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# American Legion Post 1758 Newsletter

March 2019

American Legion Post 1758,  
<https://al-ny1758.org/>

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Our next meeting will be Tuesday April 9,  
**2019 at 7:00 PM** at the **East Fishkill Old  
Town Hall**, Rte. 52, next to the Police  
Station. Please try to attend.

Don't forget to check out our Post web  
site at <https://al-ny1758.org/>. There is a  
wealth of information there.

"Attitude is a choice. Happiness is a  
choice. Optimism is a choice.  
Kindness is a choice. Giving is a  
choice. Respect is a choice. Whatever  
choice you make makes you. Choose  
wisely."

— Roy T. Bennett, [The Light in the  
Heart](#)

*Mark Baaden has been trying to get the paper work  
for **Manny Bacon's Purple Heart**. The PH should  
have been awarded to and given to Manny's family  
back in 1943 when he was killed in action. Of course  
doing anything like this is a task, especially when  
dealing with our government.  
I've provided Mark with lots of documentation which  
he has passed on to the National Archives.  
The battle continues! Thanks Mark!*

**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 a  
veteran. All calls are confidential.

**Membership:** Our Post has over 90% of the membership  
renewed for 2019. Remember you have an option of  
renewing your membership online. You can do so by  
clicking here: [Online Renewal](#)

You can also become a PUFL by clicking on this link:  
[PUFL application](#)

**Please submit your renewal ASAP! Thank you**

## Disabled Veterans Picked Up A Major Travel Benefit In The Latest Defense Bill

Buried in the \$717 billion National Defense Authorization Act is a fantastic measure for disabled veterans: easier access to military flights as an escape from the horror of commercial air travel.

Under the Disabled Veterans Access to Space-A Travel Act, veterans with a service-connected, permanent disability rating of 100% can hop on any scheduled or unscheduled military flight within the continental United States operated by Air Mobility Command "as such transportation is provided to members of the armed forces entitled to retired or retainer pay."

The legislation was introduced by House Veterans Affairs Committee vice chairman and Florida Rep. Gus Bilirakis way back in 2016 and eventually merged with the fiscal 2019 NDAA that President Donald Trump signed into law on Monday.

"Disabled veterans who have a service-connected permanent disability rated as 100 percent cannot travel on military flights unless they are military retirees," Bilirakis' office said of the legislation at the time, according to Sunshine State News. "This bill would authorize veterans who have a service-connected, permanent disability rated as 100 percent to travel on Space-A at no additional cost to the Department of Defense and without aircraft modifications."

According to Connective Vets, the push for the expansion of Space-A travel found a public advocate from Lanna Britt, a military spouse whose husband Tim, an Army MP, was injured when vehicle-borne improvised explosive device targeted his convoy in central Baghdad. His injuries, which earned him a 100% disability rating, made traveling near-impossible, according to Lanna.

"Long, crowded flights aren't easy for anyone, but they can be a nightmare for 100 percent disabled veterans, depending on their injuries," Lanna Britt told Connecting Vets in July. "100 percent disabled veterans live with daily pain and stress, and this is just one way we can show our appreciation at no extra cost to taxpayers, it's a no-brainer."

According to data from the Government Accountability Office, 77.3% of space-available seats in 2011 were occupied by just 2.3% of the 8.4 million individuals eligible for the program.

"The Space-Available Travel program is a benefit rightfully extended to all military retirees, yet it excludes those who are 100 percent disabled," Bilirakis told Sunshine State News on Monday. "The brave men and women who served our country, and returned home injured, have already paid a big price on our behalf. If there is space available for travel on a military aircraft, there is no reason our 100 percent disabled veterans shouldn't be on that flight."



# Welcome

**Richard Flacinski** transferred from NY Post 001 to our Post in February. Richard is a resident of Hopewell Junction and is a Persian Gulf War Veteran. Welcome Richard.

## Boys'/Girls' State

We've had several inquiries about the Boys' State and Girls' State Programs this year. Two excellent candidates from John Jay High School were interviewed by Don Burns and Lance Ashworth for Boys' State. At the February County meeting Beacon Post 203 agreed to sponsor one of these young men for us. They will be supporting Osborne Owen and our post will send Patrick Cullen.

We've also been working with Wappinger's Post 427 to transfer more responsibility for Roy C Ketcham High School students to them. They are currently processing applicants for both programs and we've agreed to sponsor their 2nd best candidate for Girls' State this year.

The cost of sending each student is \$450.00 and as much as we would like to send everyone who is interested, our post cannot afford it. We appreciate Beacon's assistance this year so two boys from John Jay can attend Boys' State.

Going forward Post 427 will be working with Roy C. Ketcham and we will work with John Jay.



### Good of the Legion:

Juan Alfonso's name was drawn at our March 12th meeting. Unfortunately Juan wasn't in attendance so \$32.00 was added to the Pot Of Gold.

# MOH



**Melvin L. Brown**

Company D, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion  
Korea

Pfc. Brown, Company D distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. While his platoon was securing Hill 755 (the Walled City), the enemy, using heavy automatic weapons and small arms, counterattacked. Taking a position on a 50-foot-high wall he delivered heavy rifle fire on the enemy. His ammunition was soon expended and although wounded, he remained at his post and threw his few grenades into the attackers causing many casualties. When his supply of grenades was exhausted his comrades from nearby foxholes tossed others to him and he left his position, braving a hail of fire, to retrieve and throw them at the enemy. The attackers continued to assault his position and Pfc. Brown weaponless, drew his entrenching tool from his pack and calmly waited until they 1 by 1 peered over the wall, delivering each a crushing blow upon the head. Knocking 10 or 12 enemy from the wall, his daring action so inspired his platoon that they repelled the attack and held their position. Pfc. Brown's extraordinary heroism, gallantry, and intrepidity reflect the highest credit upon himself and was in keeping with the honored traditions of the military service. Reportedly missing in action and officially killed in action, September 5, 1950.

### **The New York Department Convention**

will be held July 17-20, 2019 at the Hyatt in Buffalo. Dan Oberhauser will be representing our Post. If any other member would like to attend please contact Commander Reynolds.



Despite the bad weather in the morning we had a good turnout for the Dutchess County St. Patrick's Day Parade. We had 7 members of our post along with Tommy Masch's two jeeps and our Bofer's gun Anti-Tank gun. Thanks to Dan Briscoe, Bill Kriebel, Tom Masch, Jim Reynolds, Danny Oberhauser, John Call and Lance Ashworth for participating. We also had two members from Post 427 in Wappinger's, one from Post 37 in Poughkeepsie and another from Post 203 in Beacon march with us.



### Condolences

Our condolences go out to long time member **Tom Dolan** and his family on the loss of his wife Barbara. Mrs. Dolan was the Town Of East Fishkill Tax Receiver for many years and Tom served as a Dutchess County Court Judge. Tom and Barbara are well known and respected throughout the area.



Hundreds of veterans and officials were on hand earlier this month to dedicate the site of the new **National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial** at the corner of 23rd Street and Constitution Ave., NW. The new Memorial will be in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial and near the Vietnam Wall. Special guest speakers were former Vice President and then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, retired Air Force Gen. Chuck Horner, former U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Ed Gnehm, and current Kuwait Ambassador to the U.S. Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



### **The World is Mine by Joy Lovelet Crawford**

Today on a bus, I saw a lovely girl with silken hair  
 I envied her, she seemed so gay, and I wished I was so fair  
 When suddenly she rose to leave, I saw her hobble down the isle  
 O God, forgive me when I whine  
 I have two legs, the world is mine

And then I stopped to buy some sweets  
 The lad who sold them had such charm  
 I talked with him, he seemed so calm, and if I were late it would do no harm,  
 And as I left he said to me "I thank you, you have been so kind"  
 It's nice to talk with folks like you. You see, I'm blind  
 O God forgive me when I whine  
 I have two eyes, the world is mine

Later walking down the street, I saw a child with eyes of blue  
 He stood and watched the others play; it seemed he knew not what to do  
 I stopped a moment, then I said, why don't you join the others dear"  
 He looked ahead without a word, and then I knew he could not hear  
 O God forgive me when I whine  
 I have two ears, the world is mine

With legs to take me where I'll go  
 With eyes to see the sunsets glow  
 With ears to ear what I would know  
 O God forgive me when I whine  
 I'm blessed, indeed, the world is mine

# Castle Point

On February 26<sup>th</sup> members Don Burns, Caroline Pogge, Jim Reynolds, and John Polasko delivered 323 new pieces of underwear to Castle Point.



While there they also gave out \$300 worth of Texas Road House gift cards to 6 veterans.





## **Robert L. Wilkie Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

Welcome home!

Two years ago, President Trump signed the [Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act](#) into law. That Act designates every March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It was March 29, 1973, when the last of our combat troops left Vietnam.

It was on that day that the last American prisoners of war held in North Vietnam came home.

Vietnam War Veterans Day is part of [our nation's ongoing commemoration](#) of the [50th anniversary of the Vietnam War](#).

In support, VA and more than 10,000 local, state, and national organizations join the Department of Defense as Commemorative Partners.

We honor the nine million American men and women who served on active duty from November 1, 1955, to May 7, 1975. We solemnly remember more than 58,000 whose names are etched into the Vietnam Memorial's polished black granite—constant reminders of the price of freedom.

Take advantage of the opportunities this commemoration encourages and show your gratitude to this noble generation of American service members.

Say, Thank you.

And welcome them home.

May God bless all of you, your families, and this great Nation.



## New York State Silver Rose Certificate Newest Military Award

**ALBANY** – Senator Catharine M. Young (R,C,I – 57<sup>th</sup> District) announced today that Governor Cuomo has signed legislation she authored to establish a new state military certificate to honor the sacrifices of veterans who have suffered from the effects of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange. The New York State Silver Rose Certificate will be available to current state residents or individuals who were state residents during the period when their exposure occurred.

“The risks and hardships of wartime service do not always end when a tour of duty is complete. No group of veterans understands this better than those who served in Vietnam and were exposed to highly toxic, tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange. Tragically, many of these courageous veterans have suffered from debilitating and even deadly health problems in the war’s aftermath, ranging from cancers to nervous system, respiratory and heart disorders,” said Senator Young.

“I took up this cause after speaking with many Vietnam veterans in my district who shared the devastating health challenges they’ve battled as a result of their exposure to toxic herbicides. In some cases, it caused catastrophic illnesses that eventually took their lives. For others, it caused chronic conditions that impaired their ability to work and enjoy a quality of life. The New York State Silver Rose Certificate is an acknowledgement of their enormous sacrifices and a symbol of awareness of the dangers of Agent Orange.”

Veterans who have suffered from the effects of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange would be eligible to receive a New York State Silver Rose Veterans’ Service Certificate under the new law. The designation may also be awarded posthumously. The measure authorizes the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs to select the color and design of the honor.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy authorized "Operation Ranch Hand," the code name for the United States Air Force's herbicide program in Vietnam. A number of herbicidal agents were used, including, most infamously, Agent Orange. Approximately 20 million gallons of the herbicide were used to help U.S. forces by defoliating forest areas that concealed the enemy and destroying the crops that provided their food. As many as [2.6 million U.S. service members](#) were exposed to the chemical.

Agent Orange has been linked to increased rates of cancer, including Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, throat, prostate, lung, colon, and liver cancer, as well as Ischemic Heart Disease and acute/chronic leukemia. The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes over 40 cancers and sicknesses, including diabetes, as Agent Orange related and “service connected.”

Senator Young concluded by saying that, “more than 58,000 Americans lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Yet, the real number of casualties is far higher when you factor in each veteran who has fought and died from an Agent Orange related illness. The Silver Rose Certificate is an acknowledgement of their suffering and sacrifice and a reminder of how much we owe those who have put their lives on the line for us.”

(My understanding is that this new medal will be available in May 2019.....JDR)