



The Legion - Air

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Commander's Message:

It is hard to believe that we are now in the year 2009. A lot has happened over the past six months that we all have a lot to be proud of. Time marches and so must we. Each and every day our young men and women march off to war to protect our freedoms. Unfortunately many return with the scars of war, many with physical and psychological wounds. We must continue our efforts to be compassionate and supportive of our brothers and sisters in arms. More than ever the American Legion needs to be proactive in meeting the needs of our military men and women.

This past Holiday Season many of us across Erie County have identified and been there for our vanguards of freedom. Unfortunately many veterans still stand alone facing their demons resulting from their experiences with war. Take time out to hear the silent cries for help. Lending an ear or an open heart may only be what is needed. The need may not be monetary, but rather our time and understanding.

As 2009 unfolds before us we have many challenges ahead. In January the Mid-Winter Conference will be held in Albany and I encourage all that are able to attend to do so. This conference can be a great learning experience and provide you with a wealth of knowledge. Then in March comes Hill Day, an opportunity to let your representatives in Albany that veterans' issues are important to be maintained or enhanced throughout the Empire State. Erie County in July will be hosting the Department of NY Convention. Tim Van Patten and his committee are going to have their hands full and will need all of our help to make Erie County shine once again. As you can see just scratching the surface the Erie County American Legion has a lot on its plate in the coming year. Thank you for your devotion and support for America and her veterans.

Membership – VC Bill Miskell CHALLENGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

What challenge? Make your membership numbers that you did last year. Your goal for this year is what you did last year, so with a little work you should make your goal this year. CAN YOU REACH 100%? YOU BET YA!

WORK! WORK! WORK!

Thanks to the members, the County reached the 75% goal for December and surpassed it. Today the County is at 81.25 % of goal, this is great.

In the month of December, we still have six Posts below 70% of goal. This is not good for their future. They must do better or they will become a lost Post in the future.

Retaining our current members is important but looking to the future, recruiting new members is very important. At the December meeting, I reported we only had 124 new members in the County. Please get the message out to our members, RECRUIT, RECRUIT, and RECRUIT. **DON'T JUST THINK OF TODAY, THINK OF TOMORROW**, this will be your survival. Will 2009 be the year that Erie County gets into the top 10 Counties in Department for Membership? I am willing to attend one of your meetings and talk membership, just call, 947-4919.

REMINDER: PASS DUES NOTICES FROM NATIONAL WILL BE GOING OUT IN JANUARY, SO BE SURE TO GET YOUR RENEWALS IN TODAY.

REMEMBER THE 3R'S, Retain, Recruit, Rethink

It is my hope that you and your family had a Merry Christmas and wishing you a great and safe New Year.

Special Activities – VC Pauline Fletcher

On Tuesday December 16th, County Sergeant-at-Arms George Frederick and myself set up a table at the Boulevard Mall in front of Sears for an American Legion information session, membership drive, and to sell our Lottery Calendars. We talked to a lot of people and told them about the American Legion, its programs, and what we do for the veterans.

The Lottery Calendar sales are starting to pick up. So far I have accounted for 552 calendars being sold. I hope to have a lot more sold calendars turned in at the January County Meeting. I am still awarding \$100.00 to the Post or person who sells the most Lottery Calendars by the January 2009 County Meeting!! Thank You to everyone who has sold Lottery Calendars.

The Gas Raffle was a great success! The profits far exceeded in what we made with last year's Holiday Cheer and Beef Bonanza Raffles. In May of 2009 I am planning on doing a Tops or Wegmans Gift Card Raffle. With your continued support this can be a successful fundraising effort.

American Legion launches web site

December 29, 2008 – Niles Daily Star (MI)

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - The American Legion has launched an informative new Web site to help veterans and their families understand the Post 9/11 GI Bill, which takes effect Aug. 1, 2009, and how it compares with other federal education benefits for veterans.

The site - www.mygibill.org - includes clear explanations of the different GI Bill benefits, news alerts and updates, frequently asked questions, state-by-state benefits and online application opportunities. The site also includes information about The American Legion's historical and ongoing role in the evolution of veterans' education benefits. The site will continue to evolve with new features and updated material every week.

"This new Web site comes in response to quite a bit of confusion from veterans since the passage of the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008 last summer," American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein said. "There are some major differences between the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill that veterans need to understand. Foremost, they need to understand that they have choices and should review all of the different education benefits to see which one best meets their needs."

Rehbein said The American Legion has a time-honored obligation to play a lead role in providing information and outreach on the GI Bill.

Americanism – VC Ray Caso

I hope everyone had healthy and happy holidays. Thanks to Past CC. John Kasmar I attended the Jr. ROTC drill competition along with 8th district Commander Randy Printup. The young people in the Junior ROTC program worked very hard and it showed. Good job John. I showed the DVD American Veterans to the Principal of Hoover School in Ken-Ton and they are looking forward to me coming in and sharing it with the students. When you contact your local schools about coming in and giving an Americanism talk remind them of our essay contest and ask them to have students participate. Mid winter conference is coming up and I am looking forward to attending the seminars on Americanism and hope to have some news and info for our Jan meeting. Please say a prayer for our active service men and women and don't forget our hospitalized comrades.



SUBMISSIONS
FOR
"The Legion-Air"
DUE
Jan. 21st 2009

thelegionair@gmail.com

GOOD OF THE LEGION

November 9th John Post, Legion Riders President and five other Legion Rider Members rode their bikes in the rain and hail to the Buffalo Airport to meet SSG Robert Toland and family. He was on duty in Iraq when he was found to have colon cancer. I was asked by Kevin Hayner to have Legion Riders have an escort. I asked the Patriot Guard to help with this mission. We gathered at the airport and provided the escort to SSG Toland's home in Strykersville. Kevin Hayner coordinated the complete remodeling of his house and had a large crowd to celebrate his home-coming. This is all part of our purpose; to take care of Veterans. May God bless and heal SSG Toland while giving peace to his family.

LEGION RIDERS UPDATE

To all of our friends and colleagues in the American Legion and motorcycling communities:

With the fantastic growth of our chapter during this past two years, the East Aurora Chapter of the American Legion Riders needed to find a larger home and take on a new name that better reflects the diverse home locations of its membership.

Accordingly, we have changed our chapter name to be the Southern Tier, NY Chapter and moved to our new sponsoring post, the Orchard Park American Legion Post #567 that is located at 3740 North Buffalo Road corner Webster Road in Orchard Park, NY. All of our 2nd Sunday at noon monthly meetings plus our motorcycle runs and events will be held at the Orchard Park American Legion Post. Our 2009 motorcycle events are already posted on our web site. For anyone not familiar with the American Legion Riders, it is a national organization with 910 local chapters including 49 in New York State. American Legion Riders are members of the American Legion who are also motorcycle enthusiasts. They can be found participating in parades, partaking in motorcycling events, and supporting the communities in which they live, work, and play. Members of the ALR come from the American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of the American Legion. The American Legion Riders were formed...

- ✓ to participate in parades and other ceremonies that are in keeping with the Aims and Purposes of the American Legion.
- ✓ to promote motorcycle safety programs and to provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interest.
- ✓ to use our Association to promote and support programs of the American Legion.

The Southern Tier, NY Chapter has one additional purpose, specifically by conducting outreach efforts that assists and visits military veterans in local area nursing homes and hospitals.

The American Legion Riders is family-oriented, just as is its parent organization: the American Legion.

Our best wishes to all for a wonderful holiday and for happy and healthy 2009, including a safe bike riding season.

Dave Buyer, Sr.

Web Master

Legion Riders, Southern Tier, NY Chapter

Web Site:

<http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeu9ewn/alr/>



City of Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown joins PNC Michael Kogutek, County Commander Art Forman, Convention Chairman Tim Van Patten and other Legionnaires at Troop I Post #665 in announcing the 2009 Department of New York Convention coming to Buffalo

July 8th to 11th, 2009
at The Adam's Mark Hotel



County Meeting Dates

January 29, 2009

South Buffalo Post # 721

February 26, 2009

David McKeever Post # 64

March 26, 2009

Frank L. Gierlach Post #1320

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 PERMIT NO. 103
 BUFFALO, NY

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2009

Jan. 4th 1pm 8th District Oratorical Contest;
 M.J. Brounshidle Post #205 (Snow Date: Jan.
 11th)

Jan. 18th 8am - 1pm "All You Can Eat"
 pancake breakfast at A. J. Jurek Post #1672.
 Breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, sausage,
 orange juice and coffee or tea. \$6 adults, \$3
 children 12 and under, 5 and under free.

Jan. 23rd – 25th Mid-Winter Conference,
 Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY



**Hamburg Post #527
 Dinners**

Mondays 4pm-7pm
 Beef on Weck w/ Fries \$5
 Thursdays 4pm-7pm
 Spaghetti Dinner \$5.50



*Happy Holidays
 To
 One and All!
 God Bless Our Troops!
 God Bless America!*