



# Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009 Volume No. 2 Issue No.15 October / November/ December 2012

## Yorktown Street Fair...

On Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, Yorktown held it's annual Street Fair and Festival on Commerce Street and Veterans Road. Each year our Yorktown Post uses this event to conduct an 'Open House', grill up some hamburgers and hot dogs for those attending the Fair, and try to educate them as to what our American Legion Post does in Yorktown. Last year we donated our Post hall to hold the Chamber of Commerce's free Senior Luncheon during the Fair. We donated it again this year as well. We've seen that many senior citizens who attend this luncheon are veterans, or spouses of veterans, and they really appreciate the free meal and the social aspect of meeting with people they don't get to see too often anymore. Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce on the Luncheon is another highlight of the Fair. We set-up, clean-up, and provide the hall right on the Street Fair route and the Chamber provides the food and serves everyone. This is the kind of team work that benefits the town and our organizations.

This year the weather was a little cold and rain threatened throughout the day reducing the attending crowds, but not the enthusiasm our Post members. A few of our members did double-duty splitting their day helping the Post and then moving on to help other organizations like the Yorktown Lions and the Knights of Columbus that they are also involved with. A big thanks goes out to all who helped that day especially John Marone, John Gunn, Frank Troia, Al Laughlin, Vincent Andreozzi, Marco Dibernadino, Fred and Barbara Wooding, Terry Deveau, Mike Laughlin, John McQuillan, Tom Brady, Dave Moskowitz, Gerry Knapp, and Ken & Sue Blish.

## Montrose VA Food Pantry Collection...

Our Yorktown Post #1009 continued our support of the Montrose VA Food Pantry with our annual food collection on Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM to 1 PM. Each year we set up tables at the A&P supermarket in Shrub Oak and the A&P supermarket in Yorktown and collect non-

perishable food items to help the veterans-in-need who utilize the food pantry to survive.

The day was cold when we started the collection but the warmth and generosity of the people of Yorktown helped counter the weather. 12 Legionnaires donated a few hours of their time to make this our most successful collection to date. In just four short hours we collected 15 full shopping carts of food and \$520 in cash donations for the pantry.

When the collection ended for the afternoon, Duke Searles, the manager of the VA Food Pantry at Montrose, arrived to pick up the donations in a new van donated in the memory of a US Marine who was killed in Afghanistan. The van has graphics clearly identifying that it is with the Food Pantry and has the late Marine's name emblazoned on it. Hopefully people who see the van will have it dawn upon them that the VA needs to have a food pantry to help veterans survive today... and that those who donated the most(the van) had already given the most... their friend and veteran named on the van. Thank you to Jim Guerra, Al Laughlin, Bob Dagnino, Bill Lewis, Lee Defrancesco, Don Roberts, Terry Deveau, John Gunn, Ken & Sue Blish, Rich Calbo, Gerry Knapp, and Patrick McDonough for their hard work in making our collection such a success this year.

## Our Post Holiday Party

We had a unique Post Holiday Party this year on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Almost 50 people attended the annual event where we get together before the madness of the holiday season sweeps us away. This party allows our newer members get to meet more of their fellow Legionnaires and our older members can sit and catch up with their old friends. We all enjoyed the delicious meal prepared by our legendary team of cooks - Pat & Al Laughlin and Sue & Ken Blish. They shopped, prepared, and cooked for 50 people and all their hard work made this another wonderful success. Our dessert table was a delectable smorgasbord of dishes that everyone contributed to and that everyone choose from.

We were treated to a wonderful old-style USO Show following our meal. A local Girl Scout, Alyssa Martin, had put together a Pointer Sisters

style singing group of fellow Girl Scouts as part of her work towards her Gold Award. To open her show Alyssa's Dad, Paul Martin, took the stage to warm up the crowd and performed a stand-up comedy routine just like Bob Hope used to do. The laughs came easy and often to his shtick. The singing group, String of Pearls stepped up wearing 1940's dresses and military caps and did their show the way a World War II USO Show would have appeared. The girls sang a beautiful medley of songs and closed with Bing Crosby's famous 'White Christmas'. What a wonderful treat the whole show was. We thank the singers, Alyssa and Jenny Weisberger, and Paul Martin for his comedy routine. Their show really made the day quite special for everyone. It was a great finish to a relaxing afternoon with our Yorktown Post Family and that's what the holidays are really all about.

A little side note: While we were cleaning up after the party we realized that we had veterans from every US conflict era, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon/Grenada, and the Gulf War/ War on Terrorism, in attendance for the party. What a nicely mixed group of people our Post has evolved into.

---

## Care Package...

This year Post Financial Officer John McQuillan has included a card with a star from an unserviceable US flag as a thank you from the Post for paying your 2013 Post dues. Several members contacted us with positive comments about this unique memento. One Post Legionnaire, Frank Berlanga, took a moment to send us a note saying that he received his star on 9/11 and was touched by the significance of the date and the star. Frank's return address looked a little different than most... it was an Army/Air Force Post Office (APO) signifying the sender was currently serving in the US military overseas. HOLD ON NOW!!! One of our very own is away from his home and family and we never knew about it! At our October Post meeting we let everyone know about this situation and members chimed in with suggestions. A collection for a 'Care Package' was made and we'd have someone stop in and touch base with Frank's wife to see if she needed anything that we could help with. Frank had been the Scoutmaster of our Post-sponsored Boy Scout Troop #165 and we touched base with them in case they wished to send him something as well. This is why we all joined the American Legion - to help our fellow veterans in some way, with a pizza party at the Montrose VA Hospital, or with a touch

of home in a package to someone far from their own home. We all wish Frank, his comrades, and all members of our military a safe tour and 'PLEASE, COME HOME SOON!'".

---

## Welcome Aboard!

Our Post wishes to extend a warm welcome aboard to our newest members; John Vaughnan, Roger Thompson and Evan Schwerner. We hope that you'll feel a welcome part of our Post family and we hope to see you at some of our events and meetings. Welcome Aboard!

---

## Vets in the Classroom

Legionnaires from our Post have spoken at Yorktown High School and the Mildred Strang Middle School in past years about the sacrifices the members of our military make every day while they serve on active duty. On Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 3 of our Post Legionnaires were invited to come to Thomas Jefferson Elementary School as part of their preparation for Veteran's Day. Post member John Gunn learned of their program and coordinated with the school and the Post for a memorable event. Four veterans walked around the cafeteria talking with the children as they made cards for local veterans for Veteran's Day. It was wonderful seeing the kids and hearing about their family members who are veterans and answering their questions. The school and the PTA were very happy with our visit and it only took two hours of our members' time. A big thank you to John Gunn for putting the visit together and to Patrick McDonough, and Evan Schwerner - the newest member of the Post who had joined the Post only the week before! Way to go Evan!

There are 15 schools in Yorktown and we would love to set up a program of visiting them in conjunction with Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, or Flag Day. This would require a call-up list of 10 to 15 volunteers so that we don't burden the same people every time for a visit. Anyone interested in putting this program in motion please let Pat McDonough know. We would meet as a group to discuss talking points and build up our confidence prior to offering this service to the schools. Right now we have invitations to visit Yorktown High School before Memorial Day and a nursery school whenever we are available. This is something the schools would love for us to do also.

---

## Veteran's Day Parade

The annual Shrub Oak Veteran's Day Parade kicked off at 2 PM on November 11<sup>th</sup> from Lakeland High School and proceeded to the John Hart Library for the ceremonies there. Post #1009 had 22 Legionnaires participate in the parade in whatever manner they were able and comfortable with. Some rode in the World War II jeeps and restored cars, others handled the wreath laying ceremony, some were in our Color Guard, and the rest filled out our Post platoon that marched in the parade. Thank you to Ken Blish, Fred Wooding, Evan Schwerner, Win Lollar, Terry Deveau, Bob Dagnino, Al Laughlin, Mike Laughlin, Lee Defrancesco, Mark Levandowski, Bob Gorsuch, John McQuillan, Dave Moskowitz, John Gunn, Tom Brady, Frank Troia, Roger Thompson, Gerry Knapp, Rod Leone, Henry Whitaker, and Cas Faughnan for taking the time to be a part of the only veterans unit in the parade. A special thank you goes to the holders of our Post banner this year, Hunter Dagnino, Bob Dagnino's grandson, and Jessica Marussich, Lee Defrancesco's granddaughter. They did a great job helping their grandpa's march in the parade. Join us next year for the parade if you missed it this year.

---

## Breakfast with Santa

On Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, we once again teamed up with the Yorktown Lions Club and the Yorktown Leo's Club to hold a 'Breakfast with Santa' at our Post Hall. We had the masterful chefs from the Lions Club cook up a delicious spread of 2 types of pancakes, bacon, and sausage for everyone to enjoy. And enjoy it they did... we served over 280 people during the three 90 minute seatings. Our guests sat in our hall and enjoyed breakfast. Every 10 minutes or so you would hear a cheer go up and a popular costumed character would appear in the hall. Winnie the Pooh, Frosty the Snowman, Dora, Elmo, and Spongebob Squarepants stopped and shook hands with the kids, then posed for pictures. That alone would have made this a memorable morning but Santa, himself, and Mrs. Claus arrived and spent time posing with everyone for pictures. All our guests raved about the whole breakfast experience. Some even wrote on the town's Facebook page how they loved it.

This was great fundraising event once again this year because of the amazing group of organizations and people who worked so hard to pull it off. The incredible chefs, Lou Demico, Bill

Marks, Steve Rice, and Andy Bambach of the Lions Club cooked for hours (days in Bill's case). Maria Marks and Mike Bianco created beautiful photo souvenirs for our guests; Santa and his wife (Barry Levin and his wife); and all the costumed characters that were played by members of the Yorktown Leo's Club. Our Post members set-up, served, cleaned-up, greeted everyone... anything that helped things run smoothly. With spectacular people like this we were able to make another memorable event for the people of Yorktown. This event was a success because of the help from: Al & Pat Laughlin, Ken & Sue Blish, Bob Dagnino, Steve Rice, Fred Wooding, Cas Faughnan, Gerry Knapp, Pat McDonough, Don Roberts, Tom Brady, Frank Troia, John McQuillan, Larry Qualter, and Bob Gorsuch. Thank you all!!

---

## Patient Parties At the Montrose VA

The Westchester County American Legion organizes parties at the VA hospital in Montrose for the morale and benefit of the veterans that are patients there. They try to run one party a month and rely on volunteers from the Posts to serve and set-up. Our Post has become more active in this service to our fellow vets by meeting at the Post and carpooling over for the parties.

The Christmas Party this year will be held on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> from 6 PM to 8 PM at the Social Hall. If anyone wants to go over and help out, we will leave from the Post by 5:15 PM to go over. Wear something identifying you as a vet or Post member and wear layered clothing as the heat is kept up high over there. Please let Pat McDonough - (914)953-6807, know if you plan on going - so we don't leave without you.

---

## Our Four Chaplains Ceremony

In February of 1943, four Chaplains in the US Army on a troopship in the North Atlantic experienced the ultimate test of man and faith when their ship was torpedoed and sunk. They handed out life vests and kept the men calm. When the life vests ran out, they gave up their own to save four more men. As their ship slipped into the icy cold sea they were seen praying, locked arm-in-arm with their shipmates.

Our Yorktown Post believes their bravery and faith should be commemorated and each year we hold a 1 hour ceremony to remember them.

Last year we had four members of the local clergy represent these Chaplains, we had over 30 students from Mildred Strang Middle School present our nation's colors in Revolutionary War uniforms, and everyone came away a little prouder of the religious diversity our country has come to represent.

Come join us on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 2 PM, to learn more about these men and help us make sure that no one forgets the faith and sacrifice that was present that night.

## Tidbits of Information

It's amazing what you can learn at one of our Post meetings. Often people assume that everyone around them knows all about programs or discounts that they are aware of. Here are a couple of tidbits that some veterans may not know about.

\*\*\*\*\*

The New York State School Tax Relief Program (STAR) provides homeowners with two types of partial exemptions from school property taxes. If you earn less than \$500,000 and own and live in your home, you're probably eligible for the STAR exemption.

### Two types of STAR exemptions: Basic STAR

- available for owner-occupied, primary residences where the resident owners' and their spouses income is less than \$500,000
- exempts the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home from school taxes

### Enhanced STAR

- provides an increased benefit for the primary residences of senior citizens (age 65 and older) with qualifying incomes (\$79,050 or less)
- exempts the first \$63,300 of the full value of a home from school taxes as of 2013-14 school tax bills (up from \$62,200 in 2012-13)

STAR exemptions apply only to school district taxes.

\*\*\*\*\*

There are three different property tax exemptions available to veterans who have served in the U. S. Armed Forces, including veterans who have served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

**Obtaining a veterans' exemption is not automatic** - if you're an eligible veteran, you must submit the initial exemption application form to your assessor. The deadline in most communities is March 1 - please confirm the date with your assessor.

You can only receive one of the three exemptions listed below.

- **Alternative Veterans' Exemption**

- Available only on residential property of a veteran who has served during a **designated time of war**, or who has received an expeditionary medal
- Currently available in over 95 percent of the county, city, town, and village taxing jurisdictions across the state. The remainder of these jurisdictions may choose to offer this exemption in the future
- Veteran applicants should check with the assessor or clerk in the municipalities in which they respectively reside to see whether the alternative veterans'<sup>TM</sup> exemption is offered
- Authorized by Real Property Tax Law, Section 458-a

- **Cold War Veterans' Exemption**

- Available only on residential property of a veteran who served during the Cold War period
- Counties, cities, towns, and villages have the option to offer this exemption to qualified veterans
- Check with your assessor or clerk to see whether the Cold war Veterans' exemption is offered
- Authorized by Real Property Tax Law, Section 458-b

## Post #1009 Upcoming Events

- |                   |   |                |
|-------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>Wed Jan 9</b>  | Exec. Committee Mtg                             | 7:00 PM        |
|                   | (Note: Day & Date Change!)                      |                |
| <b>Thu Jan 10</b> | Post General Meeting                            | 7:30 PM        |
| <b>Sun Feb 3</b>  | <b>4 Chaplains Service</b>                      | <b>2:00 PM</b> |
| <b>Tue Feb 5</b>  | Exec. Committee Mtg                             | 7:00 PM        |
| <b>Thu Feb 14</b> | Post General Meeting                            | 7:30 PM        |
| <b>Sun Mar 10</b> | <b>Breakfast w/ the Easter Bunny</b>            |                |
|                   | <b>Join us for a fun breakfast at the Post.</b> |                |
| <b>Tue Mar 5</b>  | Exec. Committee Mtg                             | 7:00 PM        |
| <b>Thu Mar 14</b> | Post General Meeting                            | 7:30 PM        |

## Yorktown Post #1009

235 Veterans Road, Yorktown Hts, NY 10598  
(914) 962-2843      [www.nylegion1009.org](http://www.nylegion1009.org)