



The Legion-Air

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August 2022

Commander's Message:

It is hard to believe that I will be already entering my 3rd month as Commander of Erie County.

I attended the Department of New York Convention in Binghamton along with several members from Erie County (July 13-16). Past County Commander Gary Wald picked up a number of Post awards presented at the convention and will pass them out at the August County Meeting in Hamburg. Posts awards are for 78, 205, 721, 880, 1449, 1587, & 1928.

I also attended the inaugural Dr. John Long, American Legion Baseball game in Depew.

The Erie County American Legion will be sponsoring a booth at the Erie County Fair. Vice Commander Ted Balbierz is heading up this project. The County American Legion will be hosting the Annual Veterans Day at the Fair Mass on Sunday August 14, at Noon, in the Family Entertainment Center. Erie County Chaplain Father Michael Johnson will be the celebrant. I hope we will have a large turnout. Adjutant Bojanowski will be the MC of the Memorial Service in the racetrack infield immediately after at 1:30 PM.

A joint 7th and 8th District Membership Workshop will be held in LeRoy NY on Saturday August 6. It will be held at the Botts -Fiorito Post 576, located 53 W. Main St., Leroy, NY 14482. Registration begins at 9:00 am. The workshop starts at 10 am.

Membership: Continued

We will have a Table at the 2022 Stand Down on Tuesday August 30, 2022 at Sahlen Baseball Field in downtown Buffalo. Please let me know if you may be interested in participating. Please enjoy what remains of our Summer as we will be back to work this Fall! We look forward to meeting each of you in the coming months! God Bless America!

Membership: VC Ted Balbierz

July 14 to 16, I attended the 104th Department of NY Convention in Binghamton, NY.

Congratulations to Timothy Van Patten II who was sworn in by ANEC/PDC/His Father, Timothy Van Patten as Detachment of NY SAL Commander and also to Jim Bojanowski on his election as Department Vice Commander for 7/8th District. Consider attending future conventions.

2023 Membership Cards are in and being distributed. Years of Service on this year's cards appears to be correct. All Posts, except for 1131 Sardinia, have now received their cards. There is no green bar report included this year. You can print them on MyLegion or contact Jim at the County Office and he can print one for you.

As we enter the 2023 Membership year, we are still awaiting release of the first membership report & goals. I am planning to reach out to each of the Post Membership Chairs and assemble a team to formulate this year's membership campaign. In the meantime, I would like to encourage all Post Membership Chairs/Commanders to participate in a 7/8th District Joint Membership Workshop Saturday Aug. 6, 2022 at the Botts Fiorito Post 576, 53 W. Main St, Leroy, N.Y. 14482. Registration starts at 9 am, Workshop begins at 10 am. I am planning to attend if anyone wants to ride with me.

If each of our existing members brings in One New Member we can double in size in a very short term. Compounding Membership is the Key to ensuring the stability of each Post in coming years and adds to your experience being able to share common purpose with a close friend or relative. Each of you are our best recruiters.

We will have a booth at this year's Erie County Fair in the Historical Building. Stop by and see us. I am looking for volunteers to help out.

Americanism - VC Paul Wackowski

Senate action on PACT Act is absolutely unacceptable! The American Legion and other veteran's advocates gathered in Washington DC recently to criticize a Senate vote that has delayed passage of the PACT Act. The promise to address Comprehensive Toxics Act - which has passed in both the House and Senate - received technical corrections and went to a procedural vote in the Senate for a vote and failed to meet the 60 votes necessary to advance the legislation by 55 - 42 votes.

The American Legion called the delay absolutely unacceptable. A bill that passed the House of Representatives three times and passed the Senate with a wide - ranging bipartisan support. 84 senators voting in favor of it, will now be delayed, and once again veterans will suffer. The PACT Act passed the House and Senate in a bipartisan manner, yet this delay continues because of political games. The President should already be signing this bill.

This bill's genesis came from the fact that 70 percent of veterans with illnesses related to burn pits were being denied, and as a result couldn't access health care. Sick veterans couldn't meet the burden of proof. Every day that this delay goes on, veterans are unable to receive care. This is wrong. We will not stand and allow veterans to be denied their duly owed health care. For cancer patients, a month delay makes all the difference. The American Legion demands that Congress end this delay and allow our veterans to receive the health care they desperately need and have earned.

The PACT Act provides a comprehensive framework to improve the presumptive process for burn pit veterans by streamlining access to health care benefits for those who served in areas of known toxic exposure - regardless of disability status - and provides health care for as many 3.5 million veterans exposed to airborne hazards, burn pits, Agent Orange, contaminated water, atomic radiation and other toxic substances while serving the US Armed Forces.

How does this happen? How do you change your mind right when you're about to make a law that's going to save lives? This makes no sense. There has to be accountability. Once again Politicians have placed politics before the life and wellbeing of servicemembers who have given everything to this country. For what?



(L to R) ANEC Timothy Van Patten giving the oath of office charge to retiring SAL Cmdr. David Lee and Newly elected SAL Detachment Cmdr. Timothy Van Patten II.



Newly elected Department Commander David Riley address the convention while Department Adjutant James Casey, Right, and outgoing Department Commander Frank LaMarsh, Left, look on.

Special Activities – VC Bernie Romanowski

I look forward to the upcoming year as I serve as Special Activities Chairman. Calendars have arrived for the 2023 Calendar year. I started passing them out at the July County Meeting and will continue at future County Meetings. If you can help some, please contact me at 796-5341. The Early Bird Drawing is scheduled for the October 27 County meeting at Concord Post.

Erie County Fair – Veterans Day

I hope to see many of you on Sunday August 14 as we pay respects to all Veterans both Living and Deceased through a Religious Service, a Memorial Service, and a nightly Flag Retreat Ceremony. Admission is free to The American Legion Family, free parking, and a \$10 Voucher for food or beverage that day. You can get your free tickets in advance online, or show your membership card at the entrance gates.

Erie County American Legion Chaplain Michael Johnson will celebrate a Catholic Mass at Noon in the Family Entertainment Complex. (The Dome near Gate 5)

Erie County Adjutant James Bojanowski will be Master of Ceremony for the annual Veterans Memorial Service to be held in the racetrack infield at 1:30 PM. We invite your Color Guards to participate with your Post Colors. The Flag and Rose Ceremony will be held, along with a Guest Speaker, and a Rifle Fire Salute and Taps by the Newell Faulkner Post #880.

Tables will be available in Liberty Tree Park for those who wish to bring in a picnic lunch.

Yes, we are disappointed by the ending of the annual parades and dugout tents at the Fair. But with these troubled times, the Fair Board decided to discontinue these functions due to Safety and Liability concerns. It should be noted that all of the other WNY Fair parades were discontinued years ago, along with the recent end to Department and National Convention Parades.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held at Hamburg Post #527 on Thursday August 25 located at 2 Memorial Drive, Hamburg 14075.

No food service for this meeting.

Hopefully we can see representatives from all 35 Posts in Erie County. Monthly Executive County Meetings have stopped to streamline the process.

22 Posts attended the July County Meeting; 78, 205, 431, 527, 607, 622, 665, 721, 799, 838, 900, 1041, 1320, 1346, 1449, 1477, 1528, 1586, 1626, 1640, 1659, & 1672.

Future County Meetings:

September 29, Alfred J. Jurek Post #1626

October 27, Concord Post #431

November 17, Matthew Glab Post #1477

2022 National Convention will be held in Milwaukee Wisconsin from August 27 to September 1. Housing applications are now online on the Department website. The leading candidate for the next National American Legion Commander is V. James Troiola, a New York Past Department Commander.

Cheektowaga Veterans Committee

is still selling pavers for the Veteran's Memorial. Pavers are \$100 are available at Donovan Post or call Jerry Kowalski at 716-681-7169 for more info.

**Erie County American Legion, 609 City Hall,
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Veteran14202@verizon.net
716 - 852 - 6500**



SUBMISSIONS
For the September
"The Legion-Air"
Due August 26
thelegionair@gmail.com



**JROTC Department Cadet of the Year
Thein Ehku received his award from
Department Commander Frank
LaMarsh, with Jeff Cipolla on the right,
and John Kasmer on the left.**

Sunday August 14, Erie County Fair Veterans Day, admission is free for all American Legion Family members. Gates open at 11 AM. Mass at Noon, Memorial Service at 1:30 PM.

Sunday August 14, 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 \$9, children under 12 \$4, children under 5 free.

Saturday August 20, Frank L Gierlach Post #1320, 50 Gates St., Sloan, will be hosting a hot dog sale and theme basket raffle from 9 AM until 2 PM. This will be in conjunction with the village yard sale.

Sunday August 28, East Aurora Post #362 is sponsoring a Car Show on Main Street East Aurora.

Saturday September 17, Orchard Park Post #567, 5784 Ellis Rd., Orchard Park, Grand Opening from 1:00 - 4:00 PM, inviting all Legion Family members to stop in and see our new renovated Post.

Tuesday September 27, Matthew Glab Post #1477, 1965 Abbott Rd., Lackawanna, Polka Night show WBBZ TV taping 4 shows with one honoring Veterans. Doors open at 6 PM. Taping starts at 7 PM. \$10. Polish food available for purchase and a Cash Bar. One show to be televised Veterans Day weekend.

South Buffalo Post #721, 136 Cazenovia St., Buffalo, 14210, Summer cook outs are back in full swing every Monday from now through August 29. Menu includes: Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Italian Sausage with peppers & onions, Boneless Chicken Breast, Beans and other sides.

Newell Faulkner Post #880, 2912 Legion Drive, Eden, NY 14057. This week, the kitchen will only be open 8/2 & 8/3 due to the Eden Corn Festival the balance of the week. Normal Hours: Tues., Wed., & Thurs. 3 to 9 PM, Fri. 11 am to 9 PM & Sat. Noon to 9 PM. DINE - IN OR TAKE OUT, Tuesday Taco Night, Wednesday 10 for \$12 Wings special, Thursday Steak Night, Friday Fish Fry & Specials, Saturday Pizza & Wings and Sandwiches, Regular menu also available, Wed. - Sat. www.post880.com

Matthew Glab Post #1477, serving Wed., Thurs., Fri. 2 – 8 PM Fish Frys, Seafood, Burgers & weekly specials. Wednesday 75 cent Wings and \$3 Tacos.

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 8/26 for the September 2022 edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor