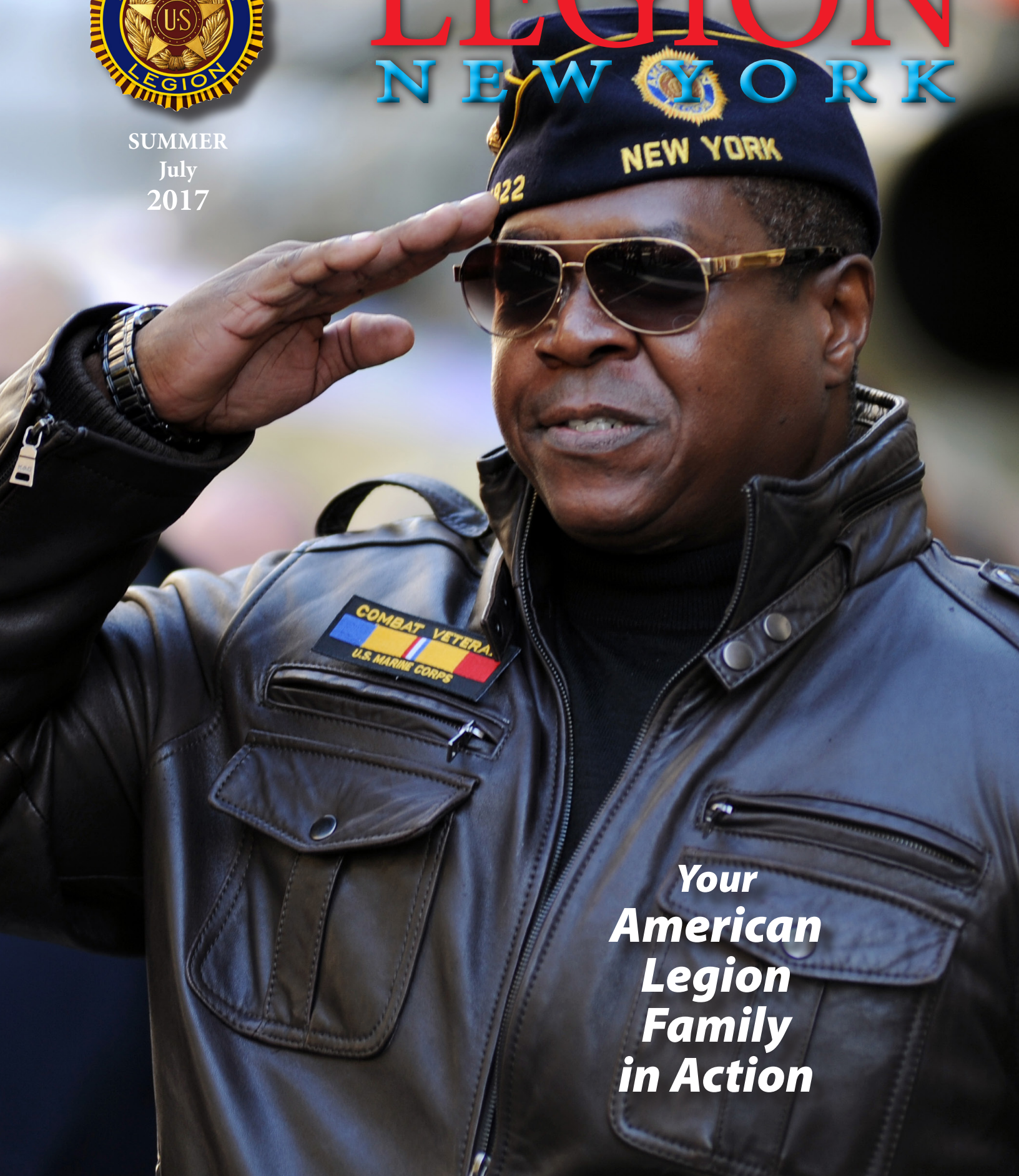




SUMMER
July
2017

LEGION NEW YORK



*Your
American
Legion
Family
in Action*

LEGION NEW YORK

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YOU ARE DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

By John B. Sampson, commander

In my travels around the state, I am constantly impressed by the reach and impact of our Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units, SAL Squadrons and Riders Chapters.

Our American Legion Family is accomplishing amazing things. Some of those accomplishments are featured in this magazine.

I'd like to point to two in particular as examples of Legionnaires doing something extraordinary.

One is the dedication to provide dignified burials for indigent veterans. Thanks to Legionnaires like Queens County Adjutant Paul J. Schottenhamel, deceased homeless veterans are not forgotten. Their sacrifices for God and Country are honored. (See Page 4).

The second example comes out of the simple notion that the Legion is here to help veterans in need. That's how Utica Post 229 Commander Jim George put it in relating how his post got a homeless Vietnam-era vet off the streets and into his own apartment. (See Page 15).

"We're attempting positive change," he said. Plus, it just plain "feels good."

There are a lot of Legionnaires like Paul and Jim, Legionnaires who embody the spirit of The American Legion.



Another way of saying it is:

The American Legion Family is alive and well in the Department of New York.

Thank you, my fellow veterans, for stepping up and being extraordinary.

ON THE COVER: SUPPORTING FELLOW VETS, PATRIOTIC CAUSES

While Legionnaires quietly work behind the scenes supporting veterans, families and community, they are also walking "billboards" for patriotism, out in force for parades and memorial events -- such as American Legion Post 1822 member Darryl Taylor, shown rendering a salute in support of Legion Family members marching in the 2016 Veterans Day Parade in New York City. "Veterans Day, to me, in the city is the best day of the year," said Taylor, who served in the U.S. Marines from 1980 to 1988. "The people, the stories, the camaraderie -- everything is great. I really love Veterans Day."

Photo by Amy C. Elliott / The American Legion.

RIBBON-CUTTING FOR NEW POST HOME



Participating in the ribbon-cutting at Iroquois Post 1587 were, from left, Post Commander Lowell Thompson, Seneca Nation President Todd Gates, Department Commander John Sampson, 8th District Commander Jim Bojanowski, Erie County Commander Nelson Oldfield, and New York State Senator Katharine Young. Photo by Timothy Van Patten II.

IROQUOIS POST 1587 HAS NEW FACILITY, THANKS TO SENECA NATION

Iroquois Post 1587 has a new post home, thanks to the Seneca Nation.

“The Seneca Nation paid for the entire building of this new American Legion Post,” reports 8th

District Commander Jim Bojanowski. “The new Post home is located next to the old site at 12897 Route 437, Irving, NY.”

Seneca Nation and Department of New York

leaders took part in a recent ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new building, along with a state senator. They included Post Commander Lowell Thompson, Seneca Nation President

Todd Gates, Department Commander John Sampson, 8th District Commander Jim Bojanowski, Erie County Commander Nelson Oldfield, and New York State Senator Katharine Young.

MEET YOUR STAFF

Department Adjutant Jim Casey introduces staffers on a rotating basis. In this issue he spotlights Anne Rounds.



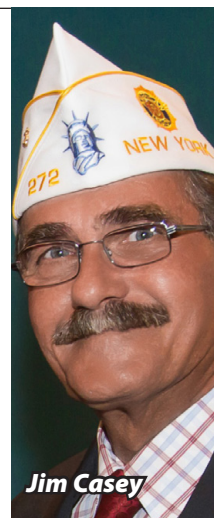
Anne Rounds

Anne Rounds is the new office director for Department Headquarters and executive assistant to the Department Adjutant. She brings with her organizational and meeting planning skills, both as a retired business owner and as a seminar and conference director for the New York Planning Federation.

A life-long resident of Troy, NY,

Anne is an Auxiliary member with Gerald O’Neil Post 1683 in Rensselaer. She is a member of the Troy School Board, serving as parliamentarian and previously as president and vice president.

Anne’s husband, Samuel, is a Vietnam combat-wounded vet. They have a daughter, Gabriella Rounds, BSN, who is in the nurse practitioner program at Russell Sage College.



Jim Casey

NY TIMES SPOTLIGHTS LEGIONNAIRES

DIGNIFIED BURIALS FOR HOMELESS VETS

A dignified end to New York's forgotten veterans.

That was the headline for a May 23rd feature story in the New York Times about homeless veterans who are saved from pauper's graves, thanks to Legionnaires like Queens County Adjutant Paul J. Schottenhamel.

"I am proud to be a small part in providing a proper burial for unclaimed veterans," Schottenhamel noted after the article appeared. "Many people come together to make it happen. I want to especially thank Past County Commander Michael Honan, Chaplain John B. Fiore and my fellow American Legionnaires from Queens County; Director James Sturges of the George Werst Funeral Home in Glendale; Ines Adan at the Department of Veteran Services of the City of New York; Vietnam Veterans Chapter 32, and the Patriot Guard Riders for all their help."

The Times article noted: "He (Schottenhamel) and other volunteers help schedule burials and organize viewings by engaging funeral home owners to provide services for little or no fee. They recruit groups of veterans to attend because mourners who knew the deceased almost never come."

The article, by Corey



Paul J. Schottenhamel

Kilgannon, described the case of three unclaimed veterans who were brought to George Werst Funeral Home. He wrote: "Two dozen military veterans filed into the funeral home, which has held about 100

free services for unclaimed veterans and has donated coffins and transported bodies to Calverton (National Cemetery)."

"Mr. Schottenhamel announced that the three veterans had been 'called to the high command'. With no details known about their lives, the service was brief."

"We know nothing more about these men, but we don't need to know anything more than that they honorably served their country," the article quoted Schottenhamel, who served in Vietnam and has helped arrange burials for 52 veterans.

The article went into the history of saving indigent vets from pauper's graves, and concludes with a scene at the cemetery, after hearses arrived escorted by Patriot Guard Riders.

The Riders formed a ceremonial walkway, the paper reported, noting:

"Rifle shots sounded out and a bugler played taps. An honor guard — active service members in dress uniforms — conducted the ritual folding of the American flags taken off the coffins.

" 'These men are unsung heroes, but for whatever reason, they died alone,' Mr. Jepson said. 'And that's why we're here.' "

See the full article here:

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/nyregion/forgotten-veterans-burials-new-york.html?_r=0



Legion Family members and Boy Scouts demonstrated flag etiquette at Honeoye Central School.

HONEOYE-HEMLOCK LEGION FAMILY CONDUCTS FLAG ED

HONEOYE, NY -- The Honeoye-Hemlock American Legion Family did a flag education program at Honeoye Central School on Flag Day, reports Jerry

Ketchum, state vice director for American Legion Riders. Members of the Legion, Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary presented the

program, along with local Boys Scouts.

"There was a presentation by members of the Legion and Sons on the parts of the Flag, then a Flag folding by

the Scouts narrated by the Auxiliary on the meaning of each fold," Ketchum said.

The program concluded "with singing patriotic songs."



Sen. James Seward and Gary Schacher.

SEN. SEWARD TAPS SCHACHER FOR VETERANS HALL OF FAME

Legionnaire Gary Schacher was inducted along with others into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in May after being nominated by state Sen. James Seward, R-Milford.

Schacher, a former chief gunners mate and 26-year Navy veteran who served in Iraq, was cited for several veterans programs he helped found. A 25-year member of The American Legion, he is department membership chair, a four-time Schoharie County commander, past department vice

commander, and an instructor at New York's Legion College.

Schacher has "demonstrated an unwavering commitment to his country, his fellow service members and his community," Seward said, in part, by establishing the Patriot Highlander Challenge, reported the Oneonta Daily Star. The Patriot Highlander Challenge is an annual obstacle course race that raises money to benefit wounded veterans and support networks in New York, Schacher said.

WELLSVILLE RIDERS CREATE FIELD OF FLAGS

EFFORT AIMED AT HELPING DISABLED VETERANS



Field of Flags on the lawn of Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville. BELOW: Riders pose for group photo. Photos provided by Jerry Ketchum.

WELLSVILLE, NY -- American Legion Riders (ALR) of Wellsville Post 702 installed a Field of Flags on the lawn of Jones Memorial Hospital here on Armed Forces Day, May 20, reported Jerry Ketchum, ALR state vice director for Districts 7 & 8.

The field is composed of “368 flags with veterans names fastened to them,” he said, noting that proceeds from flag sponsors are going to LEEK Hunting

and Mountain Preserve. LEEK provides outdoor experiences for disabled veterans, including fishing and hunting.

“This project is a brain storm of Sue Kays of Jones Memorial Hospital,” said Dennis White, director of the Post 702 Legion Rider Chapter. He noted that Legion Riders helped with “the selling of flag cards” as well as setting up the field of flags. Some 18 Riders participated.



TROIOLA PRESENTS AWARD AT CG ACADEMY

NEW LONDON, CT -- American Legion National Vice Commander V. James Troiola presented an athletics award to a graduating Coast Guard Academy cadet who is a national sailing champion.

The former Department of New York commander presented an Individual Proficiency Award for Athletics at the Commencement Awards Program May 16 to now-Ensign Nikole Barnes. Barnes is 2015-2016 Women's National College Sailor of the Year and the 2014-2015 All-American Women's Skipper. Both honors are through the Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA).



National Vice Commander V. James Troiola with now-Ensign Nikole Barnes and Academy Superintendent Rear Adm. James Rendon. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicole Barger.

LEGION WORKS VETS JOB FAIR

Eire County Legion Family members worked the June "Hiring Our Heroes" job fair in Buffalo. The fair attracted 95 job seekers and 46 employers.

They staffed the registration table as well as an American Legion information and membership table.

"We did get a few leads for membership," noted 8th District Commander Jim Bojanowski. "The Military Advantage guide benefit book supplied by our national organization was also distributed."

Other Legion Family volunteers included: Erie County Commander Sue Quirk; Anthony Solina, and Joe and Karyn Porempski.

WESTERN NY RIDERS RAISE \$2,678



Phil Dewey, director of the Lima Chapter, presents check to state Director Dave Davis, center, for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. At right is Jerry Ketchum, vice state director.

American Legion Riders in the 7th and 8th Districts had their third annual Legacy Meet and Greet on Sunday, June 25, raising \$2,678 for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, reports Jerry

Ketchum, vice state director for 7th & 8th districts.

The luncheon event was held at Arthur H. Cunningham Post 440 in Hornell.

The Hornell chapter hosted the event and

donated food. Ketchum said other chapters making donations included: Lima Chapter 282, Machias Chapter 1460, Waterloo Chapter 435, Wellsville Chapter 702, and Sonyea Chapter 1341.

7TH DISTRICT SONS HOLD FLAG RETIREMENT EVENT

American Legion Riders (ALA) from Francis M. Dalton Post 282 in West Bloomfield joined other members of the American Legion Family on May 21 for an annual flag education and retirement ceremony sponsored by the 7th District Sons of the American Legion (SAL), ALA vice state director Jerry Ketchum reported.

Held at Post 282, the event attracted Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts, and members of the "Legion, Auxiliary and Sons from



Chapter 282 Legion Riders took part in the Flag Retirement Ceremony coordinated by 7th District Sons of the American Legion. Photo provided by Jerry Ketchum.

the post, county, district and state levels," he said. The Flag Retirement

Ceremony was performed by the officers of the 7th District Sons, "with a fitting

21-gun salute and "Taps," noted Chairman Jim Daly.

LEGION VISITS VETERANS AT CROUSE CENTER VISIT OCCURS DURING LEGION FAMILY COLLEGE

Representatives of The American Legion Department of New York got to visit veterans in a skilled nursing facility in Morrisville during the first weekend in June – at the same time American Legion Family College was being held at SUNY Morrisville.

"It was a great honor to share some time with the veterans at the Crouse Community Center," Department Membership Chair Gary Schacher told Crouse Activities Director Kara Gemmell.

"We hope that this get-together can become an annual event and continue for many years into the future."



Crouse Activity Assistant Betsy Packard accepts American Flag from Membership Chair Gary Schacher. With them are, from left, Debbie Kryczkowski, American Legion Auxiliary Department president; David Riley Sr., Department Law and Order chairman, and Tim Collmer, dean of American Legion Family College.

The Legion Family members presented an

American Flag to the facility. Activity Assistant

Betsy Packard accepted on behalf of the staff.

POST THANKS GUARD FOR FLOOD RESPONSE

New York's National Guard and State Guard members responded to flooding along Lake Ontario, piling sandbags along the shoreline to help limit damage to property and homes – and Ferris Goodridge Post 330 in Spencerport, NY, decided to show its appreciation by providing a dinner for over 150 Guard members from all branches of service, reports Post Adjutant Don Sisson.



Guard members enjoy dinner at Ferris Goodridge Post in Spencerport, NY.

ALBANY COUNTY EXEC HONORS 4 LOCAL VETS FORMER COUNTY COMMANDER AMONG HONOREES

Former Albany County American Legion Commander Bob Morisseau was among four local veterans honored by Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy on June 6.

“Over the last few years, I have had the honor to acknowledge those living veterans who have served our nation,” said County Executive McCoy. “They answered the call and joined the effort to defend our country during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War. Each of them returned home and continued their service in their own way. We are very fortunate to have them in our community and to be able to honor them in this way is very important.”



Ceremony honoring four Albany County veterans, including former Albany County Legion Commander Bob Morisseau.

The honorees are:

- Joseph Albright of Altamont, a World War II Navy veteran who serviced in the Pacific Theater.
- Frank English of

Guilderland, who served in the US Marine Corps in Korea.

- Wayne Jackson, who earned two Purple Hearts as an Army combat

infantryman in Vietnam.

- Navy and Naval Militia veteran Bob Morisseau, who has served since 1979, including aboard three submarines.

NAT'L VICE COMMANDER VISITS ARSENAL

LEGION AND WATERVLiet ARSENAL HAVE LONG HISTORY TOGETHER

American Legion National Vice Commander V. James Troiola visited the historic Watervliet Arsenal on April 6, accompanied by Department Commander John Sampson, Department Auxiliary President Debbie Kryczkowski, Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander J. Bruce Ruthven, Department Adjutant James Casey and several others.

"The one thing that stood out more than any other is just how much pride each worker has in what they are doing for our country," Troiola said. "Wherever I went today, every employee was not just friendly, they were also very committed to supporting our troops."

The arsenal's public affairs director, John B. Snyder, took advantage of the occasion to reflect on the long history of Legion and arsenal interaction.

By JOHN B. SNYDER

WATERVLiet ARSENAL, N.Y.
-- The Arsenal workforce heard praise from a U.S. Army general who proclaimed that arsenals are the first line of defense for our country and therefore, the maintenance and efficiency of the arsenals should be of the first importance to the preparedness of this nation. Although this statement sounds as if the current Army's chief of staff may have just made that comment before Congress, he would have been 80 years too late.

In the summer of 1934, then Brig. Gen. William H. Tschappat drafted an article titled, "The Core of Our Preparedness," which was posted

in the American Legion's August magazine.

If anyone knew ordnance and munitions well enough to write for a national magazine, it certainly was Tschappat. After all, he had graduated from West Point in 1896 and commissioned as an Ordnance officer; served at the Picatinny Arsenal, Watertown Arsenal, Sandy Hook Proving Ground, and the Aberdeen Proving Ground; and became the Army's Chief of Ordnance from 1934 to 1938.

In that article, Tschappat greatly valued the nation's arsenals. They were very capable of quick expansion in a national emergency, as well as critical to what was then called essential pioneering work. Today, this pioneering work is called prototype development that still goes on at the Watervliet Arsenal.

And several other points that Tschappat made in that historic article remain true today.

After the Great War, the arsenals had fallen into a state of low production

Department Adjutant James Casey and National Vice Commander V. James Troiola tour the Watervliet Arsenal.

U.S. Army photo.





Arsenal Commander Col. Joseph Morrow briefs National Vice Commander V. James Troiola and other Legion leaders. U.S. Army photo.

and investment, Tschappat said. When wars end, there is little investment in the capability of the arsenals and therefore, capability struggles to keep up with modern technology. Although the general public is little acquainted with the arsenals, the scientific world well recognizes arsenals for their research discoveries, inventions, and development of industrial processes.

And on a more positive note, Tschappat said the pride of workmanship is a characteristic of the permanent civilian workforce. That old guild spirit existed then as it does today.

But this review of a 1934 article begs the question as to why this is of concern to the Arsenal today?

On April 6, 2017, V. James Troiola, a national vice commander for the American Legion, visited the historic Arsenal for his first time. He was accompanied by New York Department Commander John Sampson and several other Legion leaders.

As with any visit by a civic, business,

or military leader, the Arsenal staff conducts a quick background review so that its leaders are better prepared for the visit. Such was the case in the preparation for the American Legion.

What the Arsenal had found is that although the Arsenal claims to have a great relationship with the Legion, it wasn't always so.

In 1932, local American Legion leaders attempted to close the Arsenal. But thanks to the Troy Record newspaper, its timeless commentary regarding the value of the Arsenal to community and nation helped save it from closure. In the defense of the American Legion, however, their efforts were noble in that they had envisioned the establishment of a Veterans Hospital on Arsenal grounds.

Nevertheless, the American Legion redeemed itself, so to speak, by publishing an article in its national magazine two years after the attempted takeover in 1932. Today, the Arsenal and the American Legion participate

together in more than 40 community events every year, and are often invited to each other's functions and facilities.

Although this was Troiola's first visit to the Arsenal, he quickly picked up on the essence as to why the Arsenal is still operating after 203 years of service to the country.

"The one thing that stood out more than any other is just how much pride each worker has in what they are doing for our country," Troiola said. "Wherever I went today, every employee was not just friendly, they were also very committed to supporting our troops."

Before the American Legion left, Arsenal Commander Col. Joseph Morrow once again thanked the Legion for all that they do to support the nation's troops, Veterans, and their family members. Troiola echoed the thanks not just for the tour and the briefing, but also for providing the nation's troops with the weapon systems that will keep them safe.

NY FINDS A SYSTEM WORTH SAVING

NATIONAL LEGION SPOTLIGHTS DEPARTMENT FOR ITS INITIATIVE

by THE AMERICAN LEGION

EDITOR'S NOTE: The National American Legion's website spotlighted the Department of New York in May for its unique System Worth Saving initiative.

When funding for The American Legion's System Worth Saving program began to dwindle, Department of New York members Mike Suter and Pat Rourke — both of whom served on the national program — took the initiative to ensure their state's program would endure.

New York's program has been so successful that the national program has used it as a template for boosting the national program.

The department had to pass a resolution in 2015 to get approval for the state-level program, which Suter said was modeled off the national program but designed to reflect New York's situation.

"We talked about it almost a year before we put the resolution together," Suter said, noting that they worked with Adjutant Jim Casey to make sure there would be no funding issues.

"We put together a training program and we selected a lot of our American Legion-accredited representatives to be part of our task force," said Suter,



Last year's Department leaders receive briefing during a visit to a VA Medical Center.



R. Michael Suter

chairman of New York's veteran services committee. "Of course, they had not been through anything like this so we provided a three-day school to basically train them on areas they need to pay attention to, the questions they need to ask, and the answers they should expect."

Suter said that the national program sent two

representatives to New York's training program, who gave their blessing to the state program when they were done.

"We have had super support from national," Suter said. "Very favorable support from the national (Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation) commission, the Washington office has just been super."

Suter said the New York program can look at three to four hospitals and five to seven community-based outpatient clinics a year. The state is divided into three regions for the SWS program, ensuring that travel is easy on the task force members.

Suter says the SWS program is "critical" for veterans.

"We still find delays

in getting appointments for our veterans," he said. "There are lots of issues with specialty-type care; some have it, some don't."

Still, it's a "team effort" between the Legion and the VA, Suter said.

"We're here to help the VA, not just put them on report. They've been supportive and open," he said.

"I think we have a good program; it's something we need to do."

Suter said it's important for the program to observe and adapt to changes in the VA, and with veterans' health issues. New York's SWS has set up a committee to look at suicide prevention measures among veterans, for example.

"If we see a problem, we want to get it corrected," he said.

JARED RIOS IS STATE ORATORICAL CHAMP

ALBANY — Jared Rios, a junior at St. Edmund Preparatory High School in Brooklyn, is The American Legion New York State oratorical champion for 2017, Oratorical Chair Anthony Paternostro announced.

Jared competed in March against four other finalists from a cross section of the state in the 80th Annual Department of New York Oratorical Contest. Jared won a \$6,000 scholarship.

He was sponsored by the Floyd Bennett Post 1060 (Kings County, 2nd District). The “Constitutional Speech Contest” took place March 11 at Sand Creek Middle School in Colonie.

The other finalists:



Department Commander John B. Sampson and Oratorical Champion Jared Rios. Photo by Frank Carletta.

• Kyra Gee, a junior at Granville Jr/Sr High School in Granville, won a \$4,000

scholarship. Kyra was sponsored by Granville Post 323 of Washington County,

4th District.

• Melissa Barnosky, a sophomore at Charles D’Amico High School in Orleans, won a \$2,500 scholarship. She was sponsored by Sheret Post 35 of Orleans County, 8th District.

• Garrett Wardell, a junior at Alexandria Central School, was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. Garrett was sponsored by John B. Lyman Post 904 of Jefferson County, 5th District.

• Anusha Nambiar, a junior at John Jay High School, was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. Anusha was sponsored by Kevin Hathorn Post 1758 of Dutchess County, 9th District.

MORISSEAU RECEIVES STATE CITIZEN SOLDIER AWARD

Legionnaire Robert Morisseau, a chief petty officer with the New York Naval Militia, has received a prestigious New York State Citizen-Soldier Award.

In a ceremony on April 21, Maj. Gen. Anthony German, the state adjutant general, presented Morisseau with the 2016 Colonel Gouverneur Morris Citizen Soldier Award. CPO Morisseau was recognized out of the four state Guard Units for outstanding support of community, militia and state.

The award is named after Gouverneur Morris, an American statesman, a Founding Father of the United States, and a native



CPO Robert Morisseau receives award from Maj. Gen. Anthony German.

of New York City who represented Pennsylvania in the Constitutional

Convention of 1787. He was a signatory to the Articles of Confederation. Morris

was a significant contributor to the Constitution of the United States and one of its signers. He wrote the preamble, and has been called the “Penman of the Constitution.”

Morisseau, an Albany native who graduated from Albany High School in 1978, joined the Navy in 1979 and retired after 20 years of active duty military service. He has been a member of the New York Naval Militia since 2001 and serves as a member of the Naval Militia personnel action team and as a small boat crewman.

He is a past American Legion Albany County commander.

ALTERNATIVE PTSD CARE TOPS AGENDA

LEGISLATORS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR VETS

ALBANY -- “We should not argue” about veterans’ issues in state government.

That’s how Sen. James Sanders Jr. of Queens put it when declaring his support for New York American Legion’s legislative agenda during the Legion’s annual Hill Day legislative breakfast March 7 at the Empire State Plaza. Over 200 members of the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion (SAL) were present

“We have to keep the goal in sight, and that goal is the Legion’s legislative agenda,” said Sanders, a former Marine serving on the Veterans, Homeland Security & Military Affairs Committee. “I read it. It’s reasonable.”

Topping that agenda is alternative medical care for those suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and mild traumatic brain injury (TBI).

“That is our number one priority,” declared Frank LaMarsh, the newly appointed Legislative chairman for The American Legion Department of New York. He said the Legion was urging:

- New York State to study viable alternative treatments, such as animal therapy and hyperbaric oxygen therapy;
- the Legislature to provide the U.S. Congress



Department Legislative Chairman Frank LaMarsh converses with Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R,C,I-Brooklyn/Staten Island) following the Hill Day legislative breakfast. At right is past SAL Detachment Commander Joseph Santa Croce. Photo by Robert Stronach.

with a Memorial Resolution urging the use of alternative treatments for PTSD and TBI;

- the state and its agencies to review any means of extending state-recognized alternative health care programs to disabled veterans unable to receive such care through VA health care providers.

Department Commander John Sampson read a welcoming letter from Gov. Andrew Cuomo that saluted the Legion for being “effective advocates for veterans” for nearly a century.

The chairman of the military affairs committee, Navy veterans Sen. Thomas D. Croci of Suffolk County, pointed to servicemen and women as being “the caliber of individuals we need in our communities.” He said New

York State should be doing everything it can to attract and keep veterans. That’s why the legislature has passed a number of veterans-related bills and continues to look at legislation benefitting vets.

American Legion Posts “are centers of our communities,” where a host of events are held. For that reason, he thinks posts “should be eligible for state capital grants” to make improvements to their facilities – and he would be working on legislation that would allow just that.

Croci said he would like to see money for veterans’ programs increase in every new state budget – instead of having to fight the governor’s cuts in veterans spending.

Assemblyman Michael

DenDekker of Queens, who chairs the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee, put it another way – that the governor needs to be reminded that five percent of the state’s population has served in the armed forces. “Please make your voices heard,” he urged.

Another Veterans Affairs Committee member, freshman Assemblyman Angelo J. Morinello of Niagara Falls, recalled the time he served in the Vietnam War. “Many of us coming back from Vietnam were vilified.” Today, those in government “use us for photo opps.”

He favors mandatory military service, and pointed to homeless 18 to 21 year olds. “There’s a home for them. It’s called the military.”



Senator Sanders



Senator Croci



Assemblyman DenDekker



Assemblyman Morinello

COMMANDER: 'POSITIVE CHANGE HAPPENING'

HOMELESS VET GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE, THANKS TO UTICA POST

By ROBERT STRONACH

UTICA -- Jim George, the new commander of Utica Post 229, likes to point to the heart of The American Legion – that is, directly helping veterans.

Seeing various needs over the years – such as a veteran living on the streets or the family of a deployed soldier facing an emergency expense – George decided to do something about it, establishing an emergency assistance fund, with proceeds from a post bingo night kick-starting it.

It wasn't long before he saw his first cause – a homeless veteran who “has been bouncing between staying at the Rescue Mission and living under a bridge.”

The post fund put up a security deposit on an apartment. The veteran moved in to his first home in nearly three years, George said, noting: “Now that he has an address, we're hoping to help him get a job. Who's going to hire you without an address?” The post also has been able to get a local business to donate a bed and was working on getting other furniture donated.

The homeless Army veteran served in Germany during the Vietnam War, George said, and came to upstate New York after living in South Carolina for a couple of years. His



Utica Post 229 Commander Jim George not only is spearheading a post effort to help veterans in need, but is also a musician. Strumming a guitar he hand-crafted himself, he says he was inspired by his grandfather, a Mohawk chief who had his own country band.

life began to fall apart after losing his job, and it wasn't long before he was living on the streets.

When told of the apartment, “he burst into tears,” George said. “He kept saying, ‘why me, why are you doing this for me?’”

“You're a vet,” George replied. It's that simple.

“We're attempting positive change,” the commander noted. “We just got to keep it going. This is what we should be doing.” Plus, it just

plain “feels good.”

He met the homeless vet in a roundabout way after spotting a young man holding a sign with the words, “Homeless. Any help appreciated.” George turned his car around and pulled over to talk to the young man, who was wearing camouflage cutoffs. “I gave him \$10 and asked if he was a veteran. He said no, but a buddy he sometimes panhandles with was a Vietnam era vet. I wrote

down my name and number and asked him to give it to his buddy.”

A month later the homeless vet finally called. George arranged to meet with him, bringing along the post service officer, and got a copy of the vet's DD-214.

Bad luck happens, George said, and “when something good happens, hopefully it'll turn things around and have a ripple effect.”

For him, this is The American Legion.

CHAPLAINS HILL UPDATE

CLERGY FROM MORE RECENT WARS NOW HONORED

By KEN KRAETZER
SAL Radio

WHITE PLAINS -- The names of 24 Protestant Chaplains who died in service, including two who remain Missing In Action from the Korean War, were planned to be recognized in the spring at Chaplains Hill in Section 2 at Arlington National Cemetery on a revised plaque.

The announcement came in February on the 74th anniversary of the "Four Chaplains" who gave up their lives for others during World War II on the torpedoed troopship *Dorchester*.

The effort was being led by group of local and national veterans service organizations who combined in 2011 to donate the Jewish Chaplains Monument to Arlington National Cemetery. The group plan to replace an aging Protestant Chaplain plaque and monument stone which honors chaplains who died in service only during WWII. The new elements will be a granite monument base and upright presenting a bronze plaque honoring the 117 WWII Protestant chaplains who died in service during WWII, adding for the first time the names of 24 Protestant chaplains who died in service in Korea, Vietnam,



Chaplains Hill monuments. U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue/Arlington National Cemetery.

Cold War Era, and the War on Terror.

A plaque to recognize Catholic chaplains who died in service in the War on Terrorism is also planned to be added to the existing Catholic Monument. The Jewish chaplains plaque is up to date. Although the Chaplain Corps of the US Armed Forces is today represented by chaplains of a wide number of faiths, no other faith group has suffered the loss of a chaplain during military service.

Two US Army chaplains,

Captain Kenneth Charles Hyslop of Sussex, Delaware, a Northern Baptist chaplain, and Major Wayne Henry Burdue, of Thurston, Washington, a chaplain of the Disciples of Christ, were both taken prisoner in the early months of the Korean War. Both died in captivity and remain Missing in Action, according to American Battle Monument Commission records.

Honored by name on the existing Catholic Chaplains Monument on Chaplains Hill, are two US Army chaplains, Captain

Lawrence Frank Brunnert of St. Louis City, MO and Captain Emil Joseph Kapaun of Wichita, Kansas; both died as prisoners of war and their remains have not been found. Captain Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013.

The names to be recognized at Chaplains Hill for the first time are:

KOREA: Wayne Burdue, Wendell Byrd, James Conner, Robert Crane, Kenneth Hyslop, Byron Lee, Samuel Simpson, Kenneth Wilson.

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SAYVILLE POST SALUTES KOREAN WAR VETS

By WILLIAM TUCCI

SAYVILLE, NY - A capacity crowd of friends, family and officials packed into the American Legion Smith-Wever Post 651 on March 21, 2017 as veterans hosted an Award and Remembrance Ceremony honoring Long Island heroes of the Korean War.

"The Forgotten War" brutally raged from 1950 to 1953 and was the first major armed clash between the Free World and Communist forces as the so-called "Cold War" turned hot. Unfortunately, many Korean War veterans consider themselves forgotten, their place in history sandwiched between the sheer size of World War II and the fierce controversies of the Vietnam War.



Smith-Wever Post 651 honored Korean War veterans.

On a Tuesday evening, 20 of those veterans, now in their eighties and nineties, were front and center as they were granted accolades by fellow Long Islanders. Amid applause and tears, Post 651's WWII, Cold War, Vietnam, Desert Storm and the Global War on Terror veterans bestowed the American

Legion's *Grateful Appreciation Medal and Honor Award* to each of them.

Also presented were New York State Certificates of Appreciation from Senator Thomas D. Croci and presentations by Town of Islip elected officials John C. Cochrane Jr., Steven J. Flotteron, and Alexis Weik.

"It should be remembered," a Post 651 press release noted, "that during the Korean War over 100,000 US servicemen and women were wounded while another 36,574 paid the ultimate sacrifice for another's freedom. To this day, over 7,800 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are still missing."

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VIETNAM: Don Bartley, Merle Brown, William Feaster, Ambrosia Granda, Roger Heinz, James Johnson, Phillip Nichols.

COLD WAR ERA: Albert Beasley, Evered Cagle, Troy Carter, Robert Ledbetter.

WAR ON TERRORISM: Dale Goetz, Edward Jack, Joseph Moore, Gordon E. Oglesby, Steven Thornton

The replacement plaque and monument is replacing the existing Protestant Monument, joining three

other monuments honoring Catholic Chaplains, World War One Chaplains, and Jewish Chaplains all who died during military service. It is planned that a plaque will be added to the Catholic Chaplains Monument honoring several Catholic chaplains lost in the War on Terrorism.

The design for the new Protestant Plaque was provided by Debora Jackson of Troy, NY and The Brooklyn Wall of Remembrance who previously designed the Jewish Chaplains Monument plaque dedicated in 2011. Overall plans to update

and provide access to Chaplains Hill are provided by architect Bruno Carvalho of Washington, DC-based Carvalho and Good PLLC.

A later phase is proposed to provide an ADA compliant walkway that will provide access up the 30 foot high Chaplains hill to visitors from Honor Flights to scout groups.

Project director is retired US Navy chaplain Rabbi Rear Admiral Harold Robinson.

Participating organizations are The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, the Brooklyn Wall of Remembrance, the

Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation, the Jewish War Veterans Post 695, Wayne, NJ; Sons of the American Legion Squadron 135, White Plains, NY, the Jewish Welfare Board, and the Florence Lahey and Sol Ollinger Foundation. Appreciation is extended for assistance provided on research to Mr. Gregory Tardieu of the Alexandria, VA Public Schools, Fay Rozovsky, Marsha McManus of the US Army Chaplains School, and Capt. (ret) Tierian Cash, USN, former National Chaplain of The American Legion, and Michael D. Helm, former National Commander, The American Legion.

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

SPOTLIGHT ON 2 WOMEN IN LINE TO MAKE LEGION HISTORY

ALBANY -- The Department of New York's 98th Annual Mid-Winter Conference featured a weekend of seminars and meetings on significant issues of concern to veterans and their families – and also put a spotlight on two women in line to make American Legion history as the first national and New York State female commanders.

Denise Rohan of Wisconsin, the leading candidate for national commander, was the featured speaker at the conference banquet Jan. 21 at the Desmond Hotel. She is a Vietnam-era Army veteran who was an instructor in the Quartermaster Corps.

Rena Nessler, leading candidate for Department of New York commander, was introduced by Department Commander John Sampson at the Saturday evening banquet and the Sunday morning general assembly. A former county and district Legion commander, Nessler served on several state and national committees. She is an enrolled member of the Ojibwa Tribe from White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota. Born in Flint, Michigan, Nessler moved with her family to Minneapolis, where she lived until she joined the U.S. Navy. Upon discharge, she moved to Geneva, NY, where she resides with her



Denise Rohan speaks at Mid-Winter Conference Banquet. Photos by Robert Stronach



Rena Nessler with husband, Jim.

husband, Jim.

At the banquet, Rohan noted that, from her own experience with families at a National Guard base in Wisconsin, she has become convinced that the American Legion plays a critical role in providing assistance to service men and women, and their

families. She spoke of an 8-year-old boy whose father had been deployed five times, meaning he has been without a dad for most of his life. "It's a reality we have put our service people through ever since the war on terrorism (began)."

That scenario, along with the high unemployment and

suicide rates among veterans, is disturbing, she said.

"The only thing that gives me hope is being a member of the American Legion Family," Rohan said to rousing applause, "because I know the American Legion Family is doing (its) best to help veterans and their families."

She pointed to the Legion's family-oriented foundation of being for God and country, and noted: "It will always be about putting our family first," which includes "our relationship with God, our personal family, our Legion family, our veterans' family."

She added: "Together, as the American Legion Family, we are making extraordinary things happen across the nation."

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

NEWS MEDIA REPORT LEGION'S VETERAN FOCUS

"The guard may have changed in Washington, but for the American Legion, it's business as usual."

That's how the Albany Times-Union reporter Robert Downen began his report on the Department of New York's Mid-Winter Conference, held Jan. 20-21 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany.

"State and national leaders told the Times-Union that despite massive shifts on Capitol Hill, the Legion will continue pushing for, among other things, veteran employment and training programs. That follows a year in which Legion officials appeared before Congress 15 times, a trend officials attributed to a renewed focus on veterans' issues."

Albany Time-Warner Cable News also aired a report on the gathering of veterans from all over New York State.

Department of New York Commander John Sampson and the leading candidate for national commander,



John Sampson, department commander, and Denise Rohan, leading candidate for national commander, brief a newspaper reporter.

Denise Rohan, spoke of the Legion's efforts to get military training in certain specialties recognized for certification in civilian equivalent occupations, such as trucking, nursing and emergency services.

This, they told the newspaper, will ease stresses for military members transferring into civilian life by setting up viable career opportunities and keeping families together.

"The Legion 'looks at it as a matter of national security,'

Sampson said, noting decades-long campaigns to ease veteran unemployment, homelessness, poverty and myriad health issues, including suicide. Previously, he said, the disjointed way in which members are relieved from the military has made preemptive training difficult."

The Times-Union story also noted that the American Legion would continue its push for a constitutional amendment

against flag burning.

"People say (flag burning) is free speech, but we don't see it as free speech," said Rohan, who is in line to become the first female national commander in the Legion's nearly 100-year history.

The newspaper noted that a similar law to reverse the Supreme Court's 1989 decision in *Texas v. Johnson* failed by one Senate vote in 2006, though it was the closest that advocates had gotten in three attempts.



Denise Rohan addressed a packed room of Legion Riders at Mid-Winter.

THE YANKEE DOODLE BAND
from Fort Crailo Post 47 in Rensselaer
entertained the Legion Family during a pre-banquet reception at
January's Mid-Winter Conference in the Albany Desmond Hotel.

