

# **American Legion**

Department of New York  
Manny Bacon Post 1758  
Hopewell Junction, NY



2025-2026



Yearbook of  
Manny Bacon Post 1758  
The American Legion  
Hopewell Junction, NY for 2025-2026

Compiled by Post Historian Bill Kriebel

# Table of Contents

The American Legion.....	1
The American Legion’s Purpose.....	1
The National Organization.....	1
Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion.....	1
About Our Post.....	2
Our Membership.....	2
Our Website.....	2
Our Newsletters.....	2
Our Current Officers.....	2
Commander: Lance Ashworth.....	2
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Commander: Bill Meyer.....	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander: John Polasko.....	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander: Don Burns.....	4
Adjutant: Jeff Miedowski.....	4
Finance: John Call.....	5
Chaplain: Ed Morrison.....	5
Historian: Bill Kriebel.....	5
Membership: Drew Bellantone.....	6
Judge Advocate: Jay Livermore.....	6
Sergeant-at-Arms: Kevin Hines.....	6
About Manny Bacon.....	8
Youth Programs.....	9
Oratorical Contests.....	9
Boys' State and Girls' State Programs.....	9
Scouting, Venture Crew and Junior Shooting Sports.....	9
Veterans Outreach.....	9
Volunteering at Castle Point.....	9
The Year in Review.....	10
June.....	10
This Year’s Executive Board Inaugurated – June 10.....	10
Flag Retirement Ceremony - June 14.....	10
Rifle Cleaning Detail – June 21.....	11
Jim Reynolds Honored by Town Board and Congressman Lawler.....	12
Richard James Buoniconti Rifle Salute - June 28.....	13
July.....	13
Castle Point Clothing Donation.....	13
“80 Nights of TAPS” tribute to veterans.....	14
August.....	14
Post Picnic – Aug. 2.....	14
Boys State Participants Report at August 12 Post Meeting.....	15
David Simons: February 3, 1945 - July 16, 2025.....	16
September.....	16
Post Members Briefed on Yellow Dot Program.....	16
Sept. 11 2001 Remembrance Ceremony.....	16

Post Member Displays 9/11 Memorial.....	17
Flag Presentation for National Guardsman – Sept. 15.....	17
Community Day – Sep. 20.....	18
Recruiting Oratorical Contestants at John Jay H.S.....	19
Top Shooter Wins “Commanders’ Award” .....	20
October.....	20
Bob Spinillo’s 100 <sup>th</sup> Birthday.....	20
Fishkill Burial Ground Rededication.....	20
John Jay H.S. Baseball Program Honors Veterans.....	20
November.....	21
2025 Oratorical Contest.....	21
Stuffing Bags for Nursing Home Veterans – Nov. 4.....	21
Oratorical Contest Winner Receives award – Nov. 4.....	22
Buddy Check – Nov. 8.....	22
Local Veterans Honored With Breakfast at Elementary School – Nov. 10.....	22
Veterans Day Fundraising.....	23
Post Members Support John Jay High School Football.....	24
Post Awards Blue Star Banner to Service Member’s Father.....	24
Wappingers Falls Elementary School Presented With Certificate of Appreciation.....	24
December.....	25
Post Holiday Party – Dec. 6.....	25
New Member Ryan Batkay.....	25
New Member Bob Mastro.....	25
Visiting Veterans in Nursing Homes - Dec. 10.....	26
Wreaths Across America Ceremony – Dec. 13.....	26
Simon Kaufman 8/16/30 - 12/13/25.....	27
Callie Callista Wins Dutchess County Oratorical Contest.....	27
Beer with the Brigadier – Dec. 27.....	28
January.....	28
Newest Members Initiated at January Post Meeting.....	28
Rotary Club Briefs Post on “Vials of Life” .....	28
Bill Kriebel Wins Membership Drive Contest.....	29
Rifle Salute for Navy Veteran Stanley Brown, Jan. 30.....	29

# **The American Legion**

## **The American Legion's Purpose**

The American Legion is the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization aimed at advocating patriotism across the U.S. through diverse programs and member benefits. It was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, war-time veterans organization, devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is a not-for-profit community-service organization which now numbers nearly 3 million members, men and women, in nearly 15,000 American Legion posts worldwide.

## **The National Organization**

The American Legion is headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. It is made up of State, U.S. territory, and overseas departments, and these are in turn made up of local posts. The legislative body of The American Legion is a national convention, held annually.

## **Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion**

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

## About Our Post

Welcome to the Manny Bacon Post 1758, Department of New York, of the American Legion. We normally meet the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm, but check our calendar for changes.

We do not currently have a physical home. We normally meet at the East Fishkill Community Center located at 890 New York State Route 82, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533. We also occasionally meet at Town Hall located at 330 Route 376, Hopewell Junction, NY, 12533.

Since our charter in 1949, our post has been welcoming VETERANS from all branches of our Armed Forces. Today, we continue to welcome all military personnel serving our country. Joining our Post enables you to continue serving your God, Country and Community. Our mission is to implement the goals, aspirations, dreams, peace and blessings for our country, friends and families embodied in our preamble.

## Our Membership

Our post currently has 103 members. 16 of them are paid-up for life (PUFL).

## Our Website

Our post initiated its own website, moving content previously maintained by Jim Reynolds on his personal space, and expanding it to include as much from the past as possible. It will maintain a continuing record of our current and future activities. It can be accessed at <https://al-ny1758.org>.

## Our Newsletters

Commander Jim Reynolds continues to produce our monthly newsletter to keep members abreast of post activities. Current and past newsletters can be accessed on our website at <https://al-ny1758.org/newsletters>.

## Our Current Officers

### Commander: Lance Ashworth

#### Biography



Lance was born and raised in Cleveland, OH. He is married with two (2) daughters, and lives in the Wiccopee hamlet.

He Graduated West Point in June 1991 and was commissioned as a Field Artillery officer. Following the officer's basic course at Fort Sill, OK, he transferred to Ft. Hood where he served in the 1st Cavalry Division Artillery until June 1995.

In 1997 Lance entered Quantico as a Special Agent of the FBI, and following training, took assignment to New York City.

He served in NYC until October 2007 and then transferred to the FBI's satellite office in NY's Hudson Valley. He remained there until February 2022 after which time he served at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia. In July 2024, he returned to the U.S. and retired from the FBI. In addition to the American Legion, Lance is Chairman of the Friends of the Fishkill Supply Depot.

He enjoys hiking and fishing.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander: Bill Meyer**

### **Biography**



Bill joined American Legion Post 1758 in May of 2017. Prior to that, he belonged to American Legion Post 1 in Washington DC for a number of years.

Bill served in the Unified States Air Force from 1968 to 1972. he was an aircraft crew chief and in maintenance control on T-37's, T-38's, and F105's.

After his service in the Air Force, as a FAA licensed aircraft and power plant technician with inspection authorization, he remained in aircraft maintenance with major corporate flight departments involved with large aircraft and helicopters.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander: John Polasko**

### **Biography**



John enlisted in the Marine Corps while a senior in high school in Ohio. Upon graduation he was sent to boot camp at Parris Island South Carolina, individual combat training at Camp Geigar, North Carolina and specialty schools at camp Pendleton California.

His next assignment was "brig chaser". Then he went to FMF, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division stationed at Hill 55 in Da Nang, Vietnam. He moved around to several other bases and Operations throughout I Corps during his tour.

John married his wife Mary Ann while stationed at Camp Lejeune North Carolina and when he left the service they moved to the Bronx. They have two children and two grandsons.

John first worked at Con Edison as a Plant Utility worker and then as a supervisor for the New York Power Authority.

He and his family have lived in Hopewell Junction for the past 44 years where John is an active member of American Legion Manny Bacon Post, a member of the Disabled American Veterans, a

member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division Association and is president of the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America as well as other veteran community organizations.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander: Don Burns**

#### **Biography**



Don joined the Navy in 1969 and trained as an Electronics Technician (ET). After boot camp and "A" school, he served aboard USS O'Callahan, DE-1051, off the coast of South Vietnam. In 1971, Don attended and graduated from the Navy Nuclear Power School and Nuclear Prototype training, and then was assigned to the pre-commissioning crew of USS California, DLGN 36, and served in the Reactor Control Division. Medals received:

Good Conduct, National Defense and Vietnam Service.

Don worked at the University of Buffalo as a Sr. Reactor Operator, He also worked in sales and as a sales manager for several corporations. He was self-employed prior to retirement. He also participated in "Operation Gratitude," stuffing "Care Packages" for deployed troops.

Don Joined the Legion (and Post 1758) in 2009. He held the positions of Adjutant and Commander prior to First Vice Commander. He has also participated in various committees and organizations in support of veterans.

### **Adjutant: Jeff Miedowski**

#### **Biography**



Upon graduating from Bayonne High School and completing one year at Pace University, Jeff was drafted into the army in April 1969. He did his basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and his MOS of Combat Engineer at Fort Lenard Wood in Missouri. He was then assigned to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division in Hanau, Germany. There he attended a 4-week training session where he completed the MOS for Atomic Demolition Specialist.

He was Honorably Discharged in April 1971 with a rank of Specialist 5. Upon his return from his tour in Germany, he married in 1973, moved to Pomona, New York in 1979, graduated from Saint Peter's University in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Business and Marketing. In 1987 they had a son.

He took an early retirement after 33 years from AT&T and Lucent Technologies. He then worked an additional 11 years in the Security and Safety Department of the North Rockland School District until his official retirement in 2017.

He was a member of Leo Ladders Post 130 of Thiells, New York for 10 years and Post Chaplain for 6 of those years.

He and his wife downsized and moved to Wappingers Falls in May of 2017. He has been a Manny Bacon Post member since 2017.

### **Finance: John Call**

#### **Biography**



John served in the U.S. Navy from 1961-1965 in Naval Aviation. His service as a flight crew aircrewman special weapons took him to Alaska, Japan and Vietnam. After leaving the Navy, John went to work for Con Edison and retired in 2007.

John has served as post finance officer since 2017.

### **Chaplain: Ed Morrison**

#### **Biography**



Ed began his military career in 1969 as a Chaplain in the Navy before transitioning to the New York Army National Guard in 1984 as a Military Police Officer in the 442 Military Police Company. He was assigned to the Criminal Investigative Directorate and was tasked with investigating crimes throughout the State. After attending the Empire State Military Academy in 1990 and 1991, he was promoted to Sergeant First Class and was assigned to 53 Troop Command where he served as an aide to the Inspector General. From 9/11/2001 to 11/15/2001, he served in the

Situation Command Center in Valhalla in response to the terrorist attack in New York City and as the NCOIC at the RAPIDS Identification Center at Camp Smith. From 2002 to 2004 Ed was assigned as a team leader for the Range Control Office at the Camp Smith Training Center. He retired from the Army National Guard in 2004 after 21 years of service.

In civilian life, Ed was a Police Sergeant with the Westchester County Police, retiring in 2007 after 36 years.

Ed has served the Post as Chaplain since 2024.

### **Historian: Bill Kriebel**

#### **Biography**



A Pennsylvania native, Bill joined the Navy in '65. He served aboard USS Guadalcanal (LPH-7) while waiting to go to Nuclear Power School at Bainbridge, MD. After graduating NPS and prototype training in upstate New York, Bill was assigned to USS George C. Marshall (SSBN-654), making 6 patrols on the "Blue" crew. Bill finished his service aboard USS Fulton (AS-11), a submarine tender out of New London, CT and La

Madalena, Spain. Bill left the Navy as MM1 (SS) and moved to New York in 1973, having married a year earlier. After being discharged, he was hired by Consolidated Edison to work at Indian Point

nuclear power plant. Bill became a licensed Senior Reactor Operator and eventually worked in the Training department as Simulator Coordinator. He retired from ConEd in 2000. He joined the American Legion in 2012 and transferred to the Manny Bacon Post a few years ago.

### **Membership: Drew Bellantone**

#### **Biography**



Drew Bellantone enlisted into the U.S. Coast Guard in 1996 and separated from active duty in 2000 as a PO2. His first duty station as a non-rate / boarding team member was aboard USCGC Acushnet then homeported out of Eureka, CA. The Cutter's main duties were search and rescue and maritime law enforcement ranging from southern Mexico to the Bering Strait. He attended EM-A school in Yorktown, VA and was then stationed at NESU (naval engineering support unit) Miami subsector Key West, FL, until separating from service. After 20 years of police service in NYC and Westchester Co., he is semi-retired and wants to give back to all who served at home and abroad. He recently joined the AL1758 Manny Bacon Post, and is committed to its success and growth.

### **Judge Advocate: Jay Livermore**

#### **Biography**



Jay participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom following his enlistment in the Marine Corps in 1998. For his six and a half years of service, he received the following awards: Good Conduct Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Expeditionary Medal, Sea Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Iraq Campaign Medal, two Letters of Appreciation, two Meritorious Masts, and a Certificate of Commendation (Individual Award).

Jay has worked as a farmer, a horse trainer, in a grocery store, as a carpenter, as a mason and as a mechanic. Jay's other volunteer work includes being PTA President (Noxon Road Elementary), being a youth soccer and basketball coach, and helping out at the VA.

### **Sergeant-at-Arms: Kevin Hines**

#### **Biography**



Kevin enlisted in the U.S. Army and reported for basic training in July 1979 at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He was assigned to E company, 6th battalion, 1st infantry training brigade. Upon graduating in October 1979 from infantry school as an infantryman - anti tank gunner, he then reported to the 2nd infantry division at Camp Hovey, South Korea where he participated in 63 combat patrols on the DMZ between North and South Korea. In October 1980, Kevin left South Korea and reported to C company, 1st infantry division, at Ft. Riley, Kansas.

He left active military service and reported to C company, 10th Mountain Division of the New York State National Guard in Leeds, NY. Kevin left the National guard in 1986 and remained with the U S Army ready reserve until 1992.

Kevin is a retired New York State corrections officer.

He is an active volunteer fireman for 41 years, 38 years with the Bloomington Fire Department and 3 years with the East Fishkill Fire Department Company 4 in Wiccopee. He is also an active member of American Legion post 1758 in Hopewell Junction.

## About Manny Bacon

Charles Peter "Manny" Bacon was born November 29<sup>th</sup> 1920. Manny grew up in Hopewell Junction in a house near what is currently The Hopewell Inn on Route 376. He attended Elementary School in the Three Room Schoolhouse on Beekman Road. Manny entered Beacon High School in January 1934 and left March 10, 1937. After leaving school, he went to work for the maintenance division of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. At that time, Manny was also a Lieutenant of Hopewell Hose.

On April 15<sup>th</sup> 1942, Manny received his induction notice to report to the Memorial Building 446 Main Street in Beacon. On May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942, he was accepted for military service at Fort Jay, NY. After basic training, he was shipped to Ireland and was part of the invasion forces to hit North Africa in November of 1942. Manny was a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Recon Troop. On May 19<sup>th</sup> 1943, Mr. and Mrs. Bacon were notified that Manny was missing in action. Two weeks later, another War Department telegram informed them that he had been killed in action April 20, 1943. He was the first resident of Hopewell Junction killed in World War Two. He was first interred in the American Cemetery Beja, Tunisia (plot B, row 10, grave 3). After the war, his remains were returned to the United States and he was buried in the Long Island National Cemetery at Pinelawn in Farmingdale (LI), New York. His grave is located in Section J, grave # 14770. At the time of his death, he was survived by his parents Lewis (3/10/1897-5/1966) and Marcella (6/25/1902-8/23/1994) Bacon, one sister, Margaret, and two brothers, James and Lewis. In 1949, American Legion Post 1758 was created in Hopewell Junction and named in honor of Manny.

Any corrections or additional information about Manny or his family would be greatly appreciated. Please contact: Post Historian, Manny Bacon American Legion Post 1758, PO Box 92, Hopewell Jct. NY 12533.

Data researched and collected by James D Reynolds 2003.

*Thanks to George Bailey (charter member and Past Commander) and Doug McHoul whom Manny's Mother entrusted with memento's of Manny.*



*Charles Peter "Manny" Bacon*



*Manny Bacon's Headstone*

# Youth Programs

## Oratorical Contests

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.

## Boys' State and Girls' State Programs

Two outstanding representatives from each of 49 Boys States are called upon to represent their state at American Legion Boys Nation in Washington, DC. It is here that the young leaders, who had excelled at their respective Boys States, are introduced to the structure and function of the federal government.

## Scouting, Venture Crew and Junior Shooting Sports

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition.

Shooters use the .177 caliber air rifle. Both males and females can participate, through Legion sponsorship; disabled youth are encouraged to join, as competitive shooting is a sport that creates an equal playing field for all competitors. Contact your local Legion post, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Auxiliary unit for information about affiliating as a club or individual.

The shooting team normally meets on Sundays at Whortlekill Rod & Gun Club. They often hold "Postal Matches" in which the shooters' scores are emailed to other participating posts and their scores are compared in order to achieve their rankings. The top shooters then go to Cicero, NY to compete personally against the top shooters at other posts.

Our posts youth mentors are Dan Briscoe and Norm Dauerer. The shooting team has 13 members, and Venture Crew has 7 members. The post also sponsors Scout Troop 3086.

# Veterans Outreach

## Volunteering at Castle Point

Our Post currently has a food collection box at Adam's Fairacre Farm on Rte. 9 in Wappinger Falls. Shoppers are encouraged to drop off non-perishable food and drink items for distribution to veterans at the hospital. Post members regularly pick up what's collected and deliver it to the hospital.

Members John Call, Eli Cohen, John Lyons, Jeff Miedowski, and Jeff Dunay regularly volunteer their time at Castle Point, in the pantry picking up and distributing food, assisting patients in the hospital, and picking up veterans and driving them to medical appointments.

# The Year in Review

## June

### This Year's Executive Board Inaugurated – June 10



At the May 13 membership meeting, Adjutant Jeff Miedowski cast a single vote for the slate of officers running unopposed. The incoming officer corps had two changes from the previous year: Membership officer Kevin Hines moved to Sergeant-at-Arms and Drew Bellantone will become the new Membership officer.

At the June 10th meeting, the oath of office was administered by Sergeant-at-Arms (outgoing) Jeff Boes and 3rd Vice Commander Don Burns. Commander Ashworth then addressed the membership.

### Flag Retirement Ceremony - June 14

This year's Flag Day was unusually busy as the post had been invited to participate in the Rotary Club's flag dedication ceremony in Unity Park. At 7pm, the flag retirement ceremony began, with Commander

Lance Ashworth presiding. Unlike in past years when many Boy Scouts participated, only two came this year, along with several Scout leaders.



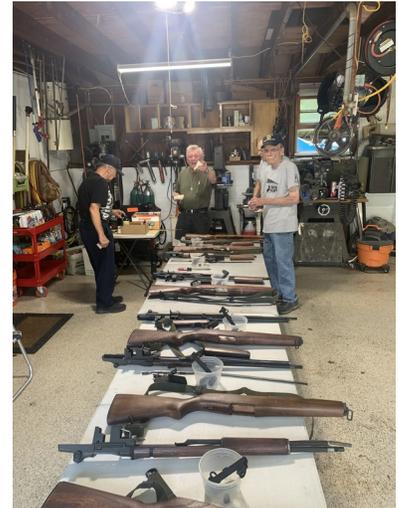
Under the watchful eyes of members of Hopewell Hose Fire Company, a fire was started and Post members, Scouts and bystanders were invited to take flags from a large pile and place them in the fire pit. They were also suggested to honor a friend or loved one as they placed their flags in the fire. When all the flags had been retired, the firemen put out any remaining flames and the pit was covered.

Post members in attendance (Left to right): Fred Beck, Jeff Miedowski, Bill Meyer, Commander Lance Ashworth, Dan Briscoe, Jim Reynolds, Len Hart, Karl Sokol, John Call, Mark Graser, John Polasko, Ralph Schwartz and Dan Oberhauser. Not shown is Bill Kriebel.

## Rifle Cleaning Detail – June 21

After being fired several times in ceremonial salutes, “our” (they don’t belong to us, we hold them on loan) rifles need to be cleaned. So on Saturday afternoon, June 21, John Call, Bill Meyer, Dan Oberhauser and Karl Sokol met in Norm Dauerer’s workshop to accomplish the task.

More photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;06;Rifle%20Cleaning%20Detail>



## Jim Reynolds Honored by Town Board and Congressman Lawler



The first item on the agenda at the June 26<sup>th</sup> town board meeting was the presentation of proclamations by the East Fishkill Town Board and Congressman Michael Lawler honoring retiring Post Commander Jim Reynolds for his service to the community and the Post. Lawler’s proclamation was naming Jim as “Veteran of the Year” and it was presented by a member of his staff. A video of the event can be viewed at <https://rumble.com/v6vel0v-jim-reynolds-honored.html>. More photos are at [https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;06;Jim Reynolds Honored](https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;06;Jim%20Reynolds%20Honored).

Representing Post 1758 at the meeting, in addition to Jim, were John Call, Bruce Coneeny, Mark Graser, Bill Meyer, Jeff Miedowski, John Polasko and Claude Wuytack.

In response, Jim sent out the following message:

I'd like to take a moment to thank each one of you for appearing and supporting me at the towns proclamation recognizing me last night. I didn't realize that you all were aware that the presentation was being made. When I entered the lobby I was surprised to see Bill Meyer and John Polasko already there. Then the rest of you dribbled in before the meeting started which surprised me more. The whole thing was somewhat embarrassing to me. I've had my name and picture in the local newspapers several times over the years and always felt like I was a media hog when I was really representing Post 1758 and the work done by all of us. I was just the head of the snake!

I was made aware of Representative Mike Lawler's award as his "Dutchess County Veteran of the year" late last year but was unable to attend his presentation down in Westchester County. I had forgotten about it until last night when his representative showed up the meeting.

Thanks again for taking the time to attend the presentation. I know how many times the legion has called upon you for help that has taken you away from your families. You didn't need another one to honor me.

Jim

## Richard James Buoniconti Rifle Salute - June 28

Richard James Buoniconti, an area resident for many years, formerly of The Villages, FL and Mount Vernon, NY, passed away at his home on June 23rd. He was 93 years old.

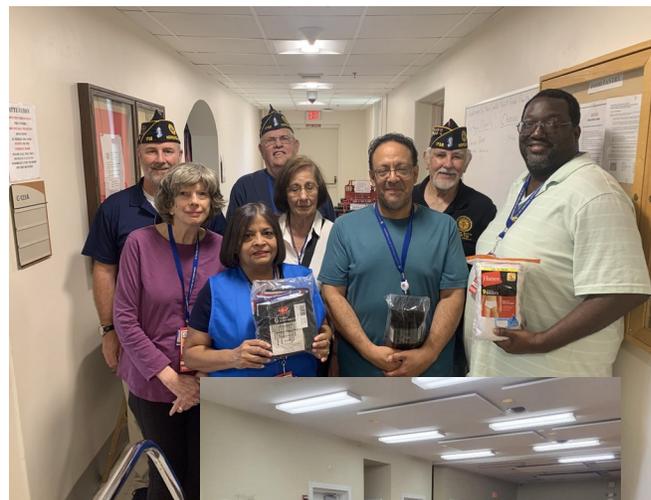


Richard was an Army veteran and an American Legion member. Post 1758 was asked to provide a rifle salute for a grave-site service where his ashes were to be interred. Jeff Miedowski, Bill Meyer, John Polasko and John Call answered the call and provided the Honor Guard. Jim Reynolds acted as the "drill sergeant," while Bill Kriebel photographed the proceedings. Thanks to the expert rifle cleaning overseen by Norm Dauerer, all of the rifles functioned perfectly.

More photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;06;Buoniconti Rifle Salute>.

## July

### Castle Point Clothing Donation



Recently, Castle Point put out an urgent request for clothing for veterans at the facility and American Legion Post 1758 in Hopewell Junction answered the



call. On Monday July 21, members of the post delivered a shipment of \$500 worth of clothing to the Point.

Post members Commander Lance Ashworth, John Call and Jim Reynolds made the delivery. They were joined by Eli Cohen who is a volunteer there.

### **“80 Nights of TAPS” tribute to veterans**

Dani Masterson, a talented musician, embarked on a meaningful and heartfelt journey titled "80 Nights of TAPS". This endeavor is a solemn tribute of remembrance and respect for those who have served our country.

Beginning in May, Dani committed to performing TAPS each evening for 80 consecutive nights in honor of our fallen heroes. Her musical tribute not only serves as a poignant reminder of their sacrifices but also unites communities in reflection and gratitude.

We were honored that Dani brought her journey to East Fishkill, performing TAPS at the East Fishkill Rotary Flag on July 28 at 5 p.m.

Commander Lance Ashworth, John Call, Bill Meyer, John Polasko and Jim Reynolds attended the event representing Post 1758.

## **August**

### **Post Picnic – Aug. 2**





Saturday Aug. 2 was a beautiful day for a picnic and Bill Meyer and John Polasko once again provided the Post with another great one. Hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks were provided by the Post, and members and their spouses brought side dishes and desserts. A commemorative cake was also on display to be consumed after the hearty meal.

Commander Ashworth kicked off the festivities by introducing himself as well as the other executive board members in attendance. He also commemorated the service of former commander Jim Reynolds who served for many years in that post as well as several other key posts. Lance then gave special thanks, and a bouquet of flowers, to Jim's wife Cathy for her support while he served.

Post members in attendance were Commander Lance Ashworth, Fred Beck, Dan Briscoe, Don Burns, John Call, Eli Cohen, George Dickman, Norm Dauerer, Mark Graser, Kevin Hines, Bill Kriebel, John Lyons, Tom Masch, Bill Meyer, Mike Miller, Alan Nalbandian, Joe Paterno, John Polasko, Jim Reynolds and Karl Sokol. Also joining us were numerous spouses, significant others and family members.

Many more photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;08;2025 Post Picnic>.

## **Boys State Participants Report at August 12 Post Meeting**

This year, AL Post 1758 sponsored Justin Brancamp for Boys' State and assisted AL Post 1303 (Hyde Park) by financially sponsoring a second attendee (Maxwell Goldstein). These young men attended the August post meeting and recounted their experiences at this summer's competition. Pictured are Brancamp (right) and two attendees from Hyde Park (one of which is Maxwell Goldstein).



More photos at

[https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;08;Boys State Participants](https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;08;Boys%20State%20Participants)

## **David Simons: February 3, 1945 - July 16, 2025**

On Saturday August 16, 2025, AL 1758 members Jim Broughton, John Call, Bill Meyer, Danny Oberhauser and John Polasko attended the funeral of Dave Simons at Saint Denis Church. While not a Legionnaire, Simons was a U.S. Navy veteran who served during the Vietnam War period. The U.S. Navy provided honors at the service which was also attended by 5 of Simon's family members who served in the U.S. Air Force.



## **September**

### **Post Members Briefed on Yellow Dot Program**

SGT Alonzo Montanya, Training Director & Community Resource Unit Supervisor, Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, briefed the attendees of the September post meeting on the "Yellow Dot" program which involves placing personal health and medical information in your vehicle and/or home so that first responders may conduct quicker assessments during emergency situations. For more on the program and how to obtain a "Yellow Dot" see <https://nysheriffs.org/yellowdot/>.

### **Sept. 11 2001 Remembrance Ceremony**

Each year since the horrific attacks on the World Center, the Pentagon and the attack that ended on farmland in Shanksville, PA, the Town of East Fishkill hosts a ceremony to commemorate the events.

The proceedings began at 6pm at the Community Center with the Hudson Valley Council BSA Concert Band performing patriotic music for those arriving early. Our participation began at about 7pm with our Color Guard presenting the Colors.

The Color Guard consisted of Kevin Hines, John Call, Bill Meyer, Dan Oberhauser and Ed Morrison. Other Post members in attendance were Commander Lance Ashworth, Drew Bellantone, Bill Kriebel, Doug McHoul, John Polasko and Jim Reynolds.

A video of this event is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLVstjOve5c>. Our participation starts at about the 39 minute mark.



## Post Member Displays 9/11 Memorial

Also on September 11 th , longtime post member Frank Gentile checked-in and provided a photo of himself and a 9/11 memorial that he constructed and displayed in his front yard.

## Flag Presentation for National Guardsman – Sept. 15

On Monday, September 15, 2025, beginning around 11:30am, the following members of AL Post 1758 participated in a flag folding and presentation ceremony following the memorial church service for John Aiello, a deceased U.S. Army National Guard soldier and resident of Wiccopee: Jim Broughton, John Call, Bill Meyer, Dan Oberhauser, and Lance Ashworth. Bugler Danny Stevenson accompanied the flag-folding detail by playing “Taps.”



## Community Day – Sep. 20



On Saturday, September 20, 2025, AL Post 1758 participated in the annual East Fishkill Community Day event which kicked-off with a parade through Hopewell Junction. The following post members marched as an Color Guard (Jeff Boes, Rich Flacinski, Bill Meyer, Ed Morrison, and Lance Ashworth) while Scouts from Troop 40 carried the AL Post 1758 banner. Post members Norm Dauerer and Tom Masch drove their period Jeeps in the parade with Fred Beck, Bill Kriebel, and John Polasko as passengers.

Following the parade, the following members staffed the informational table at the main festival: Don Burns, Bill Kriebel, Bill Meyer, Jim Reynolds, and Lance Ashworth with Norm Dauerer's and Tom Masch's vehicles served as static displays. Lance's wife Cindy assisted by operating the popcorn machine.

Separately, post members served as volunteers for other organizations: Eli Cohen (East Fishkill Historical Society); John Call (Knights of Columbus); Vinnie Richards (Hudson Valley Council Band); and John Polasko and Mike Miller (Vietnam Veterans of America).

Items raffled by the post netted \$97.00 in earnings (to be split with the Auxiliary which donated the raffle items) and the cash donation box ("coin drop") displayed at the table netted \$98.00. Additionally, one NY Post 0001 member who was contacted back in February as part of "Operation Buddy Check" visited the table and requested transfer to Post 1758.

More photos at [https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;09;2025 Community Day](https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;09;2025%20Community%20Day).

## Recruiting Oratorical Contestants at John Jay H.S.



On Wednesday Sept. 24, Commander Lance Ashworth, along with John Call, Bill Meyer and Dan Oberhauser, went to John Jay High School to recruit candidates for Post 1758's annual oratorical contest. Many students showed interest in participating, and about two dozen took information packets. Let's hope that this year we get enough participants to make it a real contest.

## Top Shooter Wins “Commanders’ Award”

On September 28<sup>th</sup> Norm Dauerer and Dan Briscoe presented the “Commander’s Award” to Nicholas Arshanuse, one of most prolific shooters on Youth Shooting program. He may be invited to an upcoming Post meeting.



## October

### Bob Spinillo’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

October 4 marked Bob Spinillo’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Bob is now living in Virginia to be close to his family.

### Fishkill Burial Ground Rededication

October 14 at 2:30pm, the town of Fishkill held a rededication ceremony for the Revolutionary War Fishkill Supply Depot burial grounds. Post 1758 came out in numbers for the event.



Post members in attendance: Commander Lance Ashworth, Fred Beck, Hal Brilliant, Jim Broughton, John Call, Bill Kriebel, Tom Masch, Skip McEwing, Bill Meyer, Ed Morrison, Dan Oberhauser, John Polasko and Jim Reynolds.

More photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;10;Fishkill%20Burial%20Ground%20Rededication>.

### John Jay H.S. Baseball Program Honors Veterans

The John Jay High School baseball program held an intra-squad scrimmage on Thursday evening, Oct. 23, to honor area veterans.

"Manny Bacon" Post provided a Color Guard for the event, and quite a few Post members, along with other veterans from the area, took part. Kevin Hines (U.S. Army), John Call (U.S. Navy), Daniel Oberhauser (U.S. Navy) and William Meyer (U.S. Air Force) served as the Color Guard.



Other Post members who were honored were: (U.S. Army) Commander Lance Ashworth, Mark Graser, John Lyons and Tom Masch; (U.S. Marine Corps) Mike Miller and John Polasko; (U.S. Navy) Fred Beck, Dan Briscoe, Len Hart and Bill Kriebel; (U.S. Air Force) James Broughton.

After the ceremony and during the game, Commander Ashworth spoke with U.S. Navy veteran Ryan Batkay who texted him with a request to join the post. Ryan mentioned 2-3 other military veterans

affiliated with the baseball program that may also be interested in joining and asked Cdr. to send him extra application forms. Ryan's interest in joining AL 1758 underscores the importance of our members participating in outreach events: Our visible presence in the community can and will lead to new recruits that will carry-on the Legion's long legacy of service to the nation.

## November

### 2025 Oratorical Contest



Dan Oberhauser and Caroline Pogge organized this year's oratorical contest which was held at the East Fishkill Library on Sat. Nov. 1. Callie Castilla, a junior at John Jay, prepared an essay focused on the First Amendment and was selected to represent the post at the Dutchess County contest in December.

Caroline and Dan were joined by other post members acting as judges, timekeepers, tabulators and escorts. They were (left to right) John Call, Jay Livermore, John Polasko, Don Burns, Jim Reynolds, Bob Schiaffino and Bill Kriebel.

### Stuffing Bags for Nursing Home Veterans – Nov. 4

With the demise of the Semper Fi Parents of Hudson Valley organization, Post 1758 has taken on the task of providing small gift bags to veterans housed in local nursing homes. This year, Jim Reynolds and Dan Oberhauser spear-headed the effort. Prior to the Nov. 4 general membership meeting, many Post members arrived early to stuff gift bags which Jim and Dan will be distributing to the veterans.



## Oratorical Contest Winner Receives award – Nov. 4

Oratorical contest winner Callie Castilla was presented with a medal and a check by Commander Lance Ashworth at the November membership meeting for winning the Post's annual oratorical contest. Callie was accompanied by several family members.



## Buddy Check – Nov. 8

This year, the post did two buddy checks, the first being to visit the homes of American Legion members who are not member or Post 1758. This time it was for Post 1758 members whose wellbeing is unknown due to their not attending meetings or being in contact with other post members. Drew Bellantone, Don Burns, Mark Graser, Kevin Hines, Bill Meyer, Ed Morrison, Alan Nalbandian, Dan Oberhauser, John Polasko, Jim Reynolds and Karl Sokol met on Saturday morning at the East Fishkill library to collect information packets and get instructions on whom to visit. Commander Lance Ashworth coordinated the event.

## Local Veterans Honored With Breakfast at Elementary School – Nov. 10



Monday, November 10 was the day James S. Evans Elementary School in Wappingers Falls put on a breakfast to honor local veterans. Post members attending were John Call, Len Hart, John Lyons, Bill Meyer and Mike Miller.

More photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2025;11;Elementary%20School%20Honors%20Veterans>

## Veterans Day Fundraising



Commander Lance Ashworth, Mike Miller (seated), Claude Wuytack, John Polasko (seated), Bill Kriebel and Bill Meyer at Flory's.



Len Hart and Jim Reynolds at Stewarts.



John Call, Dan Oberhauser and Rich Galdiero at Convient Mart.



Commander Ashworth joined Dan at Rich at Convient Mart.

Not shown were Jim Broughton, Ed Morrison and Drew Bellantone at 84 Diner, and Norm Dauerer, Don Burns and Karl Sokol at Red Line Diner.

## Post Members Support John Jay High School Football

Saturday Nov. 15 was the date for the Section 1 High School football championship at Mahopac High School between Mamaroneck and John Jay. John Polasko, Commander Lance Ashworth, Mark Graser, Jim Broughton and Kevin Hines hopped on the bus and traveled down to Mahopac to watch the game and show support for a school that supports us.

Unfortunately, their support wasn't enough to keep Mamaroneck from shutting out the Patriots 9 – 0.



## Post Awards Blue Star Banner to Service Member's Father

On November 21, John Call, Commander Lance Ashworth and Jim Reynolds awarded a Blue Star Banner to a deserving father at Stewart's on Rt. 82 in Hopewell Junction.



## Wappingers Falls Elementary School Presented With Certificate of Appreciation

Also on November 21, Jim Reynolds, Commander Lance Ashworth and John call visited James S. Evans Elementary School to present a certificate of appreciation for the veterans' breakfast the school put on on November 10.



# December

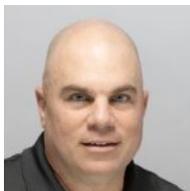
## Post Holiday Party – Dec. 6



On Saturday evening, December 6, 2025, fifty guests representing AL Post 1758 members and their families participated in the annual Post Christmas dinner. The wife of new member Ryan Batkay won the 50/50 raffle but donated the proceeds back to the post! Congratulations to 1st Vice Commander Bill Meyer for being named AL Post's "Unsung Hero of the Year" for 2025.

### New Member Ryan Batkay

Ryan Batkay, a Navy veteran, was introduced at the Post Holiday Party as a new member of our post.



### New Member Bob Mastro

Bob, also a Navy veteran, recently joined the post.



## Visiting Veterans in Nursing Homes - Dec. 10



On December 10th four members of our post delivered Goody Bags to 60 Veterans spread across 4 Nursing homes. Bill Meyer, John Polasko, Dan Oberhauser and Jim Reynolds visited residents of the Taconic Rehabilitation and Nursing Home in Fishkill, Fishkill Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing in Beacon, The Pines and Lutheran Care both in Poughkeepsie.

## Wreaths Across America Ceremony – Dec. 13

Saturday morning, December 13 was the day for the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at St. Denis Cemetery. Post members attending were Commander Lance Ashworth, Drew Bellantone, Dan Briscoe, Jim Broughton, John Call, John Lyons Bill Kriebel and Bill Meyer. Jim Broughton laid a wreath for the Air Force and Drew Bellantone laid a wreath for the Coast Guard.

At the January Post monthly meeting, an \$85 donation was authorized for purchase of wreaths for this ceremony.



### **Simon Kaufman 8/16/30 - 12/13/25**

Si Kaufman was a long-time, although inactive, member of our post. You can read his obituary at:

<https://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/obituaries/pnys1356968>



### **Callie Callista Wins Dutchess County Oratorical Contest**

On Saturday, Dec. 20, Post 1758 candidate Callie Castilla of John Jay H.S. competed in the Dutchess County – level Oratorical Competition held at Post 37 in Poughkeepsie. Thanks to Bill Meyer, John Polasko, and Danny Oberhauser for staffing the event and Caroline Pogge for coordinating Callie’s continued participation.

As with the post-level competition, Callie was the sole competitor (and thus, the overall winner) and has advanced onto the District-level competition to be held Sunday, January 11, 2026 in Beacon. Callie gave a 9 minutes and 55 seconds speech on the 1st Amendment that drew on the Creation story and incorporated remarks made by Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King. She showed great improvement from the post-level competition and demonstrated great poise when, at one point, she momentarily lost her place.

Callie’s participation (and advancement) underscores the strength of Post 1758 amid the other posts in Dutchess County. We continue to lead the way in recruitment of new members; children & youth

programs; and community outreach. Heading into the new year, we couldn't be more proud of our post.

### **Beer with the Brigadier – Dec. 27**

Recently, Post member and Army officer Carolyn Pogge was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. On Saturday, Dec. 27, Post members John Polasko, Jim Reynolds, Commander Lance Ashworth and John Call saluted her promotion by having a beer or two with Carolyn and her Mom Renate at The Barrel Room in Newburgh.



## **January**

### **Newest Members Initiated at January Post Meeting**



Three of the newest members were “sworn in” by Post Commander Lance Ashworth at the Post monthly meeting on Jan.13. The initiates, flanked by Post Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Hines, are (left to right) Eli Cohen, Ryan Batkay and Tim Bila. Tim is a Marine Corp veteran.

### **Rotary Club Briefs Post on “Vials of Life”**

East Fishkill Rotary President Suzanne DeCosta and several other Rotarians visited the January 2026 post meeting to brief the post on the “Vials of Life” program as well as hand-out both vials and gift coupons for coffee at Dunkin’ Donuts.



### **Bill Kriebel Wins Membership Drive Contest**

Also at the January meeting, post historian, Bill Kriebel, was presented with an award check for his recruiting the most new members.



### **Rifle Salute for Navy Veteran Stanley Brown, Jan. 30**



On Jan. 30, five post members provided a rifle salute for Navy veteran Stanley Brown at the Trinity Methodist Church Cemetery.

Post members participating: Bill Meyer, Jeff Miedowski, John Call and John Polasko (rifles); Bill Kriebel (photography).

More photos at <https://al-ny1758.org/gallery.php?2026;01;Stanley%20Brown%20Rifle%20Salute>

