

THE GREENLAWN BUGLE



Greenlawn Post 1244

Spring 2024

Boys State / Girls State 2024

Harborfields High School



L-R: Dr. Rory Manning Superintendent of Harborfields School District, Dr. Marie Netto Principal Harborfields High School, Delegates Cole Johnston, Max Vaughan, Sam Brettischneider; Leo Meagher, Nolan Surbeck, Luke Ricci and William Magnus; Ed O'Shea and Charlie Armstrong



From left, Ed O'Shea, Dr. Marie Netto Principal, Delegate Elizabeth Michalopoulos, Alternate Bridget Hickey, Charlie Armstrong and Dr. Rory Manning, Superintendent.

Walt Whitman High School



L-R: Charlie Armstrong, Corey Blair (Asst Principal - Head of Counseling), Delegates Demetri Parrish, Ryan Johnstone, Edward Flores Medina, Cash Resta, John Marr, Luca Coiffi, Mathew Johnstone, and Vladimir Jean Baptiste, Ed O'Shea



L-R: Charlie Armstrong, Corey Blair, Asst. Principal - Head of Counseling; Lauren Breaton (Delegate), Alexa Costello (Alternate), Ed O'Shea and Hal Dieterle.

Boys State / Girls State 2024

Huntington High School



L-R: Joe Leavy, Dir. of Humanities, Delegate Nicholas Plachta, Ed O'Shea and Charlie Armstrong



It has been almost 90 years since our Boy's and Girl's State programs were first initiated, and our Post has been involved for the last 16 years. To date we have sent over 200 well qualified students to this unique summertime educational program.

Only students with outstanding qualities of leadership, character, scholarship, loyalty and service to their school and community are considered. We must thank the schools for providing us with a list of such students for us to interview and consider, and also thank the local community which provides the financial support which enables us to send a good number of these students each year.

By this time each year, we have interviewed students from these lists, and made the very difficult selections of who will get the opportunity to participate in Boy's & Girl's State. A number of years ago, Ed O'Shea said

“My opportunities to interview candidates for these programs over the last few years have restored my confidence in our youth.

“The values, knowledge, leadership skills and confidence of all the candidates have given me new hope for the future of our republic.”

We have selected 21 students for this year's Boy's & Girl's State programs, and are now in the process of gathering the necessary paperwork to get them enrolled. They will be departing for “A WEEK THAT SHAPES A LIFETIME” soon after this school year ends.

*Charlie Armstrong
Chairman
Boys State / Girls State*

Operation Enduring Care



Operation Enduring Care, a veteran-operated project, was established 15 years ago by Albert and Connie Statton after they saw veterans' needs due to illness, environmental issues, and homelessness were not being fully met.

American Legion Post 1244 in Greenlawn, along with the help of many other organizations on Long Island, have collected and distributed hygiene items, clothing, non-perishable food, and household items to the Northport VA Medical Center nursing home, hospital, and hospice units, and Beacon House in Northport and Bayshore. Beacon House also provides for many veterans in need of bedding, small appliances and other household items when transitioning to permanent housing. We are also able to provide help to other veteran organizations.

I am honored to have taken the reins since Al's passing. He was a Greenlawn firefighter, Army veteran and dedicated Post member. As with any endeavor of this sort, we rely on donations and volunteers to make this work. With the help of Connie Statton and other post members, I intend to keep Operation Enduring Care going for many years to come.

Al and Connie have cultivated many relationships with generous and supportive individuals and organizations over the years. With the help of Post 1244 and the Centurion Cruisers Car Club, we have had great success in making people aware of the needs of our veterans. I am always amazed at the depth of patriotism and generosity shown by adults and young people who attend the events.

Operation Enduring Care will be at the 29th Annual Good Friday "Good Faith Walk" on March 29th at 12 noon where we will honor Albert Statton and help St. Hugh of Lincoln Parish Outreach. Contributions for Operation Enduring Care and St. Hugh's will be accepted at this event. Please join us at the Walt Whitman High School track, 301 West Hills Rd., Huntington Station, NY. Any questions can be directed to Ginger Hoering, Event Coordinator, at 631-271-8581.

In closing, as Chaplain I ask that we never forget our veterans past and present who sacrificed their time, energy, and lives to defend this great country; and to remember the families and loved ones who sacrificed with them.

John Carr, Chaplain

(516) 935-4268

P38Lightning45@gmail.com

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TO LISTEN WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK

TO REACH OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING

Post Service Officer - You Earned It!

All Veterans exposed to toxins and other hazards during military service eligible for VA health care beginning March 5

The American Legion
February 26, 2024

Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024.

This means that all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll.

As directed by President Biden, this expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act — meaning that millions of veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law. This is a critical step forward because veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in overall quality ratings and patient satisfaction ratings. Additionally, VA health care is often more affordable than non-VA health care for veterans.

VA encourages all eligible veterans to visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care beginning March 5. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on August 10, 2022, more than 500,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care.

“If you’re a veteran who may have been exposed to toxins or hazards while serving our country, at home or abroad, we want you to come to us for the health care you deserve,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “VA is proven to be the best, most affordable health care in America for veterans – and once you’re in, you have access for life. So don’t wait, enroll starting March 5th.”

“Beginning March 5, we’re making millions of



Exposures to toxins via burn pits are among the many hazards covered by the new expansion of VA benefits..

Department of Defense Photo

Veterans eligible for VA health care years earlier than called for by the PACT Act,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D. “With this expansion, VA can care for all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11. We can also care for veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty here at home – by working with chemicals, pesticides, lead, asbestos, certain paints, nuclear weapons, x-rays, and more. We want to bring all of these veterans to VA for the care they’ve earned and deserve.”

In addition to expanding access to VA care, this decision makes it quicker and easier for millions of veterans to enroll. Many veterans believe they must apply to receive VA disability compensation benefits to become eligible for VA health care, but this is not correct. With this expansion and other authorities, millions of eligible veterans can enroll directly in VA care – without any need to first apply for VA benefits.

This expansion of care covers Vietnam veterans, Gulf War veterans, Iraq War veterans, Afghanistan War veterans, veterans who deployed in support of contingency operations for the Global War on Terror

(Continued on page 5)

Expansion of VA Health Care

(Continued from page 4)

(Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission), and more.

This expansion also covers many veterans who never deployed as a part of a conflict but were exposed to toxins or hazards while serving in the U.S. Specifically, under this expansion of care, any veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (TERA) — at home or abroad — is eligible for VA health care. VA has determined that veterans who were exposed to one or more of the following hazards or conditions during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training participated in a TERA: air pollutants (burn pits, sand, dust, particulates, oil well fires, sulfur fires); chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, depleted uranium with embedded shrapnel, contaminated water); occupational hazards (asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, paints including chemical agent resistant coating, firefighting foams); radiation (nuclear weapons handling, maintenance and detonation, radioactive material, calibration and measurement sources, X-rays, radiation from military

occupational exposure); warfare agents (nerve agents, chemical and biological weapons); and more. VA will use all available information to determine if veterans participated in a TERA, including military records and service connection.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping veterans and their survivors, visit VA's PACT Act Dashboard. To apply for care or benefits today, visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or call 1-800-MYVA411. More information on eligibility can be found at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

For assistance and information regarding all veterans benefits contact:

**Post 1244 Service Officer Scott McCord
Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency
(631) 853-VETS (8387)**

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest

Maureen Kennedy, of St. Pius V School in Melville, finished in 2nd place at the Department Finals on Saturday, March 2. The contest was held at the Crown Plaza Desmond Hotel in Albany.

Maureen competed in the Suffolk County, 10th District and Zone 2 contests to be eligible to compete in the New York State Finals.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students.

Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

For her achievement, Maureen received a Department of New York Scholarship Award of \$4,000.

Maureen was sponsored by American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244.



Mary Kennedy of St. Pius V School in Melville receiving a plaque from Department Commander Tim Collmer



Spotlight on the Community

Rebecca Sanin Suffolk County Legislator District 16



Prior to your entering public service, what were your jobs in the private sector?

I have worked as a public servant my entire career in either the nonprofit sector or in government. In the nonprofit sector, my early

work focused largely on early childhood and building strong services to meet the needs of families and our youngest residents.

The brain develops most between the years of 0 and 5 and it is vital to ensure young children have access to early education, nutrition and the ingredients that support a positive trajectory for their lives. I taught Developmental Psychology as an adjunct professor at some of our local colleges.

Most recently, my work in the nonprofit sector was as the President and CEO of the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island (HWCLI), the region's health and human services umbrella agency. Here, I worked on advocacy and policy, building strong multi-sector stakeholder coalitions to solve problems and ensuring our neediest neighbors were able to be effectively served.

What was your first position in public service?

While I have always worked in positions of serving the public, my first position in Government was in 2012 when I started working for Suffolk County, initially overseeing constituent affairs. I coordinated efforts of addressing individual and community concerns for individuals and families all across the County.

A few months after starting in that position, Super Storm Sandy hit our region and I played a key role in helping communities navigate, working with disaster recovery centers and addressing the short-term crisis and long-term planning needs in Suffolk County.

I was eventually promoted to Assistant Deputy County Executive where I worked on making government more effective and efficient and worked with nonprofits to better serve vulnerable families. I am happy to be back at the County and to use the vast experience I have inside and outside of government to ensure Suffolk

County residents can live their best lives.

How do you see yourself helping veterans in your role as a Suffolk County Legislator?

Veterans are a priority to me as the granddaughter, niece and daughter of veterans. Suffolk County is home to the greatest population of Veterans in our State and we must do more to protect and serve those who protected and served us.

On an individual level, my office is well acquainted with the services at the Northport VA as well as the supportive nonprofits in Suffolk County that work with and serve veterans. This is important because constituents reach out regularly and serving them with distinction and honor is a vital priority. Working with our departments, such as DSS, Health and Veteran's Affairs, is vital to serving our veteran residents.

Many veterans need assistance with food through SNAP, housing, and resources to address any trauma that can have long lasting impacts. I am ready and determined to be of service.

What are your goals for the residents of the 16th Legislative District?

I am proud to live in District 16 and witness the incredible people who choose to call our community home. There are challenges that we face--- environmental issues, affordability, safety and much more.

I will champion legislation and be a voice and strong advocate to ensure that every one of my neighbors can live their best lives. This does require at times standing up for funding, standing against policies that could be harmful, ensuring that we are preserving open space and addressing the challenges facing our aging residents.

I will be an advocate and a champion and stand with and for my neighbors to ensure the best opportunities exist for our district and County.

By Mary Flatley

American Legion Riders



The American Legion Riders of Post 1244 have made it through another month. February was pretty quiet for us, so we were able to clean the motorcycles, change the oil and just go through “motorcycle withdrawal” not being able to ride. Who am I kidding?

George said that I don’t change the oil on my motorcycle, I just buy new ones. Well, I have changed my oil, but since I have been with the American Legion I have had five motorcycles. I believe this obsession has rubbed off on a few others. Victor recently purchased a new Honda Goldwing. When I was out east with my wife and grandkids, my grandson asked to stop in the Harley Davidson dealer. Who am I to say “no?” Well, my wife saw a motorcycle she liked and who am I to argue? So I got it. That’s my story and I am going to stick with it!



Joe Spinelli on his new ride.

Since, Joe got his new bike, he is looking forward to putting a lot of miles on it. Then there’s Steve. He just couldn’t bear to leave his new

bike on the showroom floor, so off in the snow he rode it home. Finally, Billy could not be more proud to now



Steve Scinta’s new wheels

own our dear departed brother, Herb Walker’s motorcycle. Herb will be riding along with us posthumously. So now Billy, the man who does not like Harley Davidson Motorcycles, has 2 of them! (And about 30 other motorcycles). His wife is not thrilled with all of them, but the

DMV loves him when he has to

pay the registrations on them. This summer, the riders of Post 1244 will be sharp as we ride down the road! The winter is also a good time for some of the Riders to heal. Bob, Craig , Brian and Angus - we need you all back soon.

*Bruce Blanco, Director
American Legion Riders
Greenlawn Chapter 1244*

Huntington St. Patrick’s Day Parade

On Sunday, March 10, our Riders represented the post at Huntington’s Annual St. Patrick Day Parade.

They found the spirit of the day to be warm but the weather was definitely not warm. As Bruce put it: “It was cold, with heavy rain, and we got WET!”



American Legion Riders Installation of Officers



1st Vice Commander Carlo Giordano swearing in the newly elected officers of American Legion Riders Chapter 1244 at our January 10 meeting. The officers are:

Bruce Blanco - President, Charlie Restivo - Vice President and Chaplain, Craig Lanigan - Treasurer
Brian Gerken - Sgt. at Arms, Eric Lenio - Secretary, Bill Bartasek - Road Captain, Vic Ramondetta - Road Captain

Northport VA Medical Center Veterans Service Organizations Meeting

Notes from the March 11, 2024 VSO Meeting:

* The parking project has been slightly delayed due to weather. Water issues are a result of construction but are remedied as soon as possible. Elevator in Building 11 (interior) is being repaired, The external elevator is another project.

*VAMC Northport has been inspected by different organizations (Mental Health and TLC). Both are expected to receive excellent marks.

*COVID update only one admission, others being followed as outpatients.

*Much discussion on PACT Act as it enters new phase.

The VBA, has given out 1.85 Billion dollars in benefits from the program. 4.1 million have had exposure survey

*There is no need to be service connected for toxic treatments. Toxic Exposure Risk Activity (TERA) is not limited to primary care, screening can be in specialty care.

*VA is trying to be proactive rather than reactive on toxic exposure .

Information is at www.va.gov/PACT

VAMC Northport has screened over 20 thousand veterans.

Thread of Resilience Project

According to the Department of Defense, in the year 2022 there were 8,492 reports of sexual assault in the military. The Air Force saw an increase of 13%, the Marine Corps saw an increase of 3% and the Navy saw an increase of 9%. The Army saw a decline.

The Thread of Resilience Project at the Northport VA is a program where veterans are interviewed about their experiences of military sexual trauma. I took part in the program and was interviewed by a fellow female veteran over the course of an hour at the Northport VA. A photographer took pictures of my left hand which was covered by a red thread to symbolize resilience. It was an incredible experience and a cathartic one as well as I

was able to verbalize the trauma I encountered while serving in the Marine Corps.

During the month of April an exhibit will be shown in the Lobby of Building 200 at the Northport VA. All veterans who come to the VA for appointments during the month of April can view for themselves the photographs and statements of the veterans who participated in this noteworthy program. I thank the Social Work Department at the VA and the veterans who worked in tandem with the social workers to make this exhibit possible.

Mary Flatley



THREAD OF RESILIENCE
Weaving Veterans' Stories

SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FOR THIS VETERAN LED PROJECT



INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT?

Call 631-261-4400 x7012 or x5676 by February 1, 2024
Participation includes a telephone call to review project details, followed by a photoshoot and interview with Veteran artist at the Northport VA.

The art installation will be displayed at the Northport VA in April 2024 during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month



Your DD214

What is a DD214?

The Defense Department issues to each veteran a DD-214, identifying the veteran's condition of discharge - honorable, general, other than honorable, dishonorable or bad conduct.

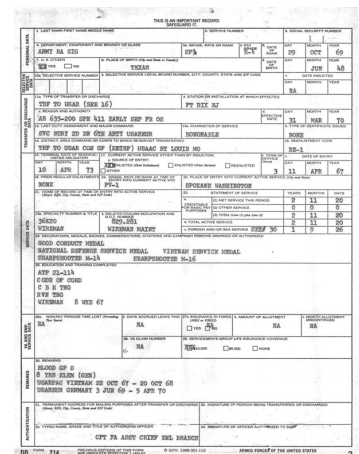
Why is a DD214 important?

The Report of Separation contains information normally needed to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in veterans' organizations. Information shown on the Report of Separation may include the service member's:

- Date and place of entry into active duty
- Home address at time of entry
- Date and place of release from active duty
- Home address after separation
- Last duty assignment and rank
- Military job specialty
- Military education
- Decorations, medals, badges, citations, and campaign awards
- Total creditable service
- Foreign service credited
- Separation information (type of separation, character of service, authority and reason for separation, separation and reenlistment eligibility codes)

To request military service records held by the NPRC, veterans and the next-of-kin of **deceased** veterans can use their web interface at vetrecs.archives.gov

Or they and others can use the **Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records** (link is on the vetrecs.archives.gov page. Although not mandatory, the SF 180 is the recommended method to send a request for military service information. This form captures all the necessary information to locate a record. Provide as much information on the form as possible and send copies of any service documents that you may have. Requests may also be submitted as a letter. Your letter should parallel the basic information requested in the SF 180. Please see that form for details on the information that you should include within your letter.



All members are encouraged to provide a copy of your DD214 to your Post1244 Adjutant.

Your Adjutant will also have copies of the SF 180 form for you to use. You may white out your social security number.

Your post can then provide a copy to you or your next of kin whenever needed.



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Vice Commander's Message



The month of February brought back a lot of memories for me.

Fifteen years ago, I was preparing to deploy to Afghanistan.

It was quite the process: medical clearance (more shots), update my will, and

assemble all the gear that I would need.

Then, the hard goodbyes to family and friends.

Finally, the day came to report. While walking to the plane, my thought was "What the hell am I doing?" But I got aboard and we were on our way.

After a long, long flight we landed at Manas Air Base - a transit center in Kyrgyzstan. There we would be issued new body armor and Kevlar helmets and then

board a C-17 to continue on to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

Now many of you know that when you deploy it does not mean they are taking you to a country club. Bagram was a lot of dirt, concrete, chain link fence, razor wire and an unfriendly location. But, because it was a large base, it was not as bad as some of the smaller bases.

So, for the next several months, you do the job you were sent to do and count the days until you get to go home.

Carlo Giordano
1st Vice Commander
631-487-4776
msgtlegion@gmail.com

Welcome new members of Post 1244

Arnold Haskell
George M. Wright

Notice: Post 1244 Election of Officers

Election of Officers for the next Legion Year will be held at our next regular meeting on April 10 at 8:00 pm.

The official slate of candidates is as follows:

- ◆ Commander: Carlo Giordano
- ◆ 1st Vice Commander: Stephen Scinta
- ◆ 2nd Vice Commander: Douglas Blair
- ◆ Adjutant: Ed Hayde
- ◆ Finance Officer: Vincent Antolin
- ◆ Service Officer: Scott McCord
- ◆ Chaplain: John Carr
- ◆ Sgt at Arms: Joseph Desomma

Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the meeting prior to the closing of nominations.

We urge all members to attend and participate in this election.

Greenlawn Bugle Ideas Welcome



Do you have an idea for our newsletter?

Please contact Bob Santo at:
post1244@verizon.net
or 516-458-7881

To subscribe to our weekly email: "Veterans News" Contact Bob at the email above. Keep up with what is going on at your post.

Book Drive for Northport VA

We are looking for donations of appropriate books to fill the bookshelves in the waiting rooms at the Northport VA Medical Center.

Hardback books or paperbacks in good condition are preferred. No magazines.

We can also use puzzles/board games and DVD's.

Contact Sean Delle 631-208-7004.

Members please bring your books to our next monthly meeting, or call Sean to arrange a pickup if you cannot attend.

2024 Flag Drop Box Schedule American Legion - Greenlawn Post 1244

January 2 - February 1. Half Hollow Hills, Dix Hills

February 1 - March 1. Half Hollow Hills, Melville

March 1 - April 1. Northport

April 1 - May 1. East Northport

May 1 - July 1. South Huntington

July 1 - Aug 1. Huntington - Huntington Station Branch

Aug 1 - Sept 3. Huntington

Sept 3 - Oct 1. Harborfields

Elwood . Oct 1 - Nov 1

Commack - Nov 1 - Dec 2

Cold Spring Harbor -Dec 2 - Jan 2

- Any flags dropped off at the libraries when the Flag Drop Box is not present will be sent to the South Huntington Public Library for Collection.
- The Northport American Legion Post 694 also has a drop box year round at 7 Woodside Avenue, Northport.

THE GREENLAWN BUGLE

*The Greenlawn Bugle: Editor, Publisher Bob Santo
Contributing Writers: Charlie Armstrong, Bruce Blanco,
John Carr, Mary Flatley, Carlo Giordano,
Photos by: Bob Santo, Bruce Blanco,
Copy Editor Madelaine Santo; Advertising Manager: Walter Rabe*

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Theresa Mari Councilwoman Town of Huntington

★ *Thank you* ★

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& THEIR FAMILIES



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Tmari@Huntingtonny.gov



*Thank you for your
service to our great
nation and for the
sacrifices you and your
family make to protect
our freedom.*

Councilwoman Brooke A.
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BLupinacci@huntingtonny.gov

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The Greenlawn Civic Association

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Thank you for your service!

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We are grateful for your service.

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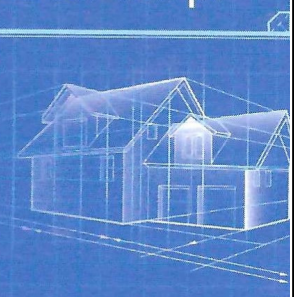
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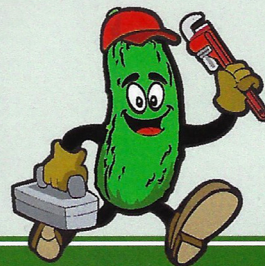
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