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

**17 CANNON AVENUE**

**STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314**

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

**February 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 |
| 2 February | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 2 March | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 6 April | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 4 May | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 1 June | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 13 July | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 3 August | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 4 September | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 2 October | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 6 November | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |
| 4 December | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1300 | Wednesday |

**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. We are collecting items such as snacks, microwave popcorn, jiffy pop and hard candies, etc. for fellow post member Adam Scher who is deployed to Afghanistan.

3. Dues Renewal Reminder:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Curry, Albert | 12/31/2017 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Garriga, Jose A | 12/31/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Hayes, Matthew T | 5/9/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Johnson, Khadijah L | 5/2/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Krigel, Adam C | 10/31/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Krishna, Ash | 6/18/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Maloney, Brian T | 12/31/2017 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Moore, Thomas | 12/31/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Ruggiero, Blenda C | 6/29/2018 | ***EXPIRED*** |
| Sheinwald, Abe | 3/30/2018 | ***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. Matthew Basile, Borough Hall, Room G-15 and at CSI Campus Center, Room 216. **(646) 799-2743** or emailing **mbasile@veterans.nyc.gov**. Also at NYC Department of Veterans' Services
1 Centre Street, Suite 2208, New York, NY 10007, DVS General Phone: (212) 416-5250

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:

**USNR Lt. Richard C. Lannom,** Attack Squadron 35, USS Enterprise, over North Vietnam, March 1, 1968.

**Army Air Forces Sgt. John Kalausich,** 409th Bomb Group, Dülmen, Germany, March 21, 1945.

**Army Air Forces Sgt. Vernon L. Hamilton,** 409th Bomb Group, Dülmen, Germany, March 21, 1945.

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Grant C. Cook,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

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.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 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. Senator Andrew Lanza Announces Legal Services Clinic Series for Veterans

*Free civil legal services are available for veterans, current service members and military connected family members*

I am proud to have secured funding in this year's State budget to support New York Legal Assistance Group's (NYLAG) Veterans Legal Assistance Project. In support of Staten Island's veterans, I will continue hosting NYLAG attorneys at my district office for a series of one-on-one legal clinics. Veterans, current service members and military connected family members are invited to schedule a free appointment with a NYLAG attorney on civil legal issues.

Legal Issues That Veterans Can Discuss With NYLAG

* **Veterans Benefits:** VA service connected compensation, VA non-service connected disability pensions, accessing VA healthcare, discharge upgrades
* **Consumer Protection:** debt matters, bankruptcy, mortgage and foreclosure issues
* **Family Law:**child support, custody/visitation, uncontested divorce
* **Housing Issues:** eviction prevention, landlord disputes, unsafe or hazardous housing conditions
* **Advance Planning:** last wills and testaments, medical advance directives, powers of attorney
* **Public Benefits:** Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security Disability (SSD), Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI), SNAP (Food Stamps)

Senator Lanza’s District Office - 3845 Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10312

\*\*APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED\*\*
Appointments from 1pm-4pm, Tuesday, Feb 12, 2019, Tuesday, Mar 12, 2019, Tuesday, Apr 9, 2019

**Items of Interest**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

In light of the appeals court ruling in California, with respect to the Pledge of Allegiance, the following recollection from Senator John McCain is very appropriate:

As you may know, I spent five and one half years as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. In the early years of our imprisonment, the NVA kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell. In 1971 the NVA moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room.

This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change and was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans on behalf of a few hundred POWs 10,000 miles from home.

One of the men who moved into my room was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was 13 years old. At 17, he enlisted in the US Navy. He later earned a commission by going to Officer Training School. Then he became a Naval Flight Officer and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation of the opportunities this country and our military provide for people who want to work and want to succeed...

As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing.

Mike got himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he created an American flag and sewed on the inside of his shirt. Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

I know the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important part of our day now, but I can assure you that in that stark cell it was indeed the most important and meaningful event.

One day the Vietnamese searched our cell, as they did periodically, and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, and for the benefit of all of us, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours. Then, they opened the door of the cell and threw him in. We cleaned him up as well as we could.

The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs hung in each corner of the room. As I said, we tried to clean up Mike as well as we could. After the excitement died down, I looked in the corner of the room, and sitting there beneath that dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. He was sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he had received, making another American flag. He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was to us to be able to Pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

So, the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, you must never forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made to build our nation and promote freedom around the world.

You must remember our duty, our honor, and our country!!!!

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."