**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS BLAZING STAR POST #1574**

**17 CANNON AVENUE**

**STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314**

**Website. http://blazingstarvfwpost1574.org/wp**

**September 2019**

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| BLAZING STAR POST 1574 CONTACT NUMBERSAl Porto, Commander - 718-578-1242, albert.porto38@gmail.comPaul Dietrich, Quartermaster - 718-698-5269, paul@the-dietrichs.comWilliam Alcock, Adjutant - 718-698-1923 |

**Calendar Events**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Event  | Location  | Time | Remarks |
| 4 September | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 2 October | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 22-23 October | Blood Drive | College of Staten Island | TBA |  |
| 2 November | Poppy Distribution | Shoprite | 0900-1500 |  |
| 6 November | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 8 November | Poppy Distribution | SI Ferry | 0700-1000 |  |
| 8 November | Poppy Distribution | Bayway Refinery | 1100-1300 |  |
| 9 November | Poppy Distribution | Stop and Shop | 0900-1500 |  |
| 10 November | Poppy Distribution | Stop and Shop | 0900-1500 |  |
| 4 December | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |

1. Join Senator Andrew Lanza & Assemblyman Michael Cusick for a ****Veterans Barbecue**** Honoring all those who have served Sunday, September 15, 2019 12:00 – 3:00 P.M. Willowbrook Park 1 Eton Place Staten Island, NY 0314 Barbecue

area is located near the Eton Place entrance. RSVP by calling: Senator Andrew Lanza - (718) 984-4073
Assemblyman Michael Cusick - (718) 370-1384.

2. VVA annual POW-MIA ceremony Sunday Sept 22nd at 1300 at corner of Manor Road and Martling Ave please wear cover.

**Membership**

1. Consider Life Membership. You save money over the long run and eliminate the need to renew yearly. Below are the membership rates for Life membership and Installment Plan Life Membership.

**Age on 31 Dec             Payment in Full             Installment Plan Option
                         Total:                   Initial Fee:        11 payments of:**

Through Age 30               $425.00                $45.00                $38.64

31-40                                  $410.00                $45.00                $37.27

41-50                                  $375.00                $45.00                $34.09

51-60                                  $335.00                $45.00                $30.45

61-70                                  $290.00                $45.00                $26.36

71-80                                  $225.00                $45.00                $20.45

81 and over                        $170.00                $45.00                $15.45

2. Dues Renewal Reminder:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Eans, Ernest** | **UnPaid** | ***6/30/2019*** | **EXPIRED** |
|  | **Gomes, Dannyel** | **UnPaid** | ***6/30/2019*** | **EXPIRED** |
|  | **Nelson, Eric** | **UnPaid** | ***5/31/2019*** | **EXPIRED** |
|  | **Santiago, Luis A** | **UnPaid** | ***4/30/2019*** | **EXPIRED** |

**Service Officer**

1. Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA health care so they are on record should they ever need it.  No cost to apply.  Apply on line at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/vfw](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CAlbert%5CDocuments%5CVFW%5CNewsletters%202011%5Cwww.va.gov%5Chealtheligibility%5Cvfw) or call 1-877-222-8387.

2. DD Form 214 website. http://vetrecs.archives.gov. If you need assistance, contact the post service officer, Doug Encarcion.

3. Survivor Outreach Services. The website has a lot of information for those left behind when a service member or veteran passes. <http://www.sos.army.mil/> or <http://www.westpointmwr.com/acs/survivor_outreach_services.html>

4. To someone going through a difficult time, one simple act has the power to make a difference. Reach out to veterans and service members in your life today – <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ThePowerof1.aspx>.

5. Online Health Care Application.[www.vets.gov](https://www.vets.gov/).  or call 877-222-VETS (8387).

6. Veterans Representative on Staten Island. Monique L. Rada Engagement and Community Services Coordinator

NYC Department of Veterans’ Services 1 Centre Street, Suite 2208 New York, NY 10007 917-628-8487 mrada@veterans.nyc.gov

7. [Vets.gov](http://vets.gov/) Connects Veterans to Services.

8. John Bartow, Assistant VSO, Veterans of Foreign Wars 518-626-5687.

9. The following web site is the medical providers close to your house who have accepted the VA Choice program and are registered to do so.  Quite a few here on SI.  It gives a map where you can see them in relation to where you live or work.  You can also get contact information to reach out to them. <https://www.va.gov/opa/apps/locator/>

10. A VBA Representative at the Staten Island Vet Center every Wednesday.  **There are no walk-ins everyone must call  (718)816-4499 to set up an appointment.**  All services are free. Samuel B. Cottes, Jr., Veterans Outreach

Specialist, Staten Island Veterans Center, US Department of Veterans Affairs; Readjustment Counseling Services, 60 Bay Street, Staten Island, NY 10301 Tel: (718) 816-4499 x 7747 Cell: (929) 359-2449 Fax:  (718) 816-6899

11. Discharge Upgrade Online Tool.

<http://www.ourveterans.nyc/discharge_upgrade_online_tool?utm_campaign=180129&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nycveteransalliance>

**Employment and Education**

1. Looking for a job? Need quality employees? USE VETJOBS! [www.vetjobs.com](http://svarialce.vfwemail.org:81/CT00004002MzA1OTA1NDk%3D.HTML?D=2011-08-26)

2. Vets looking for jobs, the website: 100000jobsmission.com. Go there to apply and search for available jobs specifically held for veterans.

Bottom of Form

General

1. Staten Island University Hospital's Military Appreciation Program. This program entitles active duty members and veterans free parking 12 times per year at the SIUH parking lot. Go to the Security Office with proof of military/veteran status. You will be given 12 parking stamps. Place them on parking ticket and no fee.

2. Free parking for veterans at Richmond County Medical Center. Veterans can park for free in the visitors parking lot where tokens are required. Stop at the main reception desk or security post, show proof you are a veteran (drivers license with vet on it, retired ID card, VA card or similar) and they will give you a free token for the parking lot. Get it on the way in as the reception/info desk is not manned all night. Use the token to exit the lot. Saves you $4 per visit.

3. The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to the following personnel. Returned

home are:

**Army Cpl. Gudmund C. Johnson, Jr.,** Co K, 3rd Bn, 35th Infantry Regt, 25th Infantry Div, POW Camp #5, North Korea. **Army Cpl. Charles H. Grubb,** Co M, 3rd Bn, 31st Infantry Regt, 7th Inf Div, Dec. 1, 1950, Chosin Reservoir, North Korea.

**Army Sgt. Gerald B. Raeymacker,** Btry B, 57th FA Bn, 31st RCT. Dec. 6, 1950, Chosin Reservoir, North Korea.

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Stewart Jordan,** USS Nelson, June 12, 1944, off the coast of Normandy, France.

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Brady O. Prewitt,** USS Oklahoma, Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor.

**Navy Fireman 2nd Class Albert Renner,** USS West Virginia, Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor.

4. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is seeking the public’s help to find and encourage more MIA families to donate a DNA sample to help speed the identification process of recovered remains. Each military service and the State Department has a service casualty office that can explain how to donate.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Army: 800-892-2490 | Navy: 800-443-9298 | State Department: 202-485-6106 |
| Marine Corps: 800-847-1597 | Air Force: 800-531-5501 |  |

5. Staten Island Community TV: Veterans TV Shows are available 24 hours a day via Youtube. To view, google "Youtube, Ed Salek, In Honor of" or go to Youtube.com and search for Ed Salek, In Honor of.

6. Now you can shop online at the PX.  For more information on the Veterans online shopping benefit, please go to  <https://www.shopmyexchange.com/community> and click on Veteran info.

**Items of Interest**

**Outsmarting Pickpockets and Thieves**

**By Rick Steves**

While Europe has little violent crime, it does have its share of petty purse snatching, pickpocketing, phone grabbing, and general ripping off of tourists — especially in places where tourists gather. Thieves target vacationers — not because they're mean, but because they're smart. We're the ones with all the good stuff in our bags and wallets. Loaded down with valuables, jetlagged, and bumbling around in a strange new environment, we stick out like jeweled thumbs. If I were a European street thief, I'd specialize in Americans — my card would say "Yanks R Us." If you're not constantly on guard, you'll have something stolen. One summer, four out of five of my traveling companions lost cameras in one way or another. (Don't look at me.) But in more than 4,000 days of travel, I've been pickpocketed just once (on the Paris Metro, on a rare day I wasn't wearing my money belt) and mugged a single time (in a part of London where only fools and thieves tread). My various rental cars have been broken into a total of six times (broken locks, shattered windows, lots of nonessential stuff taken), and one car was hot-wired (and abandoned a few blocks away after the thief found nothing to take). Not one of my hotel rooms has ever been rifled through, and I simply don't let thoughts of petty crime — or the rare instance of it — spoil the fun of being abroad. If you exercise adequate discretion, stay aware of your belongings, and avoid putting yourself into risky situations (such as unlit, deserted areas at night), your travels should be about as dangerous as hometown grocery shopping. Don't travel fearfully — travel carefully.

Here's some advice given to me by a thief who won the lotto.

**Be prepared.** Before you go, take steps to minimize your potential loss. Make copies and/or take photos of [key documents](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/trip-planning/travel-documents), and store them online. Consider getting [theft insurance](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/trip-planning/travel-insurance) for expensive electronics. Leave your fancy bling at home. Luxurious luggage lures thieves. They'll choose the most impressive suitcase in the pile — never mine.

If your phone disappears, you're not just out the cost of the device — but also the photos and personal data stored on it. It's smart to take extra precautions before your trip: Make sure you've got a "find my phone"-type app, back up your data, and enable password protection. While traveling, use the Wi-Fi at your hotel to back up your phone and its photos each night. If you don't know how to sync your stuff to the cloud, learn before your trip.

**Wear a** [**money belt**](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/theft-scams/travel-moneybelt)**.** A money belt is a small, zippered fabric pouch on an elastic strap that fastens around your waist, under your pants or skirt. I never travel without one — it's where I put anything I really, really don't want to lose.

**Leave valuables in your hotel room.** Expensive gear, such as your laptop, is much safer in your room than with you in a day bag on the streets. While hotels often have safes in the room (or at the front desk), I've never bothered to use one, though many find them a source of great comfort. (Some travelers leave their passports secured in the room safe while out for the day.) Theft from hotel rooms happens, of course, but it's relatively rare — hoteliers are quick to squelch a pattern of theft. That said, don't tempt sticky-fingered staff by leaving a camera or tablet in plain view; tuck your enticing things well out of sight. You can also leave your room key at the front desk of many hotels while you're off exploring, so it's less likely to get lost or stolen.

**Secure your bag, gadgets, and other valuables when you're out and about.** Thieves want to quickly separate you from your valuables, so even a minor obstacle can be an effective deterrent. If you're sitting down to eat or rest, loop your daypack strap around your arm, leg, or chair leg. If you plan to sleep on a train (or anywhere in public), clip or fasten your pack or suitcase to the seat, luggage rack, or yourself. Most zippers are lockable, and even a twist-tie, paper clip, or key ring is helpful to keep your bag zipped up tight. The point isn't to make your bag impenetrable, but harder to get into than the next guy's. Never set down valuable items — such as a camera, phone, wallet, or rail pass — on a train seat or restaurant table, where they are easy to swipe. Keep these tucked away. When using your phone at a crowded café, don't place it on the bar: Put it in your front pocket (then return it to a safer place before you leave). Some thieves can even be so bold as to snatch something right out of your hands. For instance, if you're holding up a phone to take a picture of the Eiffel Tower, a thief can grab it and run — and he can navigate his escape route through the streets of Paris far better than you can. Be aware of who's around you. One way to minimize this risk is to keep valuable devices attached to you or your bag (this also reduces the chance of accidentally leaving something behind). For instance, make sure your camera strap is looped around your chest or wrist, even when snapping a photo. Or use a lanyard to attach gadgets to your daypack (if there's no interior attachment point, feed straps through zipper pulls or a sturdy safety pin hooked to the inside of your bag). Be discreet with your hiding places. If you're keeping valuables anywhere but a money belt or other secure pocket (I wouldn't), be as circumspect as possible. Thieves can easily identify the easiest mark — most likely the guy whose back pocket bulges out or the woman who keeps patting her bag to check that her money is still there.

**Stay vigilant in crowds and steer clear of commotions.** Go on instant alert anytime there's a commotion; it's likely a [smokescreen for theft](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/theft-scams/tourist-scams). Imaginative artful-dodger thief teams create a disturbance — a fight, a messy spill, or a jostle or stumble — to distract their victims. Crowds anywhere, but especially on public transit and at flea markets, provide bad guys with plenty of targets, opportunities, and easy escape routes. Be on guard in train stations, especially upon arrival, when you may be overburdened by luggage and overwhelmed by a new location. A petite bump and a slight nudge getting off the Metro in Paris and...wallet gone. That's exactly what happened to me. Take turns watching the bags with your travel partner. Don't absentmindedly set down a bag while you wait in line; stay in physical contact with your stuff. If you check your luggage, keep the claim ticket or locker key in your money belt; thieves know just where to go if they snare one of these. On the train, and especially on city transit, be hyper-alert at stops, when thieves can dash on and off with your bag. City buses that cover tourist sights (such as Rome's notorious #64) are happy hunting grounds. Be on high alert on packed buses and subways; to keep from being easy pickings, some travelers wear their day bag against their chest (looping a strap around one shoulder). Some thieves lurk near subway turnstiles; as you go through, a thief might come right behind you, pick your pocket and then run off, leaving you stuck behind the turnstile and unable to follow. By mentioning these scenarios, I don't want you to be paranoid…just prepared. If you keep alert, you'll keep your valuables, too.

**Establish a "don't lose it" discipline.** Travelers are more likely to inadvertently lose their belongings than to have them stolen. I've known people to leave passports under pillows, bags on the overhead rack on the bus, and phones in the taxi. Always take a look behind you before leaving any place or form of transport. At hotels, stick to an unpacking routine, and don't put things in odd places in the room. Run through a mental checklist every time you pack up again: money belt, passport, phone, other electronic gear, charging cords, toiletries, laundry, and so on. Before leaving a hotel room for good, conduct a quick overall search — under the bed, under the pillows and bedspread, behind the bathroom door, in a wall socket…

**Leave a clue for honest finders.** Accidents happen, and even the most cautious traveler can leave something behind. Maximize your chances of getting it back by taping a tiny note with your email address or travel partner's phone number to any item you really don't want to lose, making it easy for a kind soul to return it. (For phones, you could use an "If Found Please Return To" note as your lock screen, or tuck your business card inside the case.)

**Keep material losses in perspective.** Many tourists get indignant when pickpocketed or ripped off. If it happens to you, it's best to get over it. You're well-off enough to travel, and thieves aren't. You let your guard down and they grabbed your camera. It ruins your day and you have to buy a new one, while they sell it for a week's wages on their scale. If a thief has robbed you of your belongings, don't let them rob you any further by allowing the loss to ruin your entire trip. (See my tips for [handling the loss of critical items](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/theft-scams/losing-it-all).) There probably aren't more thieves in Europe than in the US. We just notice them more because they target tourists. But remember, nearly all crimes suffered by tourists are nonviolent and avoidable. Be aware of the pitfalls of traveling, but relax and have fun. Limit your vulnerability rather than your travels.