across America" observance at Cypress Hills National Cemetery, Brooklyn. Photo by Fran Varon.

As Civil Air Patrol cadets and officers laid wreaths on veterans graves across New York Dec. 14, members of the American Legion Family were often there with them. It was part of the Wreaths Across America tribute.

Carlos Varon, an American Legion Rider with Baldwin Post 246, joined members of Academy Cadet Squadron NY-147 at Cypress Hills National Cemetery in Brooklyn. In an online photo album, he extended a thank-you to the "cadets who stood in the cold, rain and snow," with "their heads held high." He added: "It was an honor and privilege to stand with you and place a wreath for the POW/MIA."

NORTHPORT POST GETS NEW LOOK WITH \$1.17 MILLION RENOVATION

Northport American Legion Post 694 unveiled its new look Dec. 19, with a ribbon-cutting involving veterans, elected officials and representatives of North Star Construction. Work began in July on the \$1.17 million renovation, which added an elevator, updated air-conditioning system, wiring and bathroom updates. The cost of the project was covered by federal grant money, secured by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington), and a community development block grant from the Town of Huntington.



'SERVICE FIRST' THEME FOR LEADERS' VISITS

"There is a change in the air." That's a message that Department Commander Ken Governor has been bringing to the local Legion Family in his visits around the state.

It's about "Service First," he said.

The Department is reinvigorating the core mission to serve men and women in uniform, veterans and families, community and nation.

"Just as our country has evolved since 1776," he said, "we, too, must continue to evolve if we expect to be relevant for today's returning veterans whose focus" is on "getting their jobs back, keeping their mainly two-earner families together, and furthering the education of themselves, their spouses and their children."

On both national and state levels, Governor pointed out as an example, the Legion is pushing for recognition and credentialing of a host of skills learned in the military that are transferable to the private sector; thus, making it easier for returning veterans to get jobs. The Legion



Commander Governor, President Corker, Commander Chang.

brought the issue of the VA backlog to the front burner, he said, and "we'll continue to monitor the situation" to help ensure that veterans get the care and benefits they deserve for "protecting our nation's freedom."

That change in the air, he noted, involves the entire Legion Family — members of the Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion (SAL).

Another sign that the Department is on the right track in putting "service first," he noted, is the Americanism trophy that New York walked away with at the Legion's national convention this past summer. "We were honored for having the best Children and Youth, and Family Assis-

tance Programs in the entire American Legion."

The commander's visits are a joint visitation with New York Auxiliary President Barbara Corker and SAL Detachment Commander John Chang.

Chang, a dual Legion and SAL member, said he became "one of the 28,500 Sons" in New York State to honor his World War II veteran father. He pointed to SAL's sense of teamwork that supports veterans and their causes, noting in particular that "the Sons are the largest contributor" to the Legion-founded Child Welfare Fund, which provides grants to organizations that help children. He also noted that, like the department commander, his personal project

is to collect donations for the National Emergency Fund, especially since the fund helped so many New York families in the devastating wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Corker got involved in the Legion Auxiliary through her veteran father, and now has a daughter who is a veteran of military service. Like the Legion, she said, the Auxiliary is focused on serving the military, veterans and families, and community. Her personal project is to support Operation Comfort Warriors, and for two reasons. First, unlike other charities, 100 percent of donations go directly to helping wounded warriors. Second, it's important to "show our warriors our love."



MILITARY BALL A HIGHLIGHT OF VISIT TO FIRST DISTRICT

In his swing through New York City and Long Island, Department Commander Kenneth Governor (center) attended the annual American Legion Military Ball in the Bronx in November. Rendering salutes with him are with Dept. Vice Commander Ray DePhillis (left) and 1st Dist. Commander John Lanci.

NY DEPT. LOSES ACCLAIMED LEADER, MENTOR TO MANY



Past National Commander Richard Pedro at the 2012 National Convention. Photo/Doug Malin.

ALBANY -- The Department of New York lost a nationally acclaimed leader Jan. 10 when World War II Navy veteran Richard M. Pedro of Owego, NY died fighting the final battle. He was 87.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered flags to half staff in honor of Mr. Pedro, who retired last July after serving at the helm of the Department for nearly three decades as its adjutant, or executive director.

"Richard Pedro was the backbone of The American Legion, an icon, mentor and leader held in high esteem by the many who were privileged to have been the re-

cipient of his tutorage," said Department Commander Kenneth Governor. "...In fact, he was so well respected that at the 94th national convention in 2012, the delegates unanimously voted to bestow on him the honorary title of past national commander."

Noted Department Adjutant James Casey: "The Greatest Generation has lost one of its greatest...His tenure as Department of New York adjutant set the standard for adjutants across the nation."

When Mr. Pedro stepped down from his Department position last July, it wasn't the first time he retired.

Before being appointed De-

partment adjutant in July of 1984, he worked for IBM in manufacturing and engineering for 33 years.

Joining American Legion Post 401 in Tioga, soon after his discharge from service in 1947, Mr. Pedro became very active in the organization. He was elected to leadership positions on every level in the state -- post commander, county commander, district commander, and department commander. He went on to serve in a number of national roles, such as national executive committeeman, national security commission member, national commander's advisory

committee (from 1978 to his death), and national convention floor leader (1980 to to his death). He was awarded a life membership in 1964.

A native of Endicott, NY, Mr. Pedro graduated from Owego Free Academy in 1944 and then enlisted in the U.S. Navy. After being honorably discharged, he continued his education through the International Correspondence School of Engineering, Scranton, PA, from 1952 to 1954.

He leaves his wife, the former Jeanne Salata; a daughter, Debra Ann Hackett; a son, Richard JM Pedro, and seven grandchildren.

SCHOOL GETS FLAGS, THANKS TO NASSAU CO. LEGION



REGGIE BUTT

Some students wanted to say the Pledge of Allegiance but the classrooms had no American flags.

Nassau County American Legion came through with 35 flag sets. Past County Commander Reggie Butt delivered them to Barry Tech, a Nassau BOCES center in Westbury.

"This is something the American Legion does," said Butt.

He noted that the request for flags went to National Headquarters, which forwarded it to Barbara Kerr at Department headquarters who in turn passed it on to Nassau County Legion.

4 CHAPLAINS FOUNDATION HONORS NY SAL MEMBER KEN KRAETZER SPARKED CAMPAIGN FOR JEWISH CHAPLAIN MONUMENT

Sons of the American Legion Radio Host Kenneth G. Kraetzer and his SAL Squadron 50 in Pelham, NY, received the Medal of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Foundation last November -- for sparking a campaign to erect a monument to Jewish war chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery.

Kraetzer had grown up hearing the World War II story of the priest, rabbi and two ministers who gave up their life jackets to save others and led those around them in prayer as their troop transport ship sank. When he visited Chaplains Hill at Arlington in 2007, Kraetzer looked for the names of the four U.S. Army chaplains who died on that ship in 1943. But he noticed the name of the rabbi, Alexander Goode, was missing, and for that matter, any mention of Jewish chaplains who died in war.

That discovery and his



LEFT: Kenneth Kraetzer. ABOVE: 1948 Four Chaplains postage stamp.

efforts, which got Jewish War Veterans and Congress involved, resulted in the unveiling of a monument to Jewish chaplains at Arlington in October 2011. Kraetzer and SAL Squadron 50 were recognized at a Sunday morning ceremony hosted by Jewish War Veterans Post 695 in Wayne, N.J. at Temple Beth Tikvah.

"To be involved with one of the great stories in American history is amazing,"

Kraetzer, who is Catholic, told the New Jersey Record.

Among the 50 people attending the ceremony were the son-in-law and grandson of Rabbi Goode.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains is a Philadelphia-based organization that encourages cooperation and service in the spirit of the four chaplains through awards, memorial services, a scholarship program and other activities.

In 1943, the coastal steamer *Dorchester*, leaving Staten Island for Greenland, was struck by a German torpedo. Survivors say that as water flooded the ship, Fr. John P. Washington, Rabbi Goode, Rev. George L. Fox and Rev. Clark V. Poling handed out life jackets, and when supplies ran out, gave away their own. They led the men around them in prayer and hymns and then linked their arms as the ship sank.



2014 Department Convention

JULY 17-19 • THE DESMOND HOTEL • ALBANY, NY

Details will be posted on nylegion.org.

LEGION FAMILY OUT IN FORCE FOR AMERICA'S PARADE

A sea of red, white and blue followed American Legion Family members as they marched their way up New York City's renowned Fifth Avenue on Nov. 11 for the nation's largest Veterans Day parade – America's Parade.

Nearly 20,000 veterans, bands and youth groups marched in the parade.

"Last year was the first time since 1995 that I had missed this parade due to Superstorm Sandy," said Harry McMahon, a member of Post 1404 in Broad Channel, N.Y. "It (America's Parade) is important because it brings attention to veterans nationwide, and it reminds people to not forget about the sacrifices that people have made over the last 240 years. The parade also makes you feel good to be recognized for your service."

The 2013 parade marked the first time American Legion members marched together as a family instead of by their respective posts, squadrons or units.



Department Commander Ken Governor said that by marching as a family, "it's an opportunity to let the public know how we support the men and women in uniform, veterans, their families and our communities...It's all about brand recognition."

"Women in Service" was the parade's theme, giving special recognition to the history of American women in uniform.

"Being a Vietnam-era

veteran, the Vietnam War veterans did not get a good welcome home, they didn't get a parade when they came back," said Department Adjutant Jim Casey. "So for people to yell 'thank you' and 'we're proud of your service,' it's wonderful to see these men and women finally get their recognition. The American Legion is committed to the fact that what happened to Vietnam veterans will never happen again. You see it today with

the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans as they've gotten their parades, they've gotten their welcome home, and every day we thank them...

"I think it's a wonderful thing to march in this parade and show these veterans and the community that we're people who care for them, we're people who will take care of them, and we're people who will stand up for their rights. We will never let them be forgotten again."



'TAPS' NOW OFFICIAL NATIONAL SONG OF REMEMBRANCE, THANKS TO EFFORTS OF EATON POST 746 MEMBER

BATH, NY -- John P. Eaton Post 746 member Les Hampton spent four years working to gain long overdue recognition for the bugle call "taps". With the help of Congressman Tom Reed and Jari Villanueva, bugle historian and Arlington National Cemetery bugler, Hampton moved the proposal of making "Taps" our National Song of Remembrance from an idea to a law.

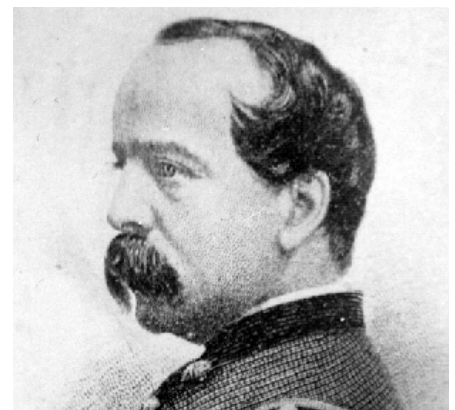
Congressman Reed, also a Post 746 member, spearheaded the bill through the House of Representatives, and the Senate adopted a



Les Hampton

similar version.

The final resolution was included in the 2013 Defense Authorization Act passed Dec. 21, 2012 -- the same year that marked the 150th



Gen. Daniel Butterfield

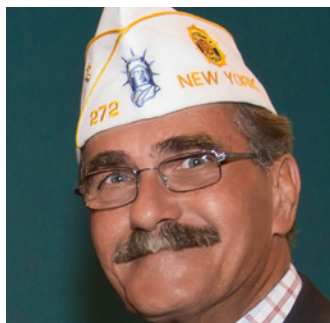
anniversary of the writing of the haunting 24-note song by Civil War General Daniel Butterfield (from Utica, NY) and bugler Oliver Wilcox Norton. The long-held tra-

dition of playing "Taps" as the final burial honors for American military personnel has now, Hampton says, been granted the honor and status that it deserves.

MEET THE ADJUTANT: James Casey, Past Department Commander

ALBANY -- The Department of New York has a new adjutant for the first time in nearly three decades. James W. Casey of Malverne, NY, succeeded Richard M. Pedro, who retired last July after serving 29 years in the post.

As adjutant, Casey serves as the chief administrative officer, working out of Department Headquarters.



A past Department commander, Casey is a member of Daniel M. O'Connell Post

272 in Rockaway Beach. The Department Convention last summer honored him with American Legion Meritorious Service Award for disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Casey served in numerous roles on the county, district and Department levels. On the national level, he had been vice chairman of

the Naval Affairs Committee.

Casey grew up in Rockaway Beach, and at the age of 18, enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1969. Upon his discharge four years later, he met his wife, Paulette Hurley. They have a daughter and two sons. Casey is retired from the Long Island Railroad where he worked as a signal inspector for 28 years.

BASEBALL COMMITTEE ISSUES RULING AFTER DISTRICT PLAYOFF INCIDENT

UTICA -- New York State American Legion Baseball is barring New Hartford Post 1376 and Whitestown Post 1113 from 2014 district playoffs, putting the coaches on probation, suspending five players, and recommending the teams do joint community service.

Department of New York Baseball Chairman Bruce Mayfield cited unsportsmanlike conduct that brought discredit to American Legion Baseball, stemming from an incident on July 26 at Murdane Field during 5th District Baseball Championships.

He said the Department

Baseball Committee issued the ruling after a review of evidence and interviews with people on the scene.

Mayfield said it was important to note that the league stands behind the traditional values upon which American Legion Baseball was founded in 1925.



WEBSTER POST AIDS STRANDED MILITARY WIFE

WEBSTER, N.Y. -- Cot-treall-Warner American Legion Post 942 came to the aid of a military wife who was traveling in the Rochester area over the weekend of Jan. 11-12, WHAM TV 13 reported.

The woman, traveling from Tennessee with her four kids, had car trouble and stopped at Benson's Service on Scottsville Road in Chili, TV news reported.

"The only problem -- she couldn't afford the estimated repair costs," the news report said. "Benson's service manager found out the woman's husband is deployed in Afghanistan, so he took the bill to American Legion Post 942 in Webster. The post offered to cover the cost of the repairs" so the family could return home.

"I know how stressful things can be," Post Commander Greg Cody told the TV station. "Typically these are the situations -- the wives are left home with the kids. That's a tough situation, when your husband or wife is gone for what could be six months at a time."



Post 942 Commander Greg Cody



NY DEPT. BASEBALL PANEL AWARDS 5 SCHOLARSHIPS, TAPS TOURNEY MVP

The Department of New York Baseball Scholarship Committee awarded three \$500 scholarships and a \$1,000 scholarship.

The following each received \$500 scholarships:

- **Patrick L. Gosney**, who played for Binghamton Post 80, Broome County.
- **Robert Pieszak, II**, who played for Depew Post 1528, Erie County.
- **Josh Walker**, who played for Middleton Post 151, Orange County.

Joseph Austin Mann, the recipient of the \$1,000 scholarship, played for Leon R. Roberts Post 161, Oneida County. His application was submitted to the National American Legion for consideration for a national

scholarship. A 2013 graduate of Holland Patent High School, Holland Patent, Mann planned to attend SUNYIT at Utica-Rome and try out for the SUNY Wildcat Baseball Team.

Two other awards were presented at the State Tournament in Utica in August. The "Big Stick" Award went to the player with the highest batting average and greater number at bats. This award went to **Ian Allen**, West Seneca Post 735, Erie County.

The Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award went to **Matthew Keating** of West Seneca Post 735 for pitching a championship perfect game. **He retired all 21 batters in a game that helped West Seneca come through the loser's**

bracket to win the 2013 NY State American Legion Championship -- and propel West Seneca to the Mid-Atlantic Regionals (where the team lasted to the final regional game before losing to Brooklawn, NJ).

Both Ian Allen and Matt Keating were awarded personalized baseball bats made by The Cooperstown Bat Company.

Noted Tournament Director Mike Macchione: "Thank you Bruce Mayfield, department baseball chairman, his vice-chairmen, all the district chairmen, and each coach from all teams for giving up their personal time to aid these players and also for supporting The American Legion Baseball Program!"

LEGION HOSTS BBQ FOR 10TH MT. TROOPS DURING EXERCISES

GREENWOOD LAKE — Members of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division were treated to a barbecue feast and enjoyed a variety of games, thanks to the largesse of the Greenwood Lake American Legion Arthur Finnegan Post 1443,

the Warwick Advertiser reported.

10th Mountain Division members, stationed upstate at Fort Drum, were in the area as part of training exercises with cadets from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. More than 200 soldiers at-

tended the Aug. 10th barbecue, enjoying the food as well as playing softball, pool, darts, Frisbee and horse shoes.

Civilians also attended for a small fee, with all proceeds going to the "Wounded Warrior" program.

3 POSTS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARDS FOR HURRICANE RESPONSE

Three New York State American Legion Posts received National Emergency Post Excellence Awards for going “above and beyond to provide assistance to their community” in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

The awards, presented at The American Legion National Convention in Houston, recognizes **Broad Channel Post 1404** in Queens County, and in Suffolk County, **Babylon Post**

94 and **Northport Post 694** for providing such assistance as meals, temporary shelter, work areas for first responders, or operations centers for disaster response.

Broad Channel Post 1401 and Babylon Post 94 received National Emergency Excellence Award plaques, and Northport Post 694, an Excellence Award honorable mention certificate.

“Since most of our posts are uniquely placed in

communities and looked upon as community service organizations, providing disaster relief is perhaps one of the most visible ways we demonstrate our devotion to mutual helpfulness,” Department Commander Ken Governor said.

“The entire American Legion Family in the Department offers congratulations and heart-felt gratitude for the outstanding efforts of the members of Broad Channel

Post 1401, Babylon Post 94 and Northport Post 694.”

Governor noted that since the Legion’s National Emergency Fund assisted New York Legion Family members who were hard hit by Hurricane Sandy’s devastation, Legion Posts from around the state made donations so that the Department could present one of the largest contributions to the fund at the convention -- a total of \$37,248.

POST 703 GETS GRANT FOR BATTLEFIELD ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITE THREATENED BY MINING COMPANY

FORT ANN -- American Legion Post 703 in the Washington County town of Fort Anne was awarded a nearly \$48,000 grant from the National Park Service to start the process of mapping and preserving a Revolutionary War site in eastern New York, the Glens Falls Post-Star reports.

The grant will allow the Post to do an archaeological survey on Battle Hill. The survey could be followed by an archaeological dig at the site, where Gen. John Burgoyne’s British forces from Canada defeated, but were delayed by a Continental Army contingent in July 1777. That delay, the Battle Hill marker points out, “made possible their defeat at Saratoga.”

The American Legion Post applied for the grant after the Connecticut businessman who owns the



Battle Hill marker. Photo/NY History Blog

property sought permission to use the site as a mine.

“This place has remained undisturbed for over 235 years, then Troy [Topsoil] obtained the property and has cleared out trees, built roads, installed culverts and drilled wells, in order to operate a sand and gravel pit,” Fort Ann Town Histo-

rian Virginia Parrott told historian-journalist John Warren’s New York History Blog.

“To most people in town, including the Fort Ann American Legion Post 703, this is a desecration of sacred ground as people have fought and died here in the name of freedom, and are

buried on Battle Hill.”

“That whole hill is a battle site,” Parrott told the Glens Falls Post-Star. “There was thousands of troops there. We’re not talking about a little group of soldiers ... like Roger’s Rangers that went out with 10 or 12 people. We’re talking about Burgoyne’s entire army.”

LEGIONNAIRE NAMED 2013 VETERAN OF THE YEAR

WORLD WAR II ARMY NURSE ALSO RECEIVES HONOR

James A. Haggerty, an American Legion member and Korean War combat marine from Valatie, was honored as 2013 Veteran of the Year, along with World War II Army nurse Calla Dever Osborne of Albany.

The annual award ceremony took place Nov. 16, at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. Friends of the NY State Military Museum and the Capital District Chapter of the Association of the US Army co-sponsor the Veteran of the Year Award.

Dever Osborne worked in "Post Op" treating critically wounded soldiers from the Battle of the Bulge and Bastogne, crossed the Rhine



James A. Haggerty, with State Sen. Kathleen A. Marchione, who named him to the 2013 Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

over a pontoon bridge and eventually ended up at Dachau 2-3 days after its liberation, where, for more than a month, she treated internees mostly for malnutrition and typhus. She was awarded the Bronze Star. After leaving the Army,

she met her husband, Karl Osborne, a former POW, continued to nurse in various hospitals in the Capital District, and became active in Ex POW Association.

Haggerty fought in Korea with G Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines as a

heavy weapons specialist from 1952-1953. Upon discharge, he returned to New York and spend his adult life working for veterans, both in the NYS Department of Labor and with a number of veterans service organizations such as Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion.

Haggerty is past president of the NY State Council of Veterans Organizations, representing 38 veterans groups. He retired from the Department of Labor as the assistant director of veterans programs and training and holds the position of district veteran director for Congressman Chris Gibson.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE HONOR DEDICATED SERVICE

In his visits around the state this past fall, Department Commander Ken Governor presented the Department Commander's Award of Excellence to a number of Legion Family members and organizations for outstanding efforts on behalf of veterans and/or their communities. They included:

RICHMOND COUNTY

STATEN ISLAND -- Ninety-year-old Louis Guerierro and Gold Star Post 1365 received the Department Commander's Award of Excellence in September. Guerierro, a past department vice commander and mem-



Edward Falk

ber of Frederick Staats Post 517, was cited for 65 years of service, and, as county leader, being "an integral part of Richmond County's success."

Governor praised Post 1365 for "dedication to the residents of Richmond County in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy" the previous October. "By making your post available as a staging area for supplies, and the countless



Mary Wheeler

hours your members put in, you became a major part of the American Legion's relief efforts during this tragedy."

HERKIMER COUNTY

MOHAWK -- Edward Falk of Newport got a surprise Oct. 1 when Governor paused at the start of his dinner remarks at Crowley-Barnum Mohawk Post 25 here and presented Falk with

the Award of Excellence. He cited 60 years of dedication to men and women in uniform, veterans, their families and community. Quipped 83-year-old Falk: "I like to think I'm still trying to be a good Boy Scout."

ONEIDA COUNTY

LEE -- Commander Governor honored Sitrin Health Care for its work with wounded warriors during his visit Oct. 2. He also honored Gold Star Mother Mary Wheeler and the Utica Chapter of the American Gold Star Mothers for unwavering support of veterans.

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AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE HONOR DEDICATED SERVICE

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LEWIS COUNTY

CROGHAN -- Governor honored Croghan's Beaver River Post 1663 Color Guard with the Award of Excellence Oct. 3. He cited the dedication to veterans, families and community, and the support of Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Final Honors, and other American Legion and community-related ceremonies and services.



Leo Joe Dwyer



Patricia Cobb



Charles West

reconnect with their families and communities through a variety of support services, Governor noted.

CORTLAND COUNTY

CORTLAND -- In his visit here Nov. 21, Commander Governor honored Leo Joe Dwyer, a 61-year member of Truxton American Legion Post 963, calling him a "Legionnaire's Legionnaire." Dwyer has served in numerous positions at the post, county and district levels, is a past Department vice commander, and has served on several national committees.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

BLACK RIVER -- The Award of Excellence was awarded John B. Lyman Post 904 of Alexandria Bay Oct. 5. Governor cited the Post's dedication to service members, veterans, families and community, and its support of American Legion Children and Youth Programs, during dinner at William C. Dexter American Legion Post 673 in Black River.

Tanner of Elmira Heights Post 154 with the Award of Excellence. "Ray Tanner is 'Mr. American Legion,'" Governor said, noting Tanner has been an active member for more than 50 years. "Anytime anyone has a question on American Legion protocol, Ray has the answer."

Mahopac American Legion Post 1080 on Nov. 14 for its efforts to provide tornado relief. Post members raised funds and supplies, and delivered them to tornado-struck Joplin, MO.

CHENANGO COUNTY

NORWICH -- Commander Governor presented the Award of Excellence to retired Navy veteran Patricia (PJ) Cobb, a member of Lt. Warren E. Eaton American Legion Post 189, here on Nov. 22. He cited her commitment to helping veterans.

BROOME COUNTY

VESTAL -- Governor presented the Award of Excellence to Barbara Beebe Nov. 5 at a dinner at John Handte American Legion Post 89. Beebe, a member of John F. Johnson Post 1700 in Endicott, was praised for extensive involvement in services to community and veterans.

MADISON COUNTY

ONEIDA -- In his visit here Nov. 20, Commander Governor honored Luanne Hollingsworth, president of the American Legion Auxiliary at Munnsville American Legion Post 54, and Clear Path for Veterans of Chittenango. "Luanne is an outstanding volunteer," Governor said. "She not only has led the Auxiliary Unit for the past two years, but also cooks and cleans for most of the family functions at the post." Clear Path for Veterans helps veterans

ONONDAGA COUNTY

SYRACUSE -- During a banquet at Valley American Legion Post 1468 in Syracuse, Governor took the opportunity to honor Mattydale Post 1832 Color Guard, which, he said, performs 70 to 80 funerals a year, along with 20 to 30 other ceremonies, logging between 2,000 and 3,000 volunteer hours.

OTSEGO COUNTY

RICHFIELD SPRINGS -- In his visit here Nov. 23, Commander Governor honored Charles West, commander of Hugick Purcell Shepard American Legion Post 616 in Richfield Springs. West promoted the Freedom Flight for Otsego County World War II veterans, helping to send 25 of them to Washington, D.C. to visit the World War II Memorial. He also helped raise money to send goodies and supplies to troops overseas.

CHEMUNG COUNTY

BIG FLATS -- During dinner at Skinner-Ernest Post 1612 here Nov. 3, Commander Governor presented Ray



Luanne Hollingsworth with Commander Governor.



Retired Army Sgt Rich Yarosh with players Mike Knapp and Mike Myers.

WOUNDED WARRIORS SHARE ADVICE WITH LEGION BALL PLAYERS STATE TOURNEY PARTICIPANTS VISIT REHAB PROGRAM AT SITRIN CENTER

UTICA -- American Legion baseball players visited wounded warriors and nursing home veterans July 30, the day before the New York State Baseball Championship Tournament got underway in Utica.

"If you don't ever give up" in the face of adversity, "you'll never fail," retired Army Maj. Bill Roberts of Boonville told players from Rome's Smith Post 24, New Hartford Post 1376, Rochester's Ferris-Goodridge Post 330, and Utica

host Andrean Post 625.

Former Army Sgt. Rick Yarosh of Binghamton had a similar message: "Play hard, play as a team, and make sure you become a family. It's more than just baseball. Working as a team and becoming family...That's how we survived in Iraq."

Roberts, who served three tours in Iraq before heading to Afghanistan where a roadside bomb caused his vehicle to flip and crush his spine, noted that after

a number of back surgeries and now rehab at Sitrin Health Care Center's Military Rehabilitation Program, "I'm just glad I can walk again," albeit with a cane.

A roadside bomb burned 60 percent of Yarosh's body, scarred his face and torso, maimed his hands, and amputated his right leg. He came to Sitrin to undergo therapy that would help him play golf again, and then Sitrin hired him to work with other wounded warriors.

The players handed baseballs to both men, asking for their autographs. "It was amazing," Roberts said. "I was never asked for my autograph before. I'm an infantry officer. I'm used to being on the other side, asking for autographs."

Tournament Director Michael Macchione noted that with the best teams in the state playing for the championship, The American Legion "wanted to make a different connection" for the youth.

Retired Sgt. Rich Yarosh autographs baseball while retired Maj. Bill Roberts chats with Dept. Commander Ken Governor.

