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American Legion Post 1758 Newsletter

August 2011

American Legion Post 1758,
Junction, NY 12533

PO Box 92,

Hopewell

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Our next meeting will be September 13, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Whortlekill Rod and Gun Club. We'll be making plans for our participation in the East Fishkill Community Day to be held September 17th so it's important to



"Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Coming to East Fishkill - the F.A.V.O.R Program

Our Post is working with County Legislator Marge Horton and Nelson Rivera to bring the necessary equipment for veteran's to obtain a FAVOR id card to East Fishkill. If you know of any Veteran who would like this free discount card please let them know. They do not have to be a Post member but do have to live in Dutchess County. Tentative date is set for the end of October.

Any honorably discharged military veteran residing in Dutchess County may get their FAVOR card by bringing his or her Military Discharge Papers or DD214 to the Veterans Services Office.

Currently there are over 50 merchants participating in this program, from attorneys to dry cleaners, restaurants, home improvement and more.

You can visit the web site at:

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/CountyClerk/19397.htm>

Thanks to the efforts of our adjutant, John Pizzuti, the Post is in the process of upgrading our ceremonial rifles from the Springfields we've had since 1949 to M1's. The rifles will cost us nothing but as with any government program the process has many steps and takes time. We've gotten all the approvals and we're pretty well set now, if only they had some M1's ready to ship. The only ones they have need repair before shipping to us so we may be waiting a while longer. The upgrade will hopefully provide us smoother volleys on Memorial Day and other events.



Holiday Party

Reminder: To take advantage of a reduced fee for your significant other to attend the Holiday Party you must participate in at least 4 activities with the Post this year. There are at least 5 activities scheduled for the remainder of the year: Meetings in September, October and November. As well as the East Fishkill Day activities on September 17th, and the Poppy distribution on November 11th.



The **American Legion** with the Dutchess County Vets Service & VA will have a booth at the **Dutchess County Fair**, if we want to help man the booth at 3 hour intervals we can. This will also be a recruiting opportunity. Point of contact is Alec Pandaleon, Millbrook Post. His email is aap3rd@hotmail.com

Good Of The Legion:

Tom Rexhouse's named was pulled for the Pot Of Gold Drawing. Unfortunately Tom was not present at the meeting so the total amount was added to the Pot Of Gold fund.



The VA offers a wide array of special programs and initiatives specifically designed to help homeless veterans live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible. Call 877-424-3838



Castle Point is always looking for volunteers in a variety of positions. Call (845) 831-2000

Membership: ..You should have gotten your membership renewal forms for 2012 in the mail. **Thank you to the 34 members who have already paid.**
The Post processes the renewals within 30 days of receiving your check. Some are held for a couple of weeks so that a trip to the bank isn't necessary each time an individual renewal is received. However the process through the Department Of New York and National seems to take an extraordinary amount of time. You may receive another notification that your dues are due when you have actually paid them. If you check your latest membership card and it

Special Notice: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number 1-800-273-8255, available 24/7, and tell them you are



Walter Reed Army Medical Center Closing

(from the Washington Post)

Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the Army's flagship hospital where privates to presidents have gone for care, is closing its doors after more than a century.

Hundreds of thousands of the nation's war wounded from World War I to today have received treatment at Walter Reed, including 18,000 troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

President Dwight Eisenhower died there. So did Gens. John J. Pershing and Douglas MacArthur.

It's where countless celebrities, from Bob Hope to quarterback Tom Brady, have stopped to show their respect to the wounded. Through the use of medical diplomacy, the center also has tended to foreign leaders.

The storied hospital, which opened in 1909, was scarred by a 2007 scandal about substandard living conditions on its grounds for wounded troops in outpatient care and the red tape they faced. It led to improved care for the wounded, at Walter Reed and throughout the military. By then, however, plans were moving forward to close Walter Reed's campus.

Two years earlier, a government commission, noting that Walter Reed was showing its age, voted to close the facility and consolidate its operations with the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and a hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va., to save money.

Former and current patients and staff members will say goodbye at a ceremony Wednesday on the parade grounds in front of the main concrete and glass hospital complex. Most of the moving will occur in August. On Sept. 15, the Army hands over the campus to the new tenants: the State Department and the District of Columbia. The buildings on campus deemed national historic landmarks will be preserved; others probably will be torn down. The city is expected to develop its section for retail and other uses.

"For many of the staff members, even though they know that this is the future of the military health system, in a way, it's still like losing your favorite uncle, and so there is a certain amount of mourning that is going on and it is an emotional time," said Col. Norvell Coats, commander of the Walter Reed Health Care System.

The new facility will be called the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. It will consolidate many of Walter Reed's current offerings with the Navy hospital.

"Frankly, I will say it's with a heavy heart that Walter Reed closes," said Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of the former president. "I don't know. I know that there was a process for that decision, but we've lost a great, important part of history."

She recalled bringing to the hospital a birthday cake she had baked for her grandfather, who spent the last several months before his death in 1969 in a special suite where politicians and foreign leaders visited him.

There are countless pieces of history throughout the campus.

At the rose garden, some nurses from the Vietnam War era were said to have married their patients. The memorial chapel is where President Harry S. Truman went for his first church service after taking office, following a visit with Pershing, who lived in a suite at Walter Reed for several years, said John Pierce, historian for the Walter Reed Society.

A marker identifies the spot on the hospital grounds where, long before the hospital was built, Confederate sharpshooters fired near President Abraham Lincoln, leading an officer to call Lincoln a "damned fool" and order him to the ground, according to a brochure produced by Walter Reed about its history.

President Calvin Coolidge's teenage son died in the hospital from an infected blister he received while playing tennis at the White House, Pierce said. A black-and-white photo from 1960 shows then-Sen. Lyndon Johnson, a vice presidential candidate at the time, visiting the bedside of Vice President Richard Nixon, who was being treated for a staph infection.

Presidents now are sent to Bethesda for treatment because it's considered more secure, said Sanders Marble, senior historian with the Office of Medical History at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The hospital was named to honor Maj. Walter Reed, an Army physician who treated troops and American Indians on the frontier. Among his medical achievements was life-saving research that proved that yellow fever was spread by mosquito. He died in 1902 at age 51 of complications related to appendicitis with a friend and colleague, Lt. Col. William C. Borden, treating him.

"I'm sure (Borden) felt very guilty about that, and over the course of the next several years, he campaigned to get money for a new hospital and of course, wanted to name it for his good friend Walter Reed," Pierce said.

The original redbrick hospital had about 80 beds, but inpatient capacity grew by the thousands during the wars of the last century. Today, it treats about 775,000 outpatients annually and has an inpatient load of about 150. It wasn't just service members and military retirees treated at the hospital over the decades, but their families, too. Countless babies were born at the hospital into the 1990s.

Rehabilitation for the wounded, including care for amputees, has been an important part of the mission since it opened. The wounded commonly spend a year or longer at the hospital now, although they are more quickly moved to outpatient care.

Photos from World War I show troops at Walter Reed learning skills such as typing and knitting. During World War II, brochures distributed to the war amputees featured pictures of amputees smoking and shaving. The message was, "Your life isn't over, don't get down," Marble said.

Laura Lehigh's late husband, Michael Schmidt, was a lieutenant when he proposed to her during his stay at Walter Reed. He was recovering from a gunshot wound he received in Vietnam in 1968.

In letters to her, he described stinky bedpans, a "new inmate" moving into his ward, a "celebrity of the week" visit from "Tricky Dick Nixon," practical jokes played on student nurses, a champagne party for a triple amputee's 26th birthday and how the orderlies turned patients' beds near a window around so they could watch Johnson enter the hospital to visit Eisenhower.

"Mike always had a wonderful sense of humor, but I think they kind of all aspired to have a sense of humor, those guys who had lost their limbs who didn't know what their lives were going to be like getting out," said Lehigh, 63, in a telephone interview from Kalamazoo, Mich. "I think they had a camaraderie and a sense of humor and an optimism about themselves, if not about life in general."

Despite all the warm feelings, a Washington Post investigation in 2007 uncovered shoddy living conditions in an outpatient ward known as Building 18. Troops were living among black mold and mouse droppings while trying to fend for themselves as they battled a complex bureaucracy of paperwork related to the disability evaluation system.

The report drew scrutiny of all aspects of care offered to the nation's wounded. The scandal embarrassed the Army and the Bush administration and led to the firings of some military leaders.

Afterward, some in Congress pushed for the Pentagon to change course and keep Walter Reed open, but an independent group reviewed the idea and recommended moving forward with Walter Reed's closure plans.

It concluded that the Defense Department was or should have been aware of the widespread problems but neglected them because they knew Walter Reed was scheduled to be closed. Then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates agreed and said there was little wisdom in pouring money into Walter Reed to keep it open indefinitely.

"Far better to make an investment in brand-new, 21st century facilities," Gates told reporters.

Pierce said the quality of medical care at Walter Reed didn't suffer, even leading up to the scandal.

"It was administrative issues and housing issues, and the housing issues were significant," he said. "I don't think anyone would want to say they weren't and it shouldn't have happened, but it was not a quality of care situation."

In addition to improved living conditions, one of the other upgrades after the scandal was the opening of an advanced rehabilitation center for troops with amputations. On a recent day, several amputees, including some who had lost three limbs, were exercising in the room, one even on a skateboard.

Marine Sgt. Rob Jones, 25, is a double amputee from the Afghanistan war who spends much of his days rowing. His goal is to become an FBI agent or make the U.S. Adaptive Rowing Team.

One of more than 440 troops from the recent wars getting outpatient care, he sat on a bench outside the center reading a book. His prosthetics were visible below his shorts.

"I'll probably just remember the people I was working with, the staff here, how much they helped me get back on my

Discount Fair Tickets

Dutchess County Clerk Bradford Kendall is pleased to announce today that the Dutchess County Fair will accept the FAVOR (Find and Assist a Veteran of Record) ID card as proof that an individual is a US Veteran and would be allowed a **discount on an admission ticket for the fair**.

Clerk Kendall stated, "I am very pleased that the Dutchess County Fair will continue its tradition of offering discounts to US Veterans. I am grateful that the fair will accept the FAVOR card as proof that an individual is a US Veteran. This is great way to say thank you to those who proudly served in the US Military."

"The FAVOR card program has been a great way for us to connect with more veterans than ever before. When they come into our office to get the necessary form for the FAVOR card, we also have the opportunity to talk to them about benefits they may be entitled to as a result of their honorable service to our country," said Director of Dutchess County's Division of Veterans Service Nelson Eddy Rivera, USN (Ret).

Clerk Kendall concluded by saying, "The Dutchess County Fair is to be commended for its obvious appreciation to our US Veterans. Any chance we can show our appreciation to the brave men and women who served our nation should not be missed."

Robert Grems, General Manager of the Dutchess County Fair added, "Continuing a tradition that started a couple years ago, a special tribute to Veterans will precede each evening's grandstand show."

To obtain a FAVOR card, Veterans must first present his or her honorable discharge papers to the Dutchess County Division of Veterans Services Office (4th floor of the county office building, 22 Market St. Poughkeepsie). A counselor within the Veterans Division will complete a quick in-take form with the Veteran. From there, the Veteran will proceed to the County Clerk's Office to obtain his or her ID at no fee.

Your Post needs your help. Contact Commander



“Women are the fastest growing segment of the Veteran population.” You may have heard or seen this statistic many times, but it’s a powerful one. It conveys both the important achievement of more and more women choosing to join our armed forces, as well as the challenges we face in addressing their specific health care needs. In VA research, this has meant not only expanding our knowledge of health conditions and diseases but making sure VA itself is prepared for the “surge” of female Veterans

Living space available for Veteran in need.

Do you know a homeless Veteran? Commander Klock has room in his home and is willing to take in a Veteran. Contact Neil at 845-227-6001

Do you know anyone who might like to join the American Legion? Print out the application on the next page and have them return it to our Post.

American Legion Application

Please return to:

American Legion Post 1758
P.O. Box 92
Hopewell Junction, NY
12533

YES! I want to become a member of the American Legion by completing this application that I served at least 90 days in the armed forces and was honorably discharged.

Verify by forwarding this application to the address above during the dates marked below

Last Name

First Name

Street

City

State

ZIP

Home Phone

Email address

Period Served (see below)

Branch Of Service

To be eligible for The American Legion, a man or woman must have served at least one day of active duty in one of the armed forces of the United States during one of the following eligibility eras.

They are:

World War I - April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918

- **World War II** - December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946
- **SPECIAL NOTE** - Merchant Marines - December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945
- **Korea** - June 25, 1950 to January 31, 1955
- **Vietnam** - February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975
- **Lebanon & Grenada** - August 24, 1982 to July 31, 1984
- **Panama** - December 20, 1989 to January 31, 1990
- **Persian Gulf** - August 2, 1990 until cessation of hostilities as determined by the United States Government (**NOTE: this means that all military personnel now on**

active duty are eligible for membership in The American Legion).