



## *The Legion-Air*

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AMERICAN  
LEGION

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March 2025

### **Commander's Message: Sunday 02, February 2025**

Members of the county staff and I attended the 8<sup>th</sup> District conference in Niagara Fall at the Stephen Skora Post #1322. There were committee reports given on membership, Finance, Boys State, Legislation, Child & Youth, Americanism and more. Highlights were on Membership – each county was asked to reach out to all the posts within their counties and emphasis the need of membership. There were suggestions of diverse ways to do this task. No members – no Legion.

Another topic discussed was the National Program of “Be the One”! addressing veteran suicide as well as using the “Buddy System” in contacting those members that we have not heard from in a while to check on their welfare. Legislation updates were provided on upcoming bills before congress about veteran benefits, health care, financial help, not only for the veteran but the family as well.

### **Friday 14, February 2025**

Department of New York American Legion Leadership Visitation and Dinner. Dept. Cmdr. Keith J Koster, Aux. Pres. Kimberley A Quick and Detachment Cmdr. Gaither Espey.

During their visit, they, along with members of the County Staff had a tour of the current Buffalo Bills stadium. There were many highlights provided to all of us. Thank you to the Buffalo Bills!

The evening dinner was well attended considering that it was Valentines Day. A huge “Thank You” to all those Legion, Auxiliary and SAL staff and members who were able to take the time out of your busy day to join us.

**A special “Thank You”!** to Ted Balbierz for arranging the Bills Facility tour, Bernie Romanowski, making his post available for the luncheon after our tour, and Commander Philip

### **Membership – VC Pat Murphy**

Erie County is well on the way to meeting the State goal for the month of March 2025. As of 2/26, we are a little over 82 percent of our membership goal. The State goal for March is 90 percent. Congratulations to all the Posts that have gained members. Any improvement is a step forward.

### **Special Activities – VC Howard Patton III**

Thank you so much for your ongoing support! We still have a few calendars left if anyone is interested in purchasing them.

### **Commander's Message Continued:**

English for hosting the Testimonial Dinner at his Post.

### **NOTES!**

This is an excellent time to use the “Buddy System” and check on those members that you have not heard from in a while as well as those who may be experiencing health issues during this unusual wintry weather that we have been experiencing. Remind those that have not renewed their membership for 2025, to do so. Lastly, while you are conducting “Buddy Checks,” let us not forget the Legion’s “BE THE ONE” program on veteran suicide. I am encouraging every Legion member to log onto the My Legion web site, search for the BE THE ONE program [it is a page by it is self-] and take the course that is provided by the American Legion in conjunction with the Columbia University on veteran suicide. I have started this course. At the completion of the course, you are sent a certificate of completion. Just a side note the Department Commander has taken this course himself.

In closing, “God Bless” our military, provide guidance for our politicians and Bless the American Legion Family and their Families. Veterans Serving Veterans!

## Boys State - Bernie Romanowski

Per Ann Brown, Dept of NY Boys State Coordinator, only one boy from Erie County (Hamburg) has registered online for the 2025 Boys State program. Please remember that the Deadline for online submission of the application is Friday April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025. After that date, all Posts must get each boys application plus Commitment form, Certification form, and Physical exam form, plus a \$550 check payable to the Erie County American Legion TO ME by April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025. My address is 19 Goodrich Rd Lackawanna, NY 14218. I can be reached at 716 822 8455 and at sz8p853@verizon.net

Things to remember, Make sure you interview each candidate, their parents understand they could be held liable if the boy does not show, and we would like the parents or guardian to pick up their boy up after the Graduation Ceremony on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Otherwise we have to pay for another bus and that could force us to raise the fee well over \$600. Current pricing for the one-way bus to take the boys is about \$1,200.

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Elder Howard Patton III

I have reached out to the National American Legion Internal Affairs Division to determine the American Legions current stance on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. I plan to have a full report on the current stance of this program at the next meeting.



**Erie County Commander Paul Wackowski receives an autographed license plate from Department Commander Keith Koster.**

Photo by Sue Quirk.



## Americanism – VC Jerry Kowalski

The American Legion is an organization that has been a stalwart of patriotic values, morals, culture and citizenship. Americanism embodies its devotion to law and order, the raising of wholesome youth, law abiding citizenship and the respectful observance of patriotic holidays. The American Legion has several programs to support this valued concept. We have the Red, White and Blue Award. That recognizes organizations, businesses or individuals that promote Americanism through actions. We have Boy's and Girl's State, a week of instructions for our youth to learn the workings of federal, state and local governments. This program instills the values of citizenship and to be involved in our government.

Our country is based on fundamental rules of law and order. The laws are written, then passed by Congress. Then they become the law of the land. The law is then enforced by our several policing agencies. We have awards to be given to Policemen. Along with the Law-and-Order Awards we have awards for First Responders, Firefighters, Youth Scholarships and Scouting. All of which come under the heading of Americanism.

## Law & Order – VC Pat Murphy

We have had some Posts submit applicants for the Law-and-Order Award. Thank you to those Posts. Applications deadlines are approaching fast. They must be submitted by the April County meeting. Please see if you can find a candidate. It is good public relations with the community and it lets the candidates know there are groups that care about them.

## Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

RESUMES FOR ERIE COUNTY LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR ARE DUE APRIL 4, 2025. 2025 Guidelines and Information are available the Erie County American Legion Webpage: [Legionnaire of the Year page \(eriecountyal.org\)](http://Legionnaire of the Year page (eriecountyal.org)). Submit the resume of your candidate to Kathleen Garvey, 5792 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221. NO LATER THAN APRIL 4, 2025.

## Department Visitation: Ted Balbierz

On Friday February 14<sup>th</sup>, your Erie County American Legion played host to American Legion Department of New York Leadership Visitation, led by Commander Keith Koster, SAL Detachment Commander Gaither Espy and Department of New York Auxiliary President Kimberly Quick.

While this year's leadership team originates from Saratoga County, it has been no secret that they are all Buffalo Bills Fans. So, the Department Leadership Team, along with Erie County Leadership, met at 10 am at Highmark Stadium for a tour of the Buffalo Bills Stadium.

The tour began in the Shadow of the New Stadium at the Club Level and moved into the Van Miller Press Box where the National Broadcasters announce the games; and toured both the Visitors & Home Team Locker Rooms, the Post Game Reaction Media Room and ended the tour on the 50 Yard Line for a Group Picture. Our Tour Guide Tim was extremely knowledgeable and entertaining during the 2.5 Hour tour and the Bills Organization provided Bills SWAG for each of our attendees to include this Seasons Salute to Service; Ball Caps, Flag, Pin & Challenge Coins.

After the tour our group traveled 2.5 miles North on Abbott Rd for Pizza & Wings Lunch and Tour of the Matthew Glab Post 1477 followed by a catered testimonial dinner at the George F Lamm Post 622.

I thank all those involved with the successful execution of this visitation to include but not be limited to: Walt Koch at Congressman Kennedy's Office and Buffalo Bills SVP Terry Gilbride for making this tour a reality; Jim Bojanowski & Joe Porempski for ensuring nothing was missed; Diana Steward for Editing and producing the Dinner Program; Bernie Romanowski/Members of the Glab Post for Hosting Lunch; and Commander of the Lamm Post, Phil English and his entire Legion Family Staff for hosting a wonderful dinner capping off a day that our Department Leadership will not soon forget.



## Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 3/27 at the Niagara Frontier Post #1041 located at 533 Amherst St., Buffalo, NY 14207. The Post will serve a roast beef sandwich, sides and a dessert for \$10 at 6 PM.

Thanks go out to the 19 Posts that were in attendance for the February County Meeting at the Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205. Posts in attendance were; 63, 64, 205, 362, 430, 607, 622, 799, 838, 1041, 1131, 1477, 1586, 1587, 1626, 1640, 1672, 1780, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County at the 3/27 meeting.

## Future County Meetings;

April 24, East Aurora #362

May 22, Concord Post #431

## Erie County Convention Saturday 6/7/25 - David McKeever Post #64

Please support their Ad and Boosters program book.

Memorial Service 9 AM

Convention Start 10 AM

Registration from 8 AM to 11:30 PM

## 8<sup>th</sup> District Conference

### April 6 – Chautauqua County

Lakewood Memorial Post #1286

174 Chautauqua Ave., Lakewood, NY 14750

Membership Mtg – Noon

Conference – 1 PM



**SUBMISSIONS**  
**For the April**  
**"The Legion-Air"**  
**Due March 28**  
[thelegionair@gmail.com](mailto:thelegionair@gmail.com)



**Department Leadership Tour of The Buffalo Bills Stadium, (L to R) Jerry Kowalski, Ted Balbierz, Paul Wackowski, Gaither Espey, Keith Koster, Cindy Koster, Kimberly Quick, Bernie Romanowski, Pattie Galley, Timothy Van Patten, Joshua Spinler, Joe Porempski, Michelle Bojanowski, Holly Trueman, Jim Bojanowski, Daryl Verstrete Jr., Howard Patton III, & Russell Bertini. Photo taken by David Lockhart. Also taking pictures Timothy Van Patten II.**



**Paul Merzallo Jr., CEO & President , Buffalo & Erie County Military & Naval Park gave an update on the latest activities of the facility at the 2/27 Erie County Meeting held at the Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205. Bill Abbott, Director Of Operations, gave an update on the future drydock plans for the USS Sullivans & the USS Croaker. Coordinator John Moffat reviewed the Docent and Volunteer Programs. The Docents assist visitors from all over the world. Volunteers are needed for this program and help maintain the ships.**



**Erie County American Legion joined Congressman Tim Kennedy as he announced The Honoring Our Heroes Act that would allow families of veterans who passed away before November 1, 1990 to request a government-issued headstone or grave marker from the Department of Veterans Affairs. (L to R) Henry Jernigan, Rev. Eugene Pierce, Jim Bojanowski, Congressman Kennedy, Dr. John Long, Ted Balbierz, and John Sanabria.**

**Sunday March 16**, 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.

**Thursday March 20**, Spaghetti Dinner at Niagara Frontier Post 1041, 533 Amherst St, Buffalo, from 5 to 7 PM, Adults 13 + \$10, Children 5 to 12, \$5, 4 and younger are free.

**Wednesday April 9**, PCC meeting at 7pm Donovan Post. Summer picnic will be in July.

**Saturday April 26**, Gabriel A. Rodriguez Annual Fundraiser Dinner at Classics V, 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst. \$75 per person. Call John Sanabria at 716 440 2605 by 3/28.

**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](http://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**, Francis J Donovan Post 1626 3210 Genesee Street Cheektowaga NY. Kitchen open every Friday from 4PM till 8PM, new full menu including a fantastic fish fry. Live music every Friday from 7-11PM. Take out available during dinner hours at 716-896-3346

**Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to [thelegionair@gmail.com](mailto:thelegionair@gmail.com) by 3/28 for the April 2025 edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor**

**Erie County Website – [eriecountyal.org](http://eriecountyal.org)**

**Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM Phone: (716) 852-6500 Fax: (716) 852-4664  
Veteran14202@verizon.net**

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

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