



The Legion-Air

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Commander's Message:

Happy Thanksgiving! To All Legion Family Members

Friday, 01 November 2024 Several County staff members, Post Representatives and I were at the WNY Heroes Red, White & Blue awards dinner, this event was well attended with an estimated one thousand guests [the who's – who of the Western New York area]. The organization recognized several Veterans for their outstanding service to our country. Also, they provide service dogs for those veterans that require assistance with various disabilities. Just to train one dog costs \$5,000.

On Monday, 04 November 2024 County Vice Commander Jerry Kowalski and Past County Commander Ted Balbierz attended a flag ceremony at the Hospice Center where 800 flags were placed along the driveway entrance to the facility. Thank You! For your attendance as I was unable to attend this event.

Thursday, 07 November 2024 Past County Commanders Ted Balbierz and County V/C Jerry Kowalski and I attended the 2nd Hospice Center veterans' ceremony, they honor all veterans and those veterans that is at their complex during this time. At the end of the ceremony, there was a special presentation to a one-hundred-year-old World War II veteran, Edger. He was presented with a special veteran pin and a few patriotic items. The highlight of this special event was that he was from Poland, evaded the German SS, came to America, later joined the Army to fight for freedom and to liberate his country. I had the honor to converse with him for some time in our native country's language, he broke into tears as, he was taken back by someone who could speak to him in Polish. What made his day was, when I gave him a Polish emblem of a white eagle pin that I wear.

Commander's Message: Continued

Thursday, 07 November 2024 Cheri Hahn President of the Erie County Auxiliary sent an invite to the Erie County Commander and Staff to attend their meeting as guests. During the meeting President Hahn paused the meeting introduced me to provide a few remarks. I introduced my staff. After a brief message, I presented some highlights of upcoming events, thanked the County Auxiliary for their participation in the Octoberfest festivities. The Legion family had exceeded last year's donation of \$6,000. To date donations raised are at \$6,500 with 5 more months left before a check is presented to the Western New York Telethon for Children's Hospital. We are hoping to raise \$7,000.

FRIDAY, 08 November 2024 Several Legion post members as well as other members of the Armed Forces and I attended the 2nd phase of a veteran's day tribute at the Bilingual Center School 33 on Elk Street. The first phase was the veteran interviews. All those that participated had their biography from the interview and a photo displayed along decorated walls. After a luncheon the principal provided her remarks, as did the teachers who started the event. There were several other guest speakers. Everyone was lined up and we were paraded through the school hallways, where students from every grade level lined the hallways and waved flags with a "Thank You"! for your service. Then everyone lined up outside for a group Photo.

Sunday, 10 November 2024 On this day, the Brounshidle Post along with several Officers and Post members from Canada, the 8th District Commander, several County Staff Officers and I attended an International Ceremony at Forest Lawn Cemetery, to honor those Canadian and British Veterans who are buried here. This was the first time that this ceremony was coordinated

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between not only the Posts that were involved but the two nations. "Thank You" to the American and Canadian Legion members that made this possible. I'm hoping that we able to make this ceremony an annual event.

Monday, 11 November 2024 The Erie County American Legion held its annual tribute in honoring all veterans at Forest Lawn Cemetery. It began with the placement of over 7,000 American Flags on all our fallen brothers and sisters. This was accomplished by Units of the JROTC, Naval ROTC, Scouts, Legion members and the public. This task was accomplished in a half hour. "What an Awesome Sight"! A brief ceremony took place after the flag placement honoring veterans with short speeches by various civic dignitaries, the CEO of Forest Lawn, Gold Star President, 40 & 8 Commander and myself. Later in the day, Joseph Porempski and I attended a brief ceremony at the Cheektowaga Town Park. This is an annual ceremony to honor all veterans. The main speaker was the Town Supervisor, and a flag placement took place at their veteran's monument and anyone who wished to honor a veteran known to them did so. Military Honors were provided by the Donovan Honor Guard.

Tuesday, 12 November 2024 Upon arriving at Forest Lawn Cemetery, I noticed a familiar snub nose bus from the Maritime Charter Academy. The commander had 7 cadets that were retrieving the flags that were placed upon veteran graves. I joined in the retrieval. A cemetery employee had stopped by to check on the progress of retrieving the flags and told me that there was another group of people retrieving the flag on the opposite end of the cemetery. Arriving on that location was Scout Troop 02 with SAL member Creig Speers from Post 1672, Alfred J Jurek, East Amherst NY. In a short conversation, Creig stated that his dad at one time was a member of the George F Lamm post before they relocated to East Amherst.

On behalf of the Erie County American Legion
A Special - "Thank You"! To those participants who took the time out of their busy day to assist in retrieving 7,100 American Flags.

Reminders! With the upcoming holidays, there are veterans and that are alone or have difficulty during this time of the year.
Use the "Buddy System", to check on those members that you haven't heard from in a while.

Membership – VC Pat Murphy

If you have questions please go to MyLegion.com for detailed answers in the help section. Make sure Department has your Post membership chair. The Department website has all membership forms needed and information on various awards like new member recruiting. You can reach out to me at murphy8693@gmail.com or 7162894143.

Americanism – VC Jerry Kowalski

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

Do these words sound familiar? Think back to your high school days. Yes, now I know. It's the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln. Back in the 1860's when the North fought the South. Both sides had their own set of views, and ideas. To the point that they went to war with each other, over them. As the war raged on, battle after battle each side lost thousands of men. After five bloody years, the nation survived. Fast forward 150 years, to today's America. We seem to be in a familiar situation. Only now we see Red states, and Blue states. The great battles are between Republicans and Democrats, on a debate stage. Each side explaining their ideas and principals to the people. The people then vote on these ideas and principals on Election Day. We have made a decision on which path the country will take. There was NO bloodshed, NO soldiers died. The great battles were with words not muskets. When the war was over, the smoke cleared. We have a new nation, under God, shall have a new birth of Freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Special Activities – VC Howard Patton III

Calendar sales have gone better than expected. All returns need to be turned in before the end of 2024. The December County Meeting on 12/19 should be your target date. I do have a couple of calendars if needed. If you have not sold your calendars that you have procured, please turn them back in. The calendars make great Christmas gifts and/or stocking stuffers. This is truly the gift that keeps on giving because the calendar has a daily reward. You have to be in it to win it.

Scouting - Felton L. Davis

The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship nomination window is now open, from November 1, to March 1, 2025. Applications should be sent to me at 115 Burbank Dr., Orchard Park, NY 14127. Date TBD for the Erie County Contest. Our winner will be forwarded to the 8th District. The National Scout of the Year will receive a \$10,000 scholarship, there are three runner-up awards of \$2,500 each. There are awards at each level of the organization. The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year will travel to join the Youth Champion Delegation of the American Legion that is honored each August at the annual National Convention of The American Legion. Additional details are on the web at Scouting « The American Legion Department of New York. See the website for additional Scouting awards.

Law & Order – VC Pat Murphy

Please keep reviewing your local community to recognize the first responders who have done a heroic act, spent a lifetime of service, or an act of compassion. Let's show our appreciation to them.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion – VC Howard Patton III

Our top leadership is committed to continually promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which serve as foundational pillars for our recruitment and retention strategies. Our department leaders actively support cultivating a diverse membership that encompasses but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

Now is the time to consider submitting a member of your Post for 2025 Erie County Legionnaire of the Year. This is an excellent way to let your members know you appreciate what they do for the Post. The 2025 Guidelines will be updated on the website soon. They will be similar to the 2024 Guidelines. Take a minute to visit <http://www.eriecountyal.org/Legionnaire%20of%20the%20year%20page.html>. The deadline for submitting candidates for Erie County Legionnaire of the Year will be in early April 2025.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 12/19 at Francis J. Donovan Post #1626 located at 3210 Genesee St., Cheektowaga, NY 14225. The Post will be serving a Turkey Dinner at 6 PM. \$10 per person.

Thanks go out to the 22 Posts that attended the November County Meeting at Gabriel A. Rodriguez Post #1928. Posts in attendance were; 63, 64, 78, 205, 362, 430, 431, 527, 607, 622, 721, 799, 900, 1320, 1477, 1586, 1587, 1626, 1640, 1672, 1780, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County at the 12/19 meeting.

Future County Meetings;

January 30, Niagara Frontier #1041

February 27, Milton J. Brounshidle #205

We need a Post to host March 27.

Department Leadership Visitation 2/14/25 - Ted Balbierz

The dinner will be held at the George F. Lamm Post #622 to honor Department Commander Keith Koster, Auxiliary President Kimberly Quick, and Detachment Commander Gaither Espey. Cash Bar at 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM. \$35 per person. \$1 Boosters and \$15 Ads. Submissions to the County Office, program by 2/2/25, dinner payment by 2/5/25.

8th District Conference

December 1 – Genesee County

Botts-Fiorito Post #576

53 W. Main St., Leroy, NY 14482

Membership Mtg – Noon

Conference – 1 PM



SUBMISSIONS
For the January
"The Legion-Air"
Due December 20
thelegionair@gmail.com

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY





Iroquois Post 1587 Color Guard at the 11/3/24 Buffalo Bills Game. Iroquois Post #1587 member Carson Waterman was honored at Bills game.



Jesse Clipper Post 430 special award to Dr. Robert Neufeld (right) for all of his support over the years was presented by Themis Smyrnioudis, Commander Sykesville Memorial Post 223 in Maryland.



Frontier High School Girls State attendee Nicole Mecca sponsored by Matthew Glab Unti 1477 was presented the Karyn Porempski award by the family (L to R) Tracy Breyemeier, Holly Smyczynski, Nicole, and Joe Porempski.



Kelly Helper, VA WNY Healthcare Veteran Ambassador addresses the Erie County American Legion Meeting 11/21/24.



Derek Sansone from Milton J. Brounshidle Post 205 coordinated a first-time salute to Canadian and British Veterans at Forest Lawn Cemetery on 11/10/2024. Representatives from north of the border included; Canadian Legion Branch 71 (Ft. Erie) President Murray Morlog, Lt. Kyle Petterson, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, and Canadian Legion Branch 124 2nd Vice President Jackie Dickieson.



Francis J Donovan Post #1626 Honor Guard gives the Rifle Salute and Taps at Forest Lawn Cemetery on 11/11/2024. Erie County Commander Paul Wackowski gave the primary address. Thanks to all who decorated the graves of the 7,100 Veterans in the Field of Valor.



Erie County American Legion Attendees at the 2024 WNY Heroes Gala that raised \$600,000 to assist local Veterans. Front Row (L to R) Sue Quirk, Kathleen Garvey, Chuck Herschlag, Paul Wackowski, & Fred Pask. Second Row (L to R) Jerry Kowalski, Jim Bojanowski, Tim Van Patten, Tom Deinzer, & Ted Balbierz.

Saturday December 7, Gierlach Post 1320, 50 Gates Ave., Sloan, is having a craft show from 10 am to 4 pm. Santa will be there at 1:30 pm.

Sunday December 15, ALL YOU CAN EAT Pancake Breakfast at A. J. Jurek Post #1672, 655 New Rd. Swormville, 14051. From 8 AM to 12:30 PM. Fresh, hot, buttermilk pancakes, "Egglands Best" eggs, link & patty sausage, juice & coffee or tea. Adults \$10, children under 12 \$4, children < 5 free.

Wednesday January 8, PCC meeting at the Gierlach Post at 7 pm, 50 Gates Ave., Sloan NY.

Saturday January 18, PCC Holiday dinner will be at Elma Towne Grill at 1 pm, order off the menu. Cost \$15 per person. RSVP deadline December 15. Email or call me. goakes_jr@hotmail.com or 716-292-9970.

Newell Faulkner Post #880, 2912 Legion Drive, Eden, NY 14057. Normal Hours: Tues., Wed., & Thurs. 3 to 9 PM, Fri. 11 am to 9 PM & Sat. 11:30 am to 9 PM. DINE - IN OR TAKE OUT, Tuesday Taco Night, Wednesday 10 for \$8.50 Wings special, dine in only, Thursday Steak Night, Friday Fish Fry & Specials, Saturday Pizza & Wings and Sandwiches. www.post880.com

Matthew Glab Post #1477, 1965 Abbott Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218, serving Wed and Friday 2-8 PM, Fish Fry's, Seafood, Burgers and weekly specials, Wednesday 75 cent wings, Taco's \$4.00.

Francis J. Donovan Post #1626, Friday Fish Fry dinners will be 4-9 pm, with children's menu, specials and live Bands from 8-11pm. Dine in or take out available, call 716-896-3346.

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 12/20 for the January 2025 edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to All!

Erie County Website – eriecountyal.org

Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM Phone: (716) 852-6500 Fax: (716) 852-4664

I will on vacation in Europe celebrating 50 years of marriage with Michelle from 11/26 to 12/8.

Veteran14202@verizon.net

Department of New York website - <https://nylegion.net>

National American Legion website - <https://www.legion.org>