



The Legion-Air

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 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

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January 2026

Commander's Message:

The year is coming to an end soon. It's time to reflect on the past year. I have been Erie County Commander for only six months. The number of events and programs I have attended are too many to list here. I have seen the American Legion participate in the African American, Hispanic, Hospice, Elementary Schools, High Schools, Boy's and Girl's States, Cemetery events, Buffalo Naval and Military Park, VA Hospital, Telethon for Variety Club, and many more community events. Which shows me how strongly involved the American Legion is in Erie County. This is our history and will be our future.

In order to keep this Legion in the future, we must increase membership. We have to be in every local newspaper, and on TV at every opportunity. We must plant the seeds in Erie County, which is rich with Veterans, that we have not harvested yet.

As we move into 2026, I'm looking forward to serving the Legion and its members. We have our Mid-Winter Conference and the Dept. Commander's visit 2/13/26 coming soon. Let's give him and the other Department representatives a warm Erie County Welcome.

As we go into 2026, let us remember Boy's State candidates, Variety Club Telethon donations, Law & Order candidates, donation for Erie County Scholarships and submit your Post nominations for Legionnaire of the Year. Our Erie County Convention will be coming in June for these awards. Please call me 716-681-7169 to set up a Post meeting, with me.

Let's all have a very Merry Christmas a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Membership: VC Howard Patton III

Membership is the backbone of the American Legion the 2026 Target Dates are: 12/3/25 – 75%, we currently have 24 Posts that are on target with the membership targets. Last month we concentrated on Retention, coinciding with Buddy Checks. We will go back to Checking Post 1 for potential members and Buddy Checks.

Check on Post 1

From September to December Veterans could be persuaded to transfer to your post by sending a friendly and inviting letter to attend your monthly meeting.

Buddy Check

I am wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We all know that Holidays can be difficult for some Veterans, consider making a call or visit which would go a long way to helping someone feel loved and appreciated.

Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

Resumes for Erie County Legionnaire of the Year will be due on April 3, 2026. The 2025 Guidelines and Information are available the Erie County American Legion webpage

<http://www.eriecountyal.org/Legionnaire%20of%20the%20year%20page.html>. The 2026

Guidelines will be similar to the 2025 Guidelines and will be posted after Mid-Winter. Submitting a member of your Post for Erie County Legionnaire of the Year is a great way to recognize our Legionnaires. Submit the resume of your candidate to Kathleen Garvey, 5792 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221.

NO LATER THAN APRIL 3, 2026.

Americanism – VC Pat Murphy

I usually try to observe and honor a Police or Fireman or EMS personnel who was injured or killed doing their job. and there is always more than enough news to fill the pages.

But today I wanted to take a moment to honor and recognize the 2 national guard soldiers who were shot. One is dead, the other listed as critical. The attacker who was arrested, I will not speak of, but I want to speak of the soldiers. Specialist Sarah Beckstrom of the U S Army was 20 years old at the time of her death. Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe is 24 years old and a member of U S Air Force, is listed as critical condition from the last report. Both were deployed from the West Virginia National Guard. I will just ask that you think of them for a minute and pray for them, and hope that Sergeant Wolfe makes a full recovery. We all wore the uniform; we all made some sacrifices.

Note as of 12-15-25 Seargeant Wolfe has been released from hospital and is recovering.

Note please remember 2 soldiers killed in Syria, reportedly by ISIS as of this report.

Law & Order – VC Pat Murphy

We must always remember that being an American is more than saluting the flag and wearing patriotic items. We must remember to protect each other. If you violate one person's rights then in a sense you have violated all our rights.

It goes both ways; citizens should respect other citizens' rights and obey police officers who are doing their jobs to protects the community. People love fireman because they come to fires, accidents, and get cats in a tree type problem. Police officers not so much, they are supposed to be marriage counselors, priests, lawyers, and somehow divine answers to a world with questions.

Emergency medical technician is called to help people who have mental and physical problems they want everything to be made better. A lot of the time it is not possible. So, remember the next time you are not happy with a problem, they are doing their best, and could use some support.

Please nominate a candidate for law-and-order awards. It will make you feel good and help your community.



Special Activities – VC Paul Wackowski

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our American Legion Family.

I will provide the final total of calendars sold when all calendars and money are turned in.

On that note, anyone with calendars and money to return, kindly do so by Wednesday, 31 December 2025. This is important as of the 1st of January 2026 begins a new Lotto year and I want to insure that, should a calendar number be drawn, that I'm able to send out the payment.

There are 25 posts in the County, 16 posts have participated in Calendar sales. To all the posts and its members," A special "Thank You" ! for all of your hard work and efforts to make the calendar sale successful..

Oratorical – Wayne Sorrentino

I am looking for the Erie County Posts to contact their local High Schools for contestants to the Erie County contest that is my responsibility to set up. My job does not entail going around to the county's various high schools to secure contestants.

This year's two contestants came from the Department Chairman, Tony Paternostro via 8th District Oratorical Chair, Kathy Kindle. Thank you to the many volunteers who assisted me with running the contest on 12-7-25 at the MJ Brounshidle Post. Thank you also to my Post for hosting the event at no charge.

The District contest will be held at the MJ Brounshidle Post #205, 3354 Delaware Ave, Kenmore, NY 14217 on Sunday 1-4-26 with a Snow Date of 1-11-26, starting at 1200. Both of the Erie County contestants will be moving up to the District contest. Please come out to witness their orations and to show your support for their efforts.

Commander, Thank you for my appointment.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all and your families.

Keep well and safe travels.

Oktoberfest – Ted Balbierz

With the Variety Club Telethon rapidly approaching March 21st & 22nd, I would like to thank all those Posts, Units, Squadrons and Riders who have participated in this year's collection, and I would like to Thank East Aurora Post 362 for their most recent commitment and Sardinia Post 1131 donation that brings Erie County American Legion Variety Club Tot-board to a total collected of \$9,400. Just \$600 shy of our \$10,000 goal with 93 Days remaining until our check presentation on the telethon.

Year to date, we have received support from 15 of 35 Posts and I would like to encourage all those Erie County American Legion Family organizations who have yet to donate, to please be as generous as you can afford and send your checks payable to: the Erie County American Legion (memo: Oktoberfest Variety Club), 65 Niagara Square Rm 609, Buffalo NY, 14202. For all those who have donated please ensure to include this donation in your 2025 – 2026 CPR under Children & Youth.

For those interested in participating, the Milton J Brounshidle Post 205, will be hosting an 80 Basket Raffle with proceeds to Benefit Variety Club on Sunday December 28 at our Monthly all You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast 9 am to noon at Memorial Hall, 3354 Delaware Ave, Kenmore NY.

Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas to each of you and your families.



Past Commander John Stiegler and Adjutant David Kerling from the Donovan Post #1626, presented 15 sweat shirts for VA Hospital patients Buffalo VA rep Nicholas LaMarca.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 1/29 at Matthew Glab Post #1477 located at 1965 Abbott Rd., Lackawanna, NY 14218. There will be no food service for this meeting.

Thanks go out to the 19 Posts that were in attendance for the December County Meeting at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626. Posts in attendance were; 63, 64, 78, 205, 362, 430, 431, 607, 622, 799, 838, 1131, 1346, 1586, 1587, 1626, 1672, 1780, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County on 1/29.

Future County Meetings;

February 26, Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205

March 26, David McKeever Post #64

April 30, East Aurora Post #362

Sunday February1, 8th District Conference, Erie County

Francis J. Donovan Post 1626, 3210 Genesee St., Cheektowaga, New York 14225

Membership Mtg – Noon

Conference – 1 PM

Department Leadership Dinner

The Erie County American Legion Family will host Department American Legion Commander John Miga, Department Auxiliary President Maureen Morgan, and SAL Detachment Commander Joseph Guidice Jr., on Friday, February 13, 2026. The Dinner will be held at the George F. Lamm Post #622. Cocktails will be at 5:30 PM and the Dinner at 6:30 PM. Dinner cost \$35. Please make your reservations through the Office or pay at the County meetings, along with any ads or boosters.



**SUBMISSIONS
For the February
"The Legion-Air"
Due January 30
thelegionair@gmail.com**



Two members of Jesse Clipper Post No. 430 were with the BROMEOS "2025 Outstanding Citizens of The Year Awards" on Veterans Day, February 11, 2025.

Attending the ceremony were the following Post members, listed from left to right: Major Felton Davis, US Army (Retired), Judge Advocate, 1st Vice Commander; Elder Garey Burt Sr., Homeland Security Officer; Dr. Kanasha Blue, Past Commander; Pastor Howard Patton III, Erie County Vice Commander; award recipient Rev. Eugene Pierce, Past Commander; Post Commander, Cheryl Thomas; Chaplain Michael Davis; and award recipient, Past Commander Henry Curtis III, CSM, US Army (Retired).



Joseph Poremski presents the Karyn Poremski Empire Girls State Achievement Award to Clara Bartholomew for her outstanding accomplishments at 2025 Girls State.

Photo by Sue Quirk

Sunday December 28, Pancake Breakfast at Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205, 3354 Delaware Ave, Kenmore, 9 AM to Noon. \$10. Basket Raffle to benefit the Variety Club Telethon.

Wednesday January 14, PCC meeting at the Gierlach Post #1320 at 7 PM.

Sunday January 18, 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.

Saturday January 24, PC Club Holiday dinner will be held at the Longhorn Steakhouse at 1 PM on Walden Ave. Cost \$20 a person. It includes food and drink during the meal. RSVP deadline January 14. Contact Gary Oakes Jr at goakes_jr@hotmail.com or 716-292-9970.

Orchard Park Post #567, 5784 Ellis Rd., Orchard Park, Dinners at the Post are from 4 – 6:30 PM (or until sold out). Monday: Beef on Weck, Tuesday: Tacos: Tacos, choice of beef or chicken, Hard shell or Soft. Thursday: Pasta Night! Comes with Salad, 2 meatballs and garlic bread. Friday: From the Grill.

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.

Francis J. Donovan Post #1626, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New Home of the Polish Villa 2 restaurant. Serving all your favorite dishes and a huge fish fry every Friday from 4-8 PM. We also have live local music entertainment from 7 PM till 10 PM every Friday. Join us for your favorite beverages! Visit our website at francisdonovanpost1626.com

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family. Remember our deployed Troops who are away from their families and keeping us safe. We express our heartfelt gratitude to our veterans and active-duty military for their unwavering service and sacrifice.

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 1/30 for the February edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor

**Erie County Website – eriecountyal.org
Phone: (716) 852 – 6500 Veteran14202@verizon.net
Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM**

DNY website - <https://nylegion.net>

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