

LEGION NEW YORK



WINTER/SPRING

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LEGION NEW YORK

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AMERICANS STOOD RESOLUTE

"New Yorkers and Americans stood resolute" when "terrorists sought to disrupt our way of life," Department Commander Gary Schacher declared during a 9/11 Remembrance Service in New York City Tuesday, Sept. 11.

The event was hosted by Lt. B. R. Kim-lau Chinese Memorial Post 1291.

Commander Schacher was on an official visitation to New York County, where he got to see the World Trade Center and 9/11 Memorial as well as other sights and events. Joining him were Department Auxiliary President Marie Mock, Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander Jim Coates, and Legion Riders Director Bob Wallace.

The commander said:

"September 11th is a day that we pause in solemn remembrance of those who lost their lives during attacks that shook the globe, spurring the War on Terror that has been waged since.

"On that day, when terrorists sought to disrupt our way of life, New Yorkers and Americans stood resolute in support of our values and beliefs, proudly refusing to let our spirits be broken.

"For many members of the American Legion, September 11th was the day that they answered the call to defend our nation. As a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I am proud to have served alongside men and women who helped



Commander Schacher, overlooking the new World Trade Center buildings and 9/11 Memorial.

our nation show the world that when you attack the American way of life, we become stronger.

"The American Legion will never forget your sacrifices and is here to support you and all New Yorkers impacted by the events of September 11th.

"God Bless the United States of America."

ON THE COVERS: LOVING A VETERAN

There are kisses that light up a veteran's life, and smooches that send a veteran off to duty. The front cover portrays the former, with "Poppy Girl" Grace cutely showing what she thinks of her daddy, Tom Drake, who spoke at the 2018 Memorial Day Parade at Hastings on the Hudson. Tom, first vice commander of Post 1195, was wearing his volunteer fire department uniform for the parade but quickly switched hats to take part in military honors at the conclusion of the event. Photo by LINDA LOEB.

BACK COVER: Department Color Guard member David Madison gets a sun-kissed, send-off smooch from wife Sherryl just prior to the start of the Veterans Day Parade in New York City. The Legion Family turned out in force to march in America's Parade. Photo by GEORGE ETHEREDGE/The American Legion.

TO CELEBRATE LEGION'S 100TH NAVY VET CLIMBS HIGH PEAKS

by PAUL POST
The Saratogian
(used with permission)

NEWCOMB, N.Y. – Keith Koster has reached the halfway point of a goal he thought might not be attainable a few years ago.

During a routine physical, doctors discovered the U.S. Navy veteran and Spa City resident had cancer, which required removal of his thyroid gland, followed by two more serious operations.

Now he's in the process of climbing all 46 Adirondack High Peaks needed to become a 46er – for the third time! Plans call for completing the feat by next March 15 when The American Legion celebrates its 100th birthday.

"I'm calling it the Centennial Challenge," said Koster, 56, a past state vice commander and past county and district commander. "You just hear that word, cancer,



U.S. Navy veteran Keith Koster of Saratoga Springs is climbing all 46 Adirondack High Peaks to celebrate and promote The American Legion's 100th birthday this March 15.

and it sets you back. But I'm not any different than anybody else when it comes to what you can do. If I didn't tell people, they wouldn't know."

Recently, Koster slogged through the mud on a rainy Monday to reach three summits – Panther, Couchsachraga and Santanoni – on a roughly 12-mile jaunt. At

the top of each mountain, he unfurls The American Legion flag for a photo, with hopes one day of publishing a description of each hike.

Continued on next page.



Kristine Miller

MEET YOUR STAFF

Kristine Miller began working for The American Legion in May of 2017 after spending the first six years of her professional career working at The Desmond Hotel in Albany, NY.

Kristine was hired as an administrative assistant and now also serves as the program coordinator. Serving veterans has a special place in her heart, she says, as both of her grandfathers served in the military during World War II — one served in the army, the other in the navy. The

Department Adjutant Jim Casey introduces staffers on a rotating basis.

stories they told her of their experiences was what compelled her to work closely and compassionately with veterans and military members today.

Born in Ringwood, New Jersey, she was raised to respect the value of hard work. Her family later moved to Kansas and then Clifton Park, NY, where Kristine chose to follow her dream of a career in hospitality. While juggling a full-time job, Kristine earned her Associates in Hospitality and Tourism Management.



Jim Casey

Continued from previous page

"I'd like to present the flag to Legion officials at next summer's state convention," he said.

A member of Post 70 in Saratoga Springs, Koster also founded The American Legion Athletic Club, a local initiative designed to get younger War on Terror veterans involved in outdoor activities.

"There are a lot of things people can do as a family like 5K races and fun walks," he said. "It gives veterans another option for getting involved in Legion and joining if they want to, which would build membership."

Koster caught the hiking bug as a Boy Scout leader when his son, Joe, was involved with the organization. Like many people, one of his first High Peaks was Cascade Mountain, whose trailhead is on Route 73, about halfway between Lake Placid and Keene.

"Once I saw the views and the beauty of it all, that's how I got hooked," he said. "It's an escape from the stress of work and everyday life. It just cleans your mind and recharges your batteries."

For Koster, hiking was also therapeutic by giving him goals to achieve while



Saratoga Springs Legionnaire Keith Koster is climbing all 46 Adirondack High Peaks to celebrate The American Legion's 100th birthday this March 15.

battling cancer. A few weeks after his first surgery, he asked his doctor if it would be okay to get back out and start hitting the trail.

"You can do a short hike," the doctor said.

So in true Koster fashion, he hiked the entire Tongue Mountain Range on the west side of Lake George, a "warm-up" before tackling the High Peaks again.

"I thought I told you a short hike!" the doctor said, on Koster's next visit.

Koster was anxious to see how his body would react to strenuous activity, minus a

thyroid gland, and the new medication he was on. His last surgery was two years ago.

He's not only climbed all 46 High Peaks, but has also done so in winter, a much tougher and more harrowing accomplishment, quite often in sub-zero temperatures. Koster began the Centennial Challenge last March 17 and is trying to hit each summit within a year's time before the Legion's 100th anniversary.

It's one of two big things in life that he's looking forward to as he and his wife, Cindy, are anticipating the birth of

their first grandchild. Their daughter, Brittney Valone, is expecting.

Several more hikes will likely be in extreme, cold-weather again. That's why, despite sloppy trail conditions, Koster is trying to get a few outings under his belt this month before temperatures start to plunge.

He finished his latest trip wet, tired and hungry, but with an ear-to-ear grin.

"I had a ball," he said, smiling. "When else can you go out and play in the mud without getting yelled at by your mother?"

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR TESTIFIES ON VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT

With veterans' employment being a priority legislative issue for the Department of New York, its legislative chairman, Frank LaMarsh, testified before the State Assembly Veterans Af-

fairs Committee in December at a hearing on veterans employment programs.

"Seven years ago," he told legislators, "New York State implemented its 'Experience Counts' program to help vet-

erans with valuable military experiences transition to the civilian workforce. This campaign does not seem to have met expectations to reach a significant number of returning veterans. Unfortunately

many are completely unaware of this State benefit. One of the American Legion Department of New York's priorities is to enhance public awareness of this program and how to take advantage of it."

NATIONAL CHAMPION BAND OF THE TONAWANDAS

A TRADITION OF SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC



The Band of the Tonawandas performs at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis last August. Photos by Robert Stronach.

by **JEFF STOFFER**
The American Legion

On Nov. 13, 1929, members of American Legion Post 264 in Tonawanda, N.Y., called a meeting to organize a community band. The World War I veterans had no funds, uniforms or instruments to get it going. No concerts or parade appearances would be scheduled for another six months, so they had to drum up money in other ways, initially by putting on a boxing smoker that, according to Post 264 minutes from the

time, “was a flop, losing money on its first try.”

The band was not about to give up. Musicians personally rented instruments, raised funds from business sponsors, had fish fries, ran some profitable smokers, chipped in 50 cents each to pay a director and personally indebted themselves for \$10,000 – at the beginning of the Great Depression – to buy equipment needed for a group that would ultimately grow to some 90 musicians.

By the end of 1930, the musicians were able to convince post leadership to

allocate \$1,800 for new gold and blue uniforms. By then, they had given no fewer than 11 performances – none of which generated much revenue – and on Jan. 15, 1931, they played a concert for disabled veterans at the Marine Hospital in Buffalo. Regardless of start-up capital, the Band of the Tonawandas was on the march.

American Legion bands were popping up across the nation at the time as part of the organization’s movement to build community pride and unity through parks, pools, theaters, sports facili-

ties, forums and other public developments in what was known as the “Iowa Idea” launched in 1923 by Past National Commander Hanford MacNider. Overseen by the national Americanism Commission, the concept was to create and expand “all forms of better citizenship movements... every enterprise which will further the well-being, health and happiness of the community.”

Nine decades later, the American Legion Band of the Tonawandas continues to do just that. Winners of

Continued on next page.



TRADITION OF SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC

continued from previous page

the 100th American Legion National Convention Band Contest last August in Minneapolis, the band has won the New York State American Legion Band Competition almost continually since 1947 and has collected 18 national convention titles.

Musicians range in age from teens to octogenarians. Their careers and backgrounds include business, medicine, engineering, government, sales and education.

Booked year-round, the Band of the Tonawandas has performed for a PBS documentary tribute to march king (and historic New York City Legionnaire) John Philip Sousa. The band has also toured internationally, having received a gold medal for its performance as the U.S. representative in the International Music Festival of 1992 in Sydney, Australia. And after three consecutive titles at the Canadian National Exhibition International Band competition, to go along with six others earlier, the CNE awarded the Band of the Tonawandas its President's Trophy – permanently. The band has recorded five CDs and one



Clarinetist and Band President David Abrahamian (left).

DVD, in honor of its 75th anniversary in 1994.

Moreover, in keeping with the spirit of the Iowa Idea, the band stands “ready to aid in any worthwhile community function to uphold the great tradition of The American Legion,” according to its promotional literature.

Clarinetist and band President David Abrahamian, a Sons of The American Legion member, has been with the band for 49 years, managing it for nearly 40.

Following a Veterans Day concert last November, he reflected on the group's success over the years. “To keep this caliber of musicians, we play challenging music and concerts that they enjoy. At the same time, the general public enjoys it, too. It's a

win-win.”

The musicians, who are selected by audition, are not paid, despite a rigorous performance schedule. “The band means a lot to the community,” Abrahamian says. “It means a lot to the members. The members put a lot of time into this group. It's very demanding (but)... they enjoy what they get back out of it – the musicality, the friendship from the other members – a lot of camaraderie.”

About half the musicians are members of the American Legion Family; the requirement for national competition is no less than 20 percent. Abrahamian says the emblem of the nation's largest veterans organization is an inspiration to them

all. “It means a lot. A lot of people are connected to veterans because their family members, friends, relatives – they all know people who served. And I think the band gets gratification playing at veterans events, playing for veterans.”

“People come to us for patriotic events. For instance, every year, we play a concert for the Armed Forces Day ceremony that takes place in Buffalo, and it's quite an event. Military color guards from all over come together, and there is a nice patriotic ceremony that actually takes place for most of the week. We play in Memorial Day parades. We play the Fourth of July. We've done dedications for monuments. We have played for the Vietnam Moving Wall. We do things like that for the community, and the band members like doing it.”

He said the band also takes pride in its place in the centennial legacy of The American Legion. “History means a lot to the group,” Abrahamian says.

To learn more, purchase CDs and see upcoming performance dates, visit www.tonawandalegionband.com.



PATRICK SAINT ANGE IS BOYS STATE GOVERNOR



2017-2018 Department Commander Rena M. Nessler with 2018 Boys State Governor Patrick Saint Ange. Photo by Doug Malin.

MORRISVILLE -- Another successful week-long Boys' State experience concluded at Morrisville State College June 29, with Patrick Saint Ange of Westchester standing out as the 2018 Boys' State governor.

American Legion Department of New York Commander Rena Nessler

congratulated Patrick on his outstanding accomplishment during a final assembly that followed an outdoor pass-in-review parade. The nearly 1,000 student-citizens gathered in formation under the guidance of U.S. Marines and marched in review before a grandstand full of parents and family as well as American

Legion and other dignitaries.

During the final assembly, Patrick Saint Ange offered his "State of the State" address. He had been elected governor running a "campaign based on honesty and compromise." Patrick attends Ossining High School where he was captain of the Track and Field and Cross Coun-

try team. After competing in national track and field championships in Manhattan, where he met young men and women from different walks of life across the U.S., Patrick said had been looking forward to his Boys' State experience as a way "to find a better understanding of the world around us."

BOYS STATER THANKS PRISON STAFF FOR SPONSORSHIP

BROCTON, NY -- Fredonia High School senior Gabe Persch got to speak about his Boys State experience at the Annual Community Advisory Board Meeting of the Lakeview Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility on Dec. 10.

He "thanked the staff for the opportunity they gave him" and "explained how much he enjoyed and benefitted from the Boys State

program," reported Henry Link, Chautauqua County American Legion Boys State chair.

"Gabe is a well-rounded student and plans a career in Criminal Justice," Link said. "He has received scholarship offers from both Gannon University in Erie, PA and Niagara University in Niagara Falls, NY. He feels having Boys State on his application is what made him

stand out over other college applicants."

The Executive Office staff at Lakeview again this year donated \$400 to the Chautauqua County American Legion Boys State Program. "This is the second year in a row the staff decided instead of giving Christmas gifts to each other they would give a gift that can change the life of a young man," Link noted.

The \$400 donation will

cover the cost of sending one high school junior from Chautauqua County to the American Legion Boys State held at the State University of New York at Morrisville, NY, June 26 to July 2, 2019. This leadership program is designed to have Boys State citizens participate in forming a democratic type of government similar to the structure of New York State. This mythical 51st state is di-

NATIONAL CONVENTION

NY ON NATIONAL STAGE FOR DONATIONS



New York leaders with then-National Commander Denise Rohan. FROM LEFT: Department Commander Gary Schacher, NY Riders Director Robert Wallace, Immediate Past Department Commander Rena Nessler, Commander Rohan, and Department Adjutant Jim Casey. Photo by Doug Malin.

NY Donates \$94,000 for Legion charities

MINNEAPOLIS -- New York leaders were center stage with then-National Commander Denise Rohan, presenting donations for American Legion charities during the 100th National Convention.

On Tuesday, Aug. 28, and Wednesday, Aug. 29, the New York delegation presented checks totaling nearly \$94,000.

The donations included \$66,435 to for the National Emergency Fund (NEF). The NEF provides financial assistance to disaster-struck

Legionnaires and Legion Posts.

The others were \$16,640 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund (which helps children of fallen service members and post-9/11 disabled veterans) and \$10,909 for Operation Comfort Warriors (which helps wounded

and injured service members and veterans).

Presenting the donation were Immediate Past Department Commander Rena Nessler, Department Commander Gary Schacher, and Department Adjutant Jim Casey.

NY'S DOC GIBBS LEADS SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Greg "Doc" Gibbs, New York's 2011 Detachment commander, is the national commander of the Sons of the American Legion for 2018-2019. He was installed Sunday, Aug. 26, during The American Legion's Centennial Convention in Minneapolis, MN, and the Sons 67th Convention.

A retired university professor and public school administrator, Gibbs holds a PhD in administration from the University of New York at Buffalo. He serves the Sons through Hamburg Post 527 in western New York.



Greg "Doc" Gibbs gives a "thumbs up" as he enters the convention hall with his family and a huge New York Legion Family delegation. Photo by Robert Stronach.

While serving as legislative chairman for the Detachment of New York, he was honored as the George B.

Evans Grassroots Advocate of the Year in 2013 at the Houston, Texas convention.

Gibbs is a member of the Legion Riders with Orchard Park Post 567 and says he is "also proud to wear the colors of the 9-11 Memorial Post 2001 Riders Group."

He has served as a Legion College of New York faculty member, the first SAL member to ever do so, co-teaching a session on legislation.

His daughter and son are both members of the Legion family and he has been married to his wife Pam for over four decades.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

OPENING DAY SPOTLIGHTS FIRST RESPONDERS, INCLUDING FALLEN STATE TROOPER

ROCHESTER – Hundreds of wartime veterans took time to posthumously honor a fallen state trooper on the opening day of the New Year State American Legion's 100th Convention here on Thursday, July 19.

Trooper Joel Davis, who was shot and killed a year ago while responding to a report of shots fired at a Jefferson County residence, was named Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Law and Order Chairman David R. Riley Sr. announced.

"Trooper Davis' sacrifice upholds the highest traditions of valor and service to the people of New York State," Riley said.

Trooper Davis was a four-year veteran of the New York State Police and had previously served nearly a decade as a Jefferson County Sheriff's deputy.

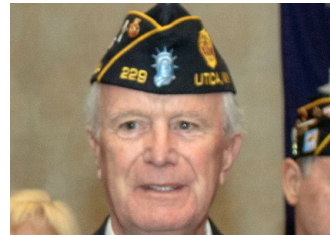
The legionnaires honored other top first responders, plus singled out Utica Post 229 as Post of the Year for its outstanding efforts to recognize police officers and firefighters in the City of Utica.

They are:

• **Firefighter of the Year:** Thomas Edwin Rothdiener, chief of Oriskany Independent Fire & Hose Company in Oneida County. A 40-year member of the fire company, Rothdiener is past president of both the Oneida County



Oriskany Fire Chief Thomas Rothdiener (left) is Firefighter of the Year and Canandaigua Fire Chief Frank Magnera accepted the Fire Department of the Year Award for his department.,



LEFT: Livingston County Deputy Brenda Clark-Pierson is Corrections Officer of the Year, and Paul Wojcik accepted the Law and Order Post of the Year Award for Utica Post 229.

Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Central New York Firemen's Association. He also serves on committees with the Firemen's Association of the State of New York and the National Fire Protection Association. Rothdiener "was directly responsible for his fire department receiving the Residential Fire Safety Institute Life Safety Achievement Award, for no loss of life in a structure fire for the past eight years," Riley noted. He also is a member of Oriskany Post 1448.

• **Fire Department of the Year:** Canandaigua Fire Department in Ontario County. The department responded to over 1,400 incidents in 2017 -- one of those involved an apartment building that was ablaze. "Two of the fire-

fighters demonstrated heroic actions in saving the life of one of the residents," a quadriplegic who uses a wheelchair. The firefighters were able to find him in the dark apartment and carried him out, and then returned to rescue a small dog from the department. They "are examples of how all the members of the Canandaigua fire department are committed in dedicating themselves in serving their community to keep it safe," Riley said. Fire Chief Frank Magnera accepted the award.

• **Corrections Officer of the Year:** Livingston County Deputy Brenda Clark-Pierson. She revived an unresponsive inmate who appeared to be not breathing. Deputy Clark-Pierson called for assistance, then

rendered sternum rubs with no response. "After applying a series of chest compressions, the inmate responded and started seizing," Riley noted. "Deputy Clark-Pierson continued to care for the inmate until EMS arrived and transported the Inmate to the emergency room. The inmate did make a full recovery."

• **Outstanding Post of the Year:** Utica Post 229 in Oneida County. Under the guidance of Law and Order Chairman Paul Wojcik, Post 229 conducts recognition dinners twice a year to honor outstanding first responders in the Utica Police Department and the Utica Fire Department. Riley praised Wojcik for leading the post's Law and Order program for many years.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

ROBERT GARDNER IS LEGIONNAIRE OF YEAR

ROCHESTER — Robert Gardner, a 25-year member of Post 974 in Whitney Point (6th District), is the New York State American Legion's Legionnaire of the Year.

Legionnaire of the Year Program Chair Mike McDermott announced the award at the 100th Department Convention, and placed a white Department cap on the honoree.



With Department Adjutant Jim Casey looking on, Legionnaire of the Year Robert Gardner addresses the assembly, saying he shares the award with all Legionnaires who do outstanding work.

EDAR PAREDES IS SERVICE OFFICER OF YEAR

Edar Paredes, a member of Yonkers Post 1954, is the New York State American Legion's Service Officer of the Year.

He was honored during the 100th Department Convention in Rochester, and given a Department-level white hat emblazoned with the title. He also was awarded the national American Legion Citation for Meritorious Service. "This is the first time the national meritorious service citation has been given in the Department of New York," noted Patrick



With Patrick Rourke and R. Michael Suter looking on, Service Officer of the Year Edar Paredes addresses the convention delegates.

Rourke, chairman of the Veterans Service Committee.

Paredes works out of the

Yonkers Veterans Service

Agency. A Navy veteran and naturalized citizen, Paredes

attended college using the GI Bill and graduated with a degree in computer science.

HUTCH TECH GRAD IS JROTC CADET OF YEAR

Cadet/Lt. Col. Mohammad Taqi, a 2018 graduate of Hutch Tech High School in Buffalo, is the New York State American Legion JROTC Cadet of the Year.

He was honored July 21 during the 100th Department Convention in Rochester. The cadet was planning to attend Norwich University on a four-year ROTC scholarship, with plans to pursue a career as a military intelligence officer.



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

KOEN WEAVER IS EAGLE SCOUT OF YEAR -- AGAIN

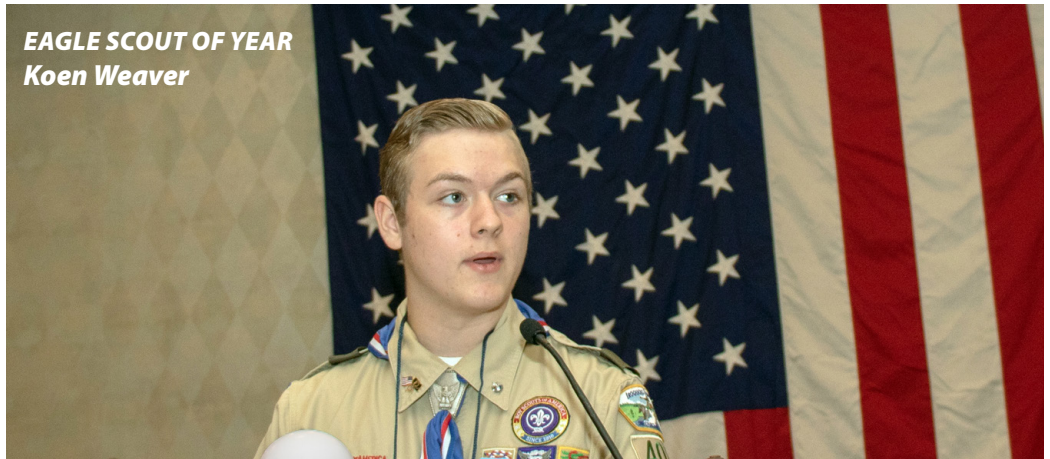
Eagle Scout Koen Weaver of Troop 4077 in Livingston County must be doing something right.

This is the second time he has been chosen as the New York State American Legion's Eagle Scout of the Year, Scouting Chair Stephen Mataraza announced at the 100th Department Convention in Rochester.

"Koen was also selected as a national runner-up for The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year," he said.

Mataraza announced other top Scouting awards:

Pack of the Year is Pack 85, chartered to Burns-McCauliffe Post 465, Cortland County.



Troop of the Year is Troop 4035, chartered to Earl J. Manning Post 490 in Saratoga County.

Adult Scouter of the Year is Dr. Stephen L. Krizar from Troop 113, Columbia County.

Venturing Crew of the

Year is Crew 14, chartered to Woodford-Burdick Post 894 in Madison County.

Mataraza noted: "This year, scouts across the nation contributed more than 15.6 million volunteer hours, and earned 1.8 million merit badges. That is a huge impact

on building stronger communities." He added: "As an organization The American Legion has a long history of supporting the BSA. That support is unwavering and is needed as much now as it was 100 years ago. Please reach out to the scout units and councils in your area."

AWARDS FOR TOP EMPLOYER AND 2 TOP SERVICE OFFICERS

An Employer of the Year and two top service officers were honored at the 100th Department Convention, held July 19-21 in Rochester.

Employment Committee Chairman Thomas Rielly announced that the **Center for Disability Services** is the New York State American Legion Employer of the Year. Headquartered in Albany, the Center provides a variety of services and programs in 15 counties. It has a workforce of nearly 2,500 – and 25 percent of them are military veterans.

Rielly also announced



Kimberly Haley

that **Kimberly Haley** is the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year, and that **Kevin Melia** is the Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year.

Kimberly Haley is as-



Kevin Melia

signed to the Working Solutions Career Center in Wampsville. She was cited for being "selflessly dedicated to all veterans" and for placing 43 disabled veterans in full-time employment in Oneida, Madison and

Herkimer counties last year. A wartime veteran herself, Haley served in the U.S. Army, the National Guard and the Army Reserves as a medic. She is a member of Oneida American Legion Post 169.

Kevin Melia is assigned to the Rochester Works office. He had 1,764 customers last year, assisting them with employment and training in the post-military careers, and secured employment for 81 veterans. Melia served in the U.S. Navy from 1983 to 1989 and is a member of Chili American Legion Post 1830.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

PEDRO SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Hali Lynea Ielfield, a 2018 graduate of South Lewis Central High School in Turin, was awarded the Richard M. Pedro Memorial Scholarship at the 100th Department Convention in Rochester. Making the presentation were Past National Vice Commander V. James Troiola and 2017-2018 Department Commander Rena M. Nessler. The scholarship honors the memory of Pedro, who was a long-time department adjutant, past department commander and past national commander.



POSTS HONORED FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS

Children and Youth Chair John P. Powers took to the podium at the Department Convention in Rochester to announce posts having “the most outstanding Children and Youth programs.” They each received National Certificates of Meritorious Service. They are:

- Cat 1 (15-99 members): Mulligan-Eden Post 1573, 9th Dist.
- Cat 2 (100-299 members): Lackawanna Post 63, 8th Dist.
- Cat 3 (300-499 mbrs): Fountain Brothers Post 1619, 4th Dist.
- Cat 4 (500 + members): Mohawk Post 1450, 4th District.

He also announced department citations for posts with the most outstanding children and youth programs, by district.

District 1

- Cat 1 – Washington Square Post 1212
- Cat 2 – Theodore Korony Post 0253
- Cat 4 – Lt. B.R. Kim Lau Chinese Memorial Post 1291

District 2

- Cat 2 – Joseph F. Merrell, Jr. Post 1368

District 3

- Cat 1 – Mohican Post 0983
- Cat 2 – Greenville Post 0291
- Cat 3 – Kingston Post 0150

District 4

- Cat 1 – Lisbon Post 1342
- Cat 2 – Whitehall Post 0083
- Cat 3 – Fountain Brothers Post 1619

Cat 4 – Mohawk Post 1450

District 5

- Cat 1 – Antwerp Post 0916
- Cat 2 – Prior-Stock Post 155

District 6

- Cat 1 – George F. Johnson Post 1700
- Cat 2 – Charles Miller Post 0140
- Cat 3 – Bentley – Trumble Post 0442

District 7

- Cat 1 – Kern-Robinson Post 0905
- Cat 2 – Marion Memorial Post 1430
- Cat 3 – Charles E. Wescott Post 0173
- Cat 4 – Cottreal-Warner Post 0942

District 8

- Cat 1 – David McKeever Post 0064
- Cat 2 – Lackawanna Post 0063
- Cat 3 – Newell - Faulkner Post 0880
- Cat 4 – East Aurora Post 0362

District 9

- Cat 1 – Mulligan-Eden Post 1573
- Cat 2 – Mamaroneck Post 0090

District 10

- Cat 1 – Little Neck-Douglaston Post 0103
- Cat 2 – Williston Post 0144

NEW YORK BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

ROCKLAND WINS 3RD CONSECUTIVE TITLE



Rockland County Pirates celebrate their tournament victory at Utica's Murnane Field. Photo by Robert Stronach.

The players of District 9 Champ Rockland County Pirates Post 130 are the New York American Legion Baseball Champions. This is the third consecutive year Rockland claimed the state title.

They held onto their undefeated tournament feat, downing District 7 Champ

Rayson-Miller Post 899 of Pittsford, 10 to 2, on Aug. 1.

Rayson-Miller scored in the first inning, but Rockland quickly followed with two runs in the bottom of the first, and then another 8 runs in the 4th inning. Rayson-Miller wasn't able to keep up, despite scoring another run

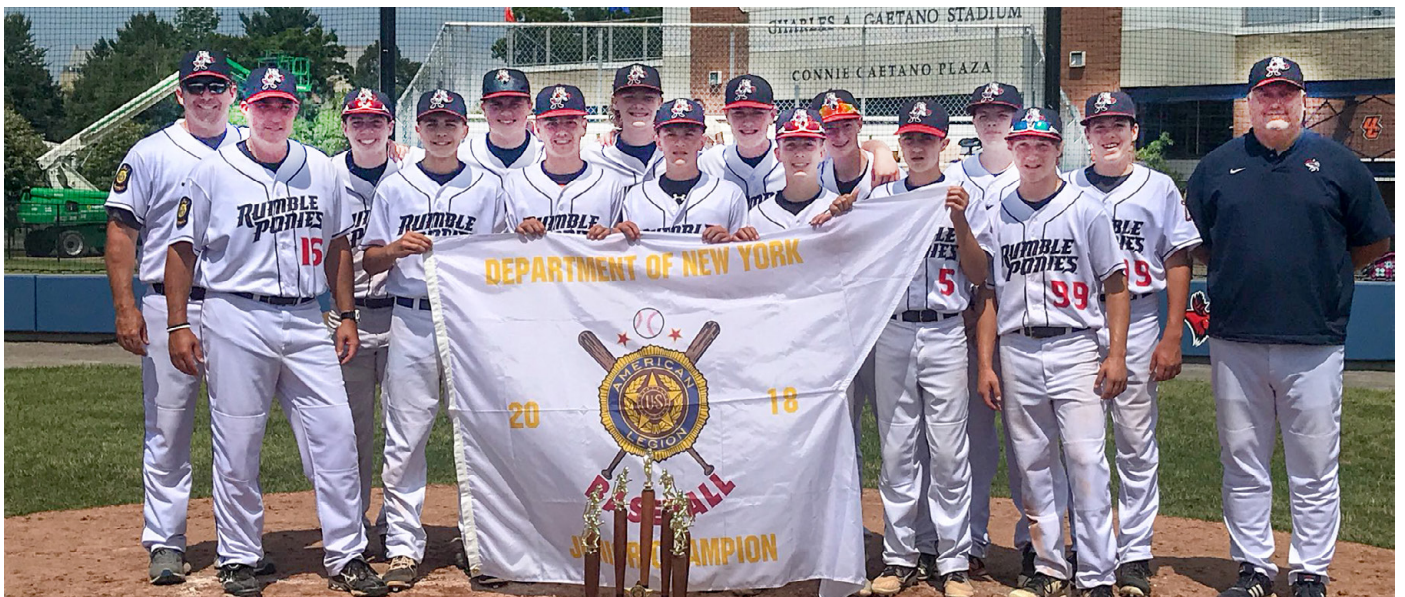
in the sixth inning.

New York State American Legion Commander Gary Schacher was on hand to award the championship and runner-up trophies along with Baseball Chairman Bruce Mayfield.

The Junior American Legion Baseball Championship

title went to Endicott Post 82 Jr team, which edged the Rockland Pirates Post 130 Jr team, 5-4.

The Junior Tournament concluded July 28 at Utica College while across town at Murnane Field's Donovan Stadium, the Senior Tournament opened.



Endicott Post 82 reigned as the New York State Junior Tournament champions.

SAILORS HELP CLEAN UP YARD AT BRONX POST



Chief-Select Hospital Corpsman Marchant Da Silva helps clean up the yard at Samuel H. Young American Legion Post 620 in the Bronx on Aug. 18. U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Roger S. Duncan.

FOUNDED IN 1919, POST NAMED AFTER FALLEN WWI VETERAN

U.S. Navy personnel showed appreciation to fellow veterans by taking on a community service project on Aug. 18 to clean up the grounds at a Bronx American Legion Post in advance of a fall centennial celebration.

The personnel included sailors in line for promotion to chief petty officer, who volunteered as part of their leadership training.

The Navy chief-selects, who were undergoing the CPO 365 Phase II leadership program at Navy Operational Support Center New York, joined chiefs and senior chiefs from the center for the community service project at Samuel H. Young American Legion Post 620.

In a ceremony following

the clean-up, Post Vice Commander Bill Franklin expressed the Legion's gratitude and presented the sailors with an American Legion Certificate of Appreciation. The sailors presented the Post with a plaque of their own, expressing appreciation for all that the American Legion does.

Also present was Marricka Scott McFadden, Bronx Deputy Borough president.

"We chose to have the property cleaned up as we are gearing to have a Centennial event at this Post" in early October, noted First District Vice Commander Joseph Mondello, who was there helping out with other members of his Post, Theodore Korony Post 253, also

located in the Bronx. "We will be rededicating the Sam Young American Legion Post" at that time.

Mondello added that he researched the namesakes of the two Bronx Posts and discovered that both Theodore Korony and Sam Young were among the allied forces that breached the Hindenburg Line (also known as the Siegfried Line) on Sept. 29, 1918 in France. It was the last line of German defenses on the Western Front in World War I. "Theodore Korony was killed September 29th; Sam Young was wounded September 29th and died on October 3rd."

Samuel H. Young American Legion Post 620 was founded in 1919.



Chief-Select Hospital Corpsman Ernest Ahiabile drives a mower at Samuel H. Young American Legion Post 620.

VETS BRING NEW LIFE TO HISTORIC CEMETERY

TOWN REACHES OUT TO AMERICAN LEGION



Department Commander Gary Schacher is interviewed by Albany's NEWS10 TV at old cemetery in Sharon, NY.

By ANYA TUCKER
NEWS10, Albany
(used with permission)

SHARON, N.Y. (NEWS10) - You've likely seen them along our local highways or tucked away along lonely roadways. Those old family cemeteries that seem to be fading away.

Like many of our old cemeteries, this one in Sharon had become overgrown with brush and was almost forgotten that was until the Sharon Town Supervisor Sandra Manko received an email.

It all started from an email.

"Yes. From one of Christopher Rhines' descendants."

Manko researched the name Christopher Rhines and found that he had been a German immigrant farmer

who had settled in the Schoharie Valley in the early 18th century. He married and had 11 children and was buried in a plot along Parsons Road.

Rhines was also listed as fighting against the crown during the Revolutionary War.

As a veteran, Sandra thought Rhines deserved to be recognized. So she reached out to another present-day veteran.

"I contacted Tony Desmond at the American Legion and said, 'We found another veteran that you can put a flag on every Memorial Day.'"

When Former Schoharie County Sheriff Tony Desmond arrived, he found an overgrown mess.

"I looked and I was like, where is it?" Desmond said.

He enlisted the help of his fellow Legionaries with Post

1269 and a small army of volunteers showed up with rakes and shovels in October.

Rhines's headstone was discovered way in the back.

"We found the headstone right there. It was leaning against that tree. That's his wife's headstone."

They also found more than a dozen field stones set on their sides.

"And we decided that these were for people too."

Very likely, Christopher Rhines's descendants.

Another headstone was discovered while digging a fence post hole.

"It was that deep and lying flat. And it's for a young boy who died in 1833 at the age of 5 months and 10 days old."

The legionnaires' work at the cemetery is now being recognized by their state

commander.

"No veteran should be forgotten. Every veteran for this country signed the dotted line and was offering their life for this country, no matter what," said Gary Schacher, New York American Legion Department Commander.

As for Rhines's descendant who first sent that email inquiring about his great, great, great great grandfather? His name is Timothy Rhines, a veteran himself.

"The work they did was amazing. Just mind-blowing," Rhines said.

"They say as long as you mention a veteran's name they are remembered. So, Christopher, we remember you and thank you for what you did and all your other patriots," Desmond said at the gravesite.

DEPT. DONATES \$10,000 IN MEMORY OF NAVY SEAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT'S MEMORIAL VANDALIZED



Department Commander Gary Schacher, with past National Vice Commander Robert Neville, presents \$10,000 to Maureen and Dan Murphy for the scholarship foundation set up in memory of their son, fallen Navy Seal Lt. Michael P. Murphy. Photo by Mario Cristaldi.

Spurred by the vandalizing of a Medal of Honor recipient's memorial, The American Legion Department of New York donated \$10,000 to the Lt. Michael P. Murphy Memorial Scholarship Foundation. Murphy is a fallen Long Island Navy SEAL who was killed in Afghanistan in 2005 and posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Department Commander Gary Schacher presented the donation Sunday, Sept. 9, to Lieutenant Murphy's parents, Dan and Maureen, for the Scholarship Foundation.

The presentation occurred during the Suffolk County American Legion dinner at Babylon Post 94 in conjunction with a visitation by state Legion, Auxiliary

and Sons of the American Legion leaders. Also present for the presentation was Past American Legion National Vice Commander and Past Department Commander Robert Neville.

The foundation awards some 18 scholarships a year in memory of the former Patchogue resident. Family members started the foundation because, they note,

the fallen SEAL's favorite saying was, "Education will set you free."

This past July Lt. Murphy's local monument plaque was vandalized, which shocked the community and got the attention of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who, news media reported, was "appalled and disgusted" by the memorial's destruction.

MRS. NEW YORK IS LEGIONNAIRE, ADVOCATES FOR VETERANS

by THE AMERICAN LEGION

As a 12-year-old living in the Bronx on the first day at a new school, the image of a dark cloud of smoke hanging over New York City on Sept. 11, 2001, stayed with Patti Gomez-Michalkow – as did the memory of the National Guardsmen who tried to comfort her at the time, telling her it was going to be "OK."

A little less than 14 years after that experience, Gomez-Michalkow joined the New York Army National Guard, serving for three years as a human intelligence collector in the 42nd Infantry Division. But her military experience is just part of the picture. In 2018 the 29-year-old was crowned Mrs. New York, using her title to advocate on behalf of veterans. She also works for a Syracuse financial firm as a senior marketing manager, is a member of American Legion Post 141 in Manlius, and serves as an ambassador for the nonprofit *Pin-Ups for Vets*.



WITH LEGIONNAIRE'S HELP

USS ARIZONA SAILOR MEMORIALIZED ON PEARL HARBOR DAY

By ROBERT STRONACH

UTICA, NY -- Petty Officer Gerald J. "Bob" Magee of Utica died at his battle station aboard the U.S.S. Arizona on Dec. 7, 1941 – one of more than 2,400 Americans killed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that thrust the U.S. into World War II.

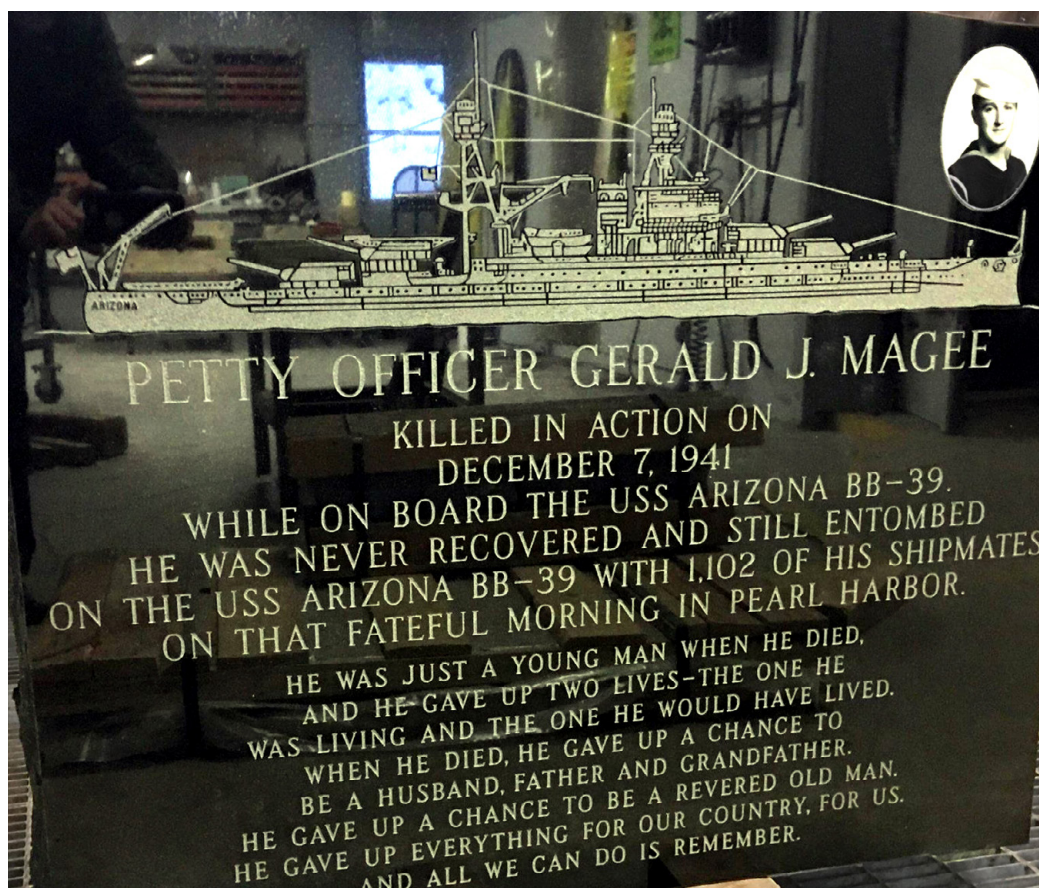
Thanks to Legionnaire Mark Williamson, Magee is now memorialized in a granite monument along Utica's Memorial Parkway and in a Pearl Harbor exhibit at the Oneida County History Center.

The unveiling of the exhibit and of the monument took place on Pearl Harbor Day.

"Mark Williamson had THE role in this," noted Magee's nephew, retired Army Major David DeSantis. Williamson, a member of Utica Post 229 and a retired Navy Master Chief who works with Junior ROTC cadets at Proctor High School, encouraged DeSantis to donate items to the History Center and "made the monument happen," DeSantis said. "His JROTC kids raised the money."

For Williamson, it was an opportunity to bring patriotism and history to life for his young cadets so they will become "viable men and women who do the right thing."

"It's all part of making a good person," he said.



Granite monument to USS Arizona sailor Gerald J. "Bob" Magee was unveiled in Utica, NY on Pearl Harbor Day, thanks to Legionnaire Mark Williamson and his JROTC cadets.

Produced by Yorkville Memorials at cost, the granite monument sports images of the Arizona and Magee, along with an inscription honoring Magee's service and sacrifice.

The centerpiece of the Pearl Harbor exhibit is Magee's Cruise Album. "It's a yearbook for a ship," explained DeSantis. It includes pictures of Magee and other sailors on the ship, pictures of other battleships that the Arizona sailed with, diary entries by Magee, and other material, including photos and letters that the family added after Magee's death.

DeSantis called the Cruise Album a "stunning" piece of history, and said he was only aware of one other copy -- the Arizona Cruise Album on display at the Pearl Harbor Museum. "I consider it to be priceless."

The family had possession of the album only because the 20-year-old Magee came home for a funeral six months before the attack and left it with his father. DeSantis and his family donated the album along with Magee's other personal effects, such as posthumous medals and certificates, and Navy photo.

History Center Executive Director Brian Howard said the exhibit items "are of national historical significance" and that "this History Center is deeply humbled and honored to receive the mementos" of a local sailor "who gave his life aboard the battleship U.S.S. Arizona."

"Their preservation here ties Oneida County to this pivotal moment in world history, and will help to inspire our area's residents for generations to come. Our sincere thanks are extended to Magee's family for this priceless gift to the community."



American Legion members from Jesse Clipper Post 430 were among those who helped break ground for a Buffalo memorial that will pay tribute to African American veterans. From left are: Rev. Eugene L. Pierce, past post commander; Perry Civils, post sgt.-at-arms; Erie County Adjutant Jim Bojanowski; Post Commander Paulette Woods; Paul Woods, WWII coordinator; State Assemblywoman Chrystal Peoples-Stokes; Henry Curtis, post adjutant and past post commander; and Deacon Michael Davis, post chaplain.

AFRICAN AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL LEGION MEMBERS HELP BREAK GROUND IN BUFFALO

BUFFALO – Members of the American Legion participated in a groundbreaking ceremony on Nov. 9 for a memorial that will pay tribute to African American veterans in Western New York.

The memorial at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park will consist of 12 pillars representing 12 military conflicts

in which African Americans fought, plus a brick foundation inscribed with names of the fallen.

Among the participants were members of Jessie Clipper American Legion Post 430, named after the first Buffalo African American to die in World War I.

“We as African Americans have been shedding our blood for this country since

its very inception,” Vietnam Veteran Walter Cole told WKBW news.

“May these hallowed grounds be a place where all people may gather to remember that it was not just one gender, one race, not just one heritage, that served our country with bravery and loyalty,” noted Darius Pridgen, Buffalo Common Council president

and U.S. Air Force veteran .

Vietnam Veteran Ken Stevens told WKBW that he hopes the memorial will educate students on the African American soldiers that were once forgotten.

Construction of the monument will begin next spring, with plans for completion by Veterans Day 2019.

CONCORD LEGION FAMILY BOASTS ‘AMERICAN LEGION DRIVE’

After a year of working with local and county officials, Concord American Legion Post 431 and Auxiliary Unit 431 in Springville were successful in having a portion of Zoar Valley Road given the honorary name of American Legion Drive, reports Auxiliary President Anne M. Baglio. A ceremony took place in August to unveil the sign, which kicked off their Legion centennial celebration.

“We had music, food, bounce house birthday cake, horse drawn carriage rides and lots of fun,” Baglio said. “We had approximately 100 Legion Family members come and celebrate.”

Now the Legion Family is working to have the name of the road permanently changed, including extensions in the Village of Springville.

A CHAT WITH TED ROOSEVELT IV

SCHACHER MEETS WITH GRANDSON OF A LEGION FOUNDER

Department of New York Commander Gary Schacher had a sit-down with Ted Roosevelt IV, grandson of Theodore Roosevelt III (known as Theodore Roosevelt Jr.), who is not only one of the founders of The American Legion, but is often referred to as its father.

The chat took place Dec. 3 at the New York Athletic Club Post 754 in New York City.

Commander Schacher had one word to describe the get-together – “phenomenal!”

He said he was impressed by the Roosevelt family’s patriotism and outstanding service to the country. Ted Roosevelt IV himself was a Vietnam War Navy SEAL before working for the State Department and eventu-



Commander Gary Schacher (right) with Ted Roosevelt IV.

ally entering the world of business and banking. His dad, Theodore Roosevelt IV, commonly known as Theodore Roosevelt III, was a World War II Navy pilot. His grandfather, who was the son of President Teddy Roosevelt,

died in France in July 1944. So, the father of the American Legion not only served in World War I, but returned to duty for World War II.

Commander Schacher first met Roosevelt at the national convention in Min-

neapolis this past August, where Roosevelt spoke at the commander’s luncheon, and then they ran into each other in the hallway and Schacher suggested doing an interview. They agreed to meet again back in New York.

LEGIONNAIRES HELP LAY 12,000 WREATHS AT SARATOGA

New York State American Legion Commander Gary Schacher and a contingent of Legionnaires and Legion Riders joined some 2,000 volunteers at Saratoga National Cemetery on Dec. 15 to lay wreaths on the graves of veterans as part of Wreaths Across America Day.

Civil Air Patrol Lt. Col. Anita Martin, one of the event coordinators, said more than 2,000 volunteers signed up to help lay the wreaths, the Glens Falls Post-Star reported. Following a ceremony that featured Civil Air Patrol and Air Force speakers, the volun-



teers spread out across the cemetery to lay a total of 12,000 wreaths.

The Wreaths Across America Project began in 1992 at Arlington National

Cemetery. Since then, it has expanded to over 1,000 sites around the country.

