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

**17 CANNON AVENUE**

**STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314**

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

**May 2015**

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| BLAZING STAR POST 1574 CONTACT NUMBERS  Al Porto, Commander - 718-578-1242, albert.porto38@gmail.com  Paul Dietrich, Quartermaster - 718-698-5269, paul@the-dietrichs.com  William Alcock, Adjutant - 718-698-1923 |

**IN MEMORIUM**

**[](http://media.silive.com/obituaries/photo/pszczola-001jpg-c6871d0fa240e02c.jpg)**

Travis native John Pszczola, 94, a retired U.S. Customs supervisor and World War II veteran, died April 15 at home.

Mr. Pszczola lived in Travis almost all his life, until relocating to Columbis, NJ in 2000. He served in the U.S. Navy as a gunner's mate during World War II. Stationed aboard the light cruiser USS Boise, he saw duty in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters of operation. He was a member of the Gold Star Post, American Legion; a member and past commander of the Blazing Star Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a member of the Military Order of the Cootie. Mr. Pszczola worked for the U.S. Customs Department for three decades. He held the posts of searcher, inspector, patrol office supervisor, and retired in 1977  as an investigative supervisor, with the rank of captain. Mr. Pszczola was a parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church, Travis. Along with his son, John, surviving are his wife of 65 years, the former Helen Sobiesiak; his sons, Steven and Robert; a sister, Violet Miuccio; seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

**Calendar Events**

Calendar of Events for 2015:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Location** | **Time** | **Remarks** |
| **6 May** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1300** |  |
| 14 May | Richmond County VFW Meeting | Labetti VFW Post | 1100 |  |
| 16 May | Poppy Distribution | Shoprite | 0900 | Volunteers Needed |
| 21 May | Memorial Day Ice Cream Social | St Adalbert's School | 1130 | 718-442-2020 |
| 22 May | Poppy Distribution | SI Ferry | 0700 | Volunteers Needed |
| 22 May | Poppy Distribution | Phillips Refinery | 1100 | Volunteers Needed |
| 22 May | KWVA Annual Dinner Dance | Staaten | 1930 |  |
| 23 May | Richmond County VFW Ceremony | Oceanview Cemetery | 1100 |  |
| 24 May | Poppy Distribution | Stop & Shop | 0900 | Volunteers Needed |
| 25 May | Memorial Day Ceremony | Travis War Memorial | 0900 |  |
| 25 May | Memorial Day Parade | TBD | TBD |  |
| 30 May | Poppy Distribution | Stop & Shop | 0900 | Volunteers Needed |
| 30 May | Frank Peters Homecoming Dinner | Staaten | 1900 |  |
| **6 June** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1000** |  |
| 14 June | P.S. 26 Flag Day | P.S. 26 | 0900 |  |
| 14 June | Vietnam Vets Day of Remembrance | Manor Road Memorial | 1100 | Site Rededication |
| 19 June | P.S. 26 Graduation | P.S. 26 | 0900 |  |
| 20 June | Memorial for Students KIA in RVN | St Peter's High School | 1000 |  |
| 4 July | Travis 4th of July Parade | Showcase Bowling | 1030 |  |
| **11 July** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1000** |  |
| **1 August** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1000** |  |
| **2 September** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1300** |  |
| **7 October** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1300** |  |
| **4 November** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1300** |  |
| **2 December** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1300** |  |

**Membership**

1. Welcome New Members!

Anthony P. Avevor

Lawrence R. Karnbach

Timothy M. Mahoney

Belinda C. Ruggiero

James Robinson

2. VFW Richmond County Council Elections. Paul Dietrich elected Commander. Al Porto elected SeniorVice Commander.

3. VFW District 2 Convention. The following from Richmond County were elected to represent the members:

Tom Harking formerly Richmond County Council Commander elected Commander of District 2 of NY State Gary Ryder of post 2159 Labetti VFW post elected as Junior Vice Commander of District 2 of NY State Tim Khun of Post 5090 elected as three year Trustee.

4. Book Published by Blazing Star member. Ghost Riders of Baghdad: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Myth of the Surge by Daniel A. Sjursen. (Amazon)

**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:\Users\Albert\Documents\VFW\Newsletters%202011\www.va.gov\healtheligibility\vfw) or call 1-877-222-8387.

2. Tri-Care Dental. Tri-Care dental isn't free. You must enroll to be covered. Tri-Care dental web site, [www.trdp.org](blockedhttp://www.trdp.org)   
Delta Dental Tel #. 888-838-8737. The Tri-Care number for NY, is 1-877-874-2273.

3. DD Form 214 website. http://vetrecs.archives.gov. If you need assistance, contact the post service officer, Paul Dietrich.

4. 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>

5. VA Choice Program Rollout. The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act required VA to start implementation of the Choice Program by November 5, 2014. Starting this week, veterans who live 40 or more miles away from a VA medical facility will have the opportunity to choose whether to receive their health care at VA or in their community, through non-VA doctors. Veterans who live within 40 miles of a VA medical facility, but are currently waiting longer than 30 days for VA care will begin receiving their cards later this month. VA expects that all veterans who were enrolled in the

VA health care system on August 1, 2014, will receive their cards by January 2015. However, receiving a Veterans Choice Card does not instantly authorize you to start receiving health care from non-VA doctors. All care received through the Choice Program must be pre-authorized and coordinated by VA.

6. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working to make filing claims and appeals as fast and easy as possible. Beginning Tuesday, March 24, 2015, claims and appeals must be filed using the appropriate form. Standardizing forms will ease frustration among claimants, make claims processing more efficient and help VA reach more accurate decisions.

There are three major actions that will require a specific form or standardized process: Intent to File, claims applications, and Notice of Disagreement.

When filing a formal claim, the following forms should be completed and submitted to VA either electronically via eBenefits

(ebenefits.va.gov) or the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (sep.va.gov), or by mailing the completed paper form to VA:

a.. For disability benefits, applicants must now use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.

b.. To apply for needs-based pension, use VA Form 21-527EZ, Application for Pension. To file a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), survivorâ€™s pension, and accrued benefits, claimants should complete VA Form 21-534EZ, Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits .

Applicants who are not ready to file a claim for disability, but wish to preserve a date of claim while gathering evidence and completing the necessary application form should use one of the following three methods to communicate an intent to file a claim to VA:

a.. 1) electronically via eBenefits (ebenefits.va.gov) or the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (sep.va.gov),

b.. 2) mailing VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC, or

c.. 3) over the phone with a VA call center representative.

Finally, Veterans filing a Notice of Disagreement with a compensation decision should use VA Form 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement. Veterans and their representatives currently use the form on an optional basis. However, beginning March 24, 2015, Veterans must use this form when VA provides the form with a decision notice letter. Veterans and survivors will not be required to use a standardized notice of disagreement form for other types of claims (i.e., pension or survivors benefits) at this time. If you are unable to download these forms from va.gov/vaforms/, call

800-827-1000 to have the correct form sent to your home. Requiring standard forms will help VA more quickly identify what the applicant is claiming and gather the evidence required to process the claim or appeal. Standardized forms are a key component of VA's transformation, which will help achieve the Department's goal to eliminate the backlog in 2015. Contact data for VSO on website. Do not file with VSO review.

7. All paid up members of Post 1574 were enrolled in Group Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance paid for by the post. Coverage is for $1000 and is with the Lockton Affinity LLC, PO box 87-9610 of Kansas City MO 64187-9610. Please keep information on this policy with your family important documents for your relatives and heirs.

**Employment and Education**

1. Looking for a job? Need quality employees? USE VETJOBS! [**www.vetjobs.com**](http://svarialce.vfwemail.org:81/CT00004002MzA1OTA1NDk=.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.

3. New initiative called the We can't wait program plan helps ex GIs get civilian credentials/licenses for skills learned in the military. For info: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/veterans_report_5-31-2012.pdf>

4. Veterans Head Back to Boot Camp to Learn Business Skills. Boots to Business: Reboot is a two-day entrepreneurship workshop presented by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) available to transitioning service members as a part of the Defense Department’s Transition Assistance Program. Learn

more about the program <http://www.military1.com/veterans/article/538543-veterans-head-back-to-boot-camp-to-learn-business-skills>.

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. Call 718-226-4325 for an application.

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

home are:

\* Marine Sgt. John McLaughlin, Company D, 32nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, who was lost in action fighting in North Korea on Dec. 2, 1950.

\* Army Cpl. Elmer P. Richard, 20, of Exeter, N.H., Battery D, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team. He was reported missing while fighting in North Korea on Dec. 2, 1950.

\* Army Pfc. Eugene L. Erickson, 21, of Crow Wing, Minn., Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He died in a North Korean POW Camp on Aug. 31, 1951.

\* Army Maj. Dale W. Richardson, 28, of Cashton, Wis., 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He was lost when the UH-1H helicopter he was a passenger in was shot down near the Vietnamese/Cambodian border on May 2, 1970.

3. Cell Phone Numbers Go Public. All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies and you will start to receive sales calls. YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS To prevent this, call the following number from your cell phone: 888-382-1222. It is the National DO NOT CALL list It will only take a minute of your time.. It blocks your number for five (5) years. You must call from the cell phone number you want to have blocked. You cannot call from a different phone number.

4. Updated list of Senior Discounts. Uploaded on Blazing Star Web site.

5. DNA Samples Needed for MIA Identifications There are 83,000 missing and unaccounted for Americans from World War II forward, yet many families of the missing have yet to provide a family reference sample to assist in DNA identifications. Currently, 89 percent of Korean War families have provided samples, as well as 83 percent of Cold War families and 81 percent of Vietnam War families, but only 4 percent of WWII families have. The government last year identified 107 MIAs, but more could have been identified-and faster-if more family reference samples were on file. Please forward the following service casualty office contact information to MIA families in your hometown, as well as to local newspapers:

Army: 800-892-2490

Marine Corps: 800-847-1597

Navy: 800-443-9298

Air Force: 800-531-5501

State Department: 202-485-6106

6. Link for VFW Testimony Before Congress. <http://heroes.vfw.org/site/R?i=cpgpu8a58dlL-ufZ-niDRg>

7. Medicare Hospital Compare Quality of Care. <http://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

8. Rep. Zeldin Introduces Bill to Require the VA to Pay Accrued Benefits to the Estate of a Deceased Veteran (HR 1569) Washington, DC. On April 22, 2015, Congressman Lee Zeldin (R), member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, and Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, announced that he has introduced legislation to require the VA to pay accrued benefits to the estate of a deceased veteran (HR 1569). If passed and signed into law, this proposal will hold the VA accountable in paying out accrued benefit claims. In recent years, the VA has struggled to complete timely reviews of claims. Under current law, if a veteran passes away

while the VA is still reviewing a claim, the VA no longer has to award the earned benefits. This bill will protect our service members by ensuring our veteran families, who rightfully earned and deserve their benefits, actually receive their benefits, even after the veteran passes away. Last week, Congressman Zeldin spoke about his bill during a legislative hearing for

the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. The Congressman introduced the legislation last month. Congressman Zeldin stated, our current system, many of our veterans have earned service related benefits due to injuries

sustained on the battlefield. Those benefits, however, can only pass to a small group of individuals should the veteran pass away. If that veteran does not have a qualifying family member and passes away, the VA recoups the benefits that rightfully belong to the veteran. As we have seen over the past year, the VA has struggled to complete timely reviews of claims, and if a veteran passes away while the VA is still reviewing a claim, the VA no longer has to award the earned benefits. H.R. 1569 would require the VA to pay certain benefits that were earned by a veteran to the veteran's estate.  Currently, only a veteran's spouse, minor child, or dependent parent(s) are eligible to collect the accrued benefits. By adding the estate to the current list of beneficiaries, adult children could now also receive the benefits earned should there be no other qualifying family members. Service members should be able to share the benefits they have earned with their families. This bill ensures that the benefits a veteran earns during his or her service stays with their family. Further, with the addition of this piece of legislation, the VA can no longer avoid awarding a claim to a veteran due to slow processing time. Not only will this bill protect the benefits that our veterans have earned, but it will also help maintain stricter levels of accountability at the VA.

9. Purple Heart Benefits. Now that Congress changed the law to expand Purple Heart eligibility to those wounded or killed in attacks motivated by foreign terrorist organizations, the Army announced it will extend all possible benefits to the military victims of the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood, Texas and outside a recruiting station in Little Rock, Ark.

Among the benefits is payment of hostile fire pay for those Purple Heart recipients "killed, injured or wounded" in the attack, as well as combat-related special compensation for retired soldiers whose disability is attributable to an injury for which they were awarded the medal.

10. FREE training course in citizen preparedness given by the state of NY. Course will be held 5/28 at 6PM in the library at PS 26. All are invited. Here is the link to the Citizens Preparedness Training Course Registration Web Site.

<http://prepare.ny.gov/> The registration process is rather simple. Remember, everyone that will be attending must be registered individually. Just follow the prompts. The link shown above will bring you to the Home page of the Citizens Preparedness site. From that page select Sign Up. It is on the top menu bar to the far right. Once the registration page appears scroll down to the lower portion of the page and complete the required questions. For the question 'Organization/Affiliation' you can put 'Travis Civic Association, PS 26 PTA, VFW, American Legion, etc'. Use your home address. The last question asks you for 'Course Location'. From the drop down menu simply select 'Staten Island

- PS 26 - Thursday, May 28, 2015' and click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page. That's it. You should receive email confirmation in the next few minutes. You DO NOT have to bring the email confirmation that you receive with you the night of the training.

11. Patriots Pen results. This year for the first time in our post history, one of our three Patriot's Pen entrants to the Patriotic writing contest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US made it to FOURTH place in the entire state of New York. Ms. Juliana D'Angelo from Saint Adalbert's School essay "Why I appreciate America's Veterans was awarded fourth place state wide and resulted in the award of $100 from the State of NY VFW to Ms. D'Angelo. She will read her essay to the veterans at the Memorial Day Ice Cream Social at St Adalbert's. Job well done.

**Items of Interest**

A Pin Drop

At a time when our president and other politicians tend to apologize For our country's prior actions, here's a refresher on how some of our former Patriot’s handled negative comments about our country. These stories are good reminders of how proud and thankful we should Always be as Americans:

JFK'S Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was in France in the early 60's when DeGaule decided to  pull out of NATO.  DeGaule said he wanted all US military out of France as soon as possible. Rusk responded,  "Does that include those who are buried here?" DeGaule did not respond. You could have heard a pin drop.

When in England, at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our  plans for Iraq were just an example of  'empire building' by George  Bush. He answered by saying, "Over the

years, the United States has sent many of  its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom

beyond our borders.  The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury  those that did not return." You could have heard a pin drop.

There was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and  American.  During a break, one of the  French engineers came back into the room saying,  "Have you heard the latest dumb stunt Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims.   What does he intend to do, bomb  them?" A  Boeing engineer stood  up and replied quietly:  "Our carriers have  three hospitals on board that can treat  several hundred people; they are nuclear  powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they  have three  cafeterias with the capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day, they can produce several thousand gallons of  fresh water from sea water each day, and they  carry half a dozen helicopters for use in  transporting victims and injured to and from  their flight deck.  We have eleven such ships; how many does France have?" You could have heard a pin drop.

A U.S. Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French Navies.  At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large

group of officers that included  personnel from most of those countries.  Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks but a French  admiral suddenly complained that, whereas  Europeans learn many

languages, Americans  learn only English. He then asked, "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking  French?" Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied, "Maybe it's because the Brit's, Canadians, Aussie's and  Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have  to speak  German." You could have heard a pin drop.

AND THIS STORY FITS RIGHT IN WITH THE ABOVE...

Robert Whiting, an elderly gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane.  At French Customs, he took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carry on. "You have been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically. Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously. "Then you should know enough to have your passport ready." The American said, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it." "Impossible.  Americans always have to show their passports on arrival in France!" The American senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look.  Then he quietly explained, ''Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944 to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchmen to show a passport  to." You could have heard a pin drop.