



The Legion-Air

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**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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Commander's Message:

I want to thank Cmdr. Ron Cook from the Iroquois Post for the invitation to the Seneca Nation "Post Everlasting Ceremony". This ceremony is to honor fallen warriors and their families of the past year. The families enter the Post, the doors are locked, and the lights are dimmed. The ceremony opens with prayers being read. Each warrior's military history is read, and then the warrior's family goes outside, places his military papers into a fire. As the papers burn his spirit is in the smoke that rises from the fire into the sky. His family speak words in the Seneca language, to honor his spirit. This is done for each warrior. Then a final salute and TAPS for all the warrior's is played. The amount of thought and respect given to each warrior and family, through this ceremony, was so moving that I needed to share this experience with everyone.

On March 22, I attended the 64th Variety Club Telethon. The Erie County American Legion presented a check to them in the amount of \$11,200. A job well done goes out the Ted Balbierz, Rosemary O'Connell and the volunteers that put together the Oktoberfest event. You made us proud.

I have many Post meeting visits scheduled, and I can add more to the coming months. Please contact me at 716-681-7169. The meetings I have attended have been very informative and productive.

April is here; it's time for Post nominations of Officers. Elections are in May. Remember to complete the Officers Certification Form. Do you need to update the Post Data Report? Also, time to start filling out the Consolidated Post Report and get it sent in to Erie County office. Get these reports in on a timely matter, so we can pass this information on to Dept. of New York, and to National. It's important that we inform the Legion on what we do on a local level.

Membership: VC Howard Patton III

Membership remains the foundation of the American Legion. At this point in 2026, our overall membership should be at or above 95 percent. 10 Posts are currently on track to meet their respective membership goals for the month of April. As we approach May & June, our objective is to reach 100 percent of our annual target.

We extend special recognition to three Posts that have achieved 100 percent or more of their membership goal their membership numbers continue to rise:

Iroquois Post 1587 – 104.76%

Frank H. Brink Post 607 – 103.70%

Jesse Clipper Post 430 – 103.28%

Their commitment and diligence set a strong example for the entire organization.

This month, we will continue to build upon our focus on Checking Post 1 for prospective members, while remaining diligent in conducting Buddy Checks and strengthening those efforts with greater intentionality. At the same time, we will place a heightened emphasis on member retention. By deliberately reaching out to those we have not connected with recently, as well as members with outstanding dues, we create meaningful opportunities to reconnect, offer support where it is needed, and reinforce the strength and stability of our overall membership.

Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

Submissions for your Post's Legionnaire of the Year for consideration as the 2026 Erie County Legionnaire of the Year are due on April 3, 2026. The Guidelines and Information are available the Erie County American Legion Web page: <http://www.eriecountyal.org/Legionnaire%20of%20the%20year%20page.html>. Please submit the resume of your candidate to Kathleen Garvey, 5792 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221, **NO LATER THAN APRIL 3, 2026.**

Commanders Message continued;

We will have two more meetings before Memorial Day. Let's start making plans. You can now order flags through the County Office for your Post to decorate your local cemeteries.

This is a dangerous time for our military. Keep them in our prayers. Let us support our warriors in this time of National Defense.

Americanism – VC Pat Murphy

March is Women's History Month, and women have had a place in American history from the start. Betsy Ross, Molly Pitcher whose real name was Mary Ludwig Hays, who carried water to cool the cannons and the soldiers at the battle of Monmouth. She reported taking over the duties of her husband who was wounded and assisted the cannon crew. Let's remember all the mothers, wives and daughters who did what needed to be done to get their family and country going and make it stronger.

Women were officially allowed to enlist in the U.S. military in 1917, with permanent service authorized in 1948. The first women to enlist was Loretta Prefectus Walsh. She enlisted in the Navy as a Chief Yeoman. This marked the first time a women could serve the country in the service openly, in a non-nurse capacity. During WW1 over 12 thousand women served as Yeomanettes takes roles in clerical and other areas.

Truman signed into law the Permanent Military Services Act which allowed women to make the military a career and become permanent members of the military. Myrtle R Hazard became the first women to take the oath in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1918. Opha May Johnson, became the first women to join the Marine Corps in 1918.

There is a rich history of women serving their country from the Revolutionary War, till present day. Some hiding their sex, some just going to the area of battle and helping. We will never know all their names or acts, that should be honored. But it is a wonderful part of our history that we should research it. Start by looking at women in the WASPS, WAC, and other women's military units.

Essay – VC Pat Murphy

The Office has mailed out the 2026 Essay Contest to all 6th Grade Schools in Erie County. Due date is 5/1/26. Topic is "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday and the Veterans who fought for our Freedom".



Special Activities – VC Paul Wackowski

I'm still receiving calendars that are still being sold. Any post or individual that still has calendars sold or unsold kindly get them turned in ASAP. On that note,, should a calendar number be drawn and I haven't received the stub, I cannot send the winnings. I have had several instances where a number has come up and I am not able to send the winnings. That means that the calendar is still in possession of a post, individual, or has been misplaced. Those numbers are as follows: 342, 018, 547, 986, 797 and 299. Anyone or post has any of these calendar numbers, kindly contact me at; 716 - 262 - 5245 to arrange for pickup or drop off. With Easter just being two weeks away, Happy Easter to the Legion Family members and your families.

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

Graves Registration – George Barton

As everyone should know, Memorial Day is Monday, May 25, 2026. I have been advised and would like to thank James Bojanowski for taking care of the legwork to obtain funding for new flags for Memorial Day. We have plenty of flags to decorate the graves at Forest Lawn and making sure that American Legion Posts have the flags they need for their Cemeteries and ceremonies. So, on that note flag request forms have been sent to all the Posts and are due to the Erie County American Legion office by Friday, April 24th, 2026. Flag request distribution will be at Forest Lawn Cemetery by the garage on Saturday, May 9, 2026, between 10:00 am till 11:30 am. If anyone cannot make this date and time, please contact me and we can make arrangements for flag distribution. Also, I would like to thank Erie County Commander Jerry Kowalski for my appointment as Graves & Registration Chairmen

Boys State Chairman - Bernie Romanowski
THE DEADLINE FOR THE STUDENTS TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION IS SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026.

The deadline to get your completed forms to Bernie Romanowski or the County Headquarters is Friday April 24. Cost this year is \$575. If you need help or any information Bernie can be reached at glabpost@aol.com or 716-796-5341. There are no extensions granted by Dept.

If applying for the SAMSUNG SCHOLARSHIP, the application must be filled out online at <https://www.legion.org/samsung-scholarship-application>. The deadline for submitting the SAMSUNG application is 11:59 pm on June 27.

As of March 20, Erie County only has 7 boys who have signed up for the program online with Department of NY. Niagara County only has 2 boys, and the entire state only has 309 boys registered. Post 64 leads the way with 3 boys, 527 has one, 567 has one, 622 has one and 1477 has one. Hopefully we can find more candidates. 205 and 1041 have candidates who has not registered. Post 64, 799, 1346 and 1528 have volunteered to sponsor a boy. Hopefully, our response rate will increase dramatically and we will be able to finance an appropriate breakfast orientation scheduled for June 13. The one-way bus quote is for \$1,216.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 4/30 at the East Aurora Post #362 located at 1 Legion Drive, East Aurora, NY 14062. The Post will be serving Meatloaf with cheese potatoes, salad, roll & butter, and Coffee at 6 PM for \$10.

Thanks go out to the 18 Posts that were in attendance for the March County Meeting at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626. Posts in attendance were; 63, 205, 362, 430, 527, 607, 622, 799, 838, 1131, 1346, 1477, 1528, 1586, 1587, 1626, 1672, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County at the 4/30 County Meeting.

Future County Meetings;
May 21, Concord Post #431

Saturday June 6, Erie County Convention at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626. Please support their AD and Booster program book.

Sunday April 12,
8th District Conference, Cattaraugus County
Little Valley Post 531, 5899 RT-353, Little Valley, NY, 14755
Membership Mtg – Noon
Conference – 1 PM

Saturday June 20,
8th District Convention, Chautauqua County
Samuel L Derby Post #556, Frewsburg, NY

July 16 – 18,
Department Convention, Syracuse, NY

During the March Erie County Meeting, Guest Speaker, Dr. Uzo Ihenko described a European Landmarks & Historical Expedition Trip to take place, April 8 - April 17, 2027. Handouts were distributed. Photo by Sue Quirk.



SUBMISSIONS
For the May/June
"The Legion-Air"
Due May 1
thelegionair@gmail.com

Law & Order – VC Pat Murphy

In honor of Women's History Month, a short History of women in the law enforcement service. Aurora Lola Baldwin was the first full time female Police Officer in the U.S.A. in 1908. Isabella Godwin was the first female detective in the New York City Police Department 1912. Penny Harrington was the first women to lead a major Police Department in 1985.

Gail Adrienne Cobb was the first women police officer to be killed in the line of duty; she was shot and killed in September of 1974. She was also the first black female to be killed in the line of Duty.

Molly Williams was the first female to serve on a Fire Company. She was with the Oceanus Engine company 11 in New York City. She joined around 1815. Note of interest, she was also the first black female and a former slave. The first females to join a fire service as a career were Judith Livers and Brenda Berkman both in the 1970's. Before women were allowed to have a career in the fire service. There were all female fire brigades (Companies) across the U.S.A. Texas had one in the 1960s.

Please look at your local Police, Fire, EMS units, they work day and night ,some paid, some volunteer. But all need to be honored, promoted, and shown to the community for the outstanding work they do.

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

Education Awards - Scholarship applications have been mailed out to all High Schools in Erie County for our program and all High Schools in the 8th District for the PNC Michael J. Kogutek Scholarship. Donations for both programs are now being accepted. Thanks go out to the Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205 and the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626 for the sponsorship of a \$500 Scholarship Award in their Post's name.



Post Everlasting Ceremony at Iroquois Post #1587 on March 3, 2026. Pictured (L to R) Reginald Kohler Sgt. At Arms, Gary Kruger EC Children & Youth, Ronald Cook Cmdr. Post #1587, Jerry Kowalski EC Cmdr. The Ceremony was to honor fallen warriors of the past year and their families.



Hamburg Post 527 Annual Police & Fireman Award Dinner took place on March 17, at the Hamburg Post Hall. The picture shows those who were honored, L-R: Lt. Jeremy Lehning; Lt. Kevin Haberman; Officer Garrett Hielman; Hamburg Post Cmdr. Don Dunkle; Trooper Brandon M. Voss; and Vol. Fireman Bruce Gannon. Photo by Sue Quirk.



The Erie County American Legion Family presented a \$11,200 check to the Variety Kids Telethon on March 22, bringing our 3-year total to \$24,200. Pictured from (L to R) Jerry Kowalski, Rosemary O'Connell, Terry McGuire, Ted Balbierz, and John DiSciullo. They were accompanied by the Francis J. Donovan Post Color Guard. Thanks go out to everyone who helped with this important fundraiser for our community.

Monday April 6, Frank L Gierlach Post Auxiliary will host a Dyngus Day party from 11 am to 5 pm at the Sloan Firehall, 55 Gates St Sloan. Music by Phocus, cash bar and homemade polish food. There will be a \$10.00 cover charge.

Wednesday April 8, PCC meeting 7 PM at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626.

Friday April 17, Milton J. Brounshidle Post 205, 3354 Delaware Ave. Kenmore, is hosting a Euchre Tournament with a blind draw starting at 6:30 PM.

Sunday April 19, 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.

Sunday April 26, Pancake Breakfast at Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205, 9 AM to Noon. \$10.

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, Home of the Erie County Rifle Team. Home of "The Foxhole Bar" Home of The Polish Villa 2U Food Service. Fish Frys and Dinners served every Friday from 4PM till 8PM. Live music every Friday from 7PM until 10PM. Cheapest drink prices in Erie County! Come check us out and always open to the Public.

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 5/1 for the May/June edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Erie County Website – eriecountyal.org Phone: (716) 852 – 6500 Veteran14202@verizon.net
DNY website - <https://nylegion.net> National American Legion website - <https://www.legion.org>