

American Legion
Post 1758
Newsletter



March 2021

Est 1949

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Next Meeting

Our first general membership meeting in several months is scheduled for **Tuesday April 13th, 2021 at 7:00PM**, place to be determined.

We are hoping with more vaccines distributed that it will be safe to gather. *Meeting details will be confirmed via a call out message.*

"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions." – Stephen Covey

Don't forget that our Post web site (al-ny1758.org) has a wealth of information:

- *Meeting and executive board minutes
- *Newsletters
- Programs
- Photos

* For "members only" pages you need a logon which you can obtain from web master Bill Kriebel at Historian@al-ny1758.org

The meeting minutes can be found here (requires login)
<https://al-ny1758.org/docs>

Special Notice: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number

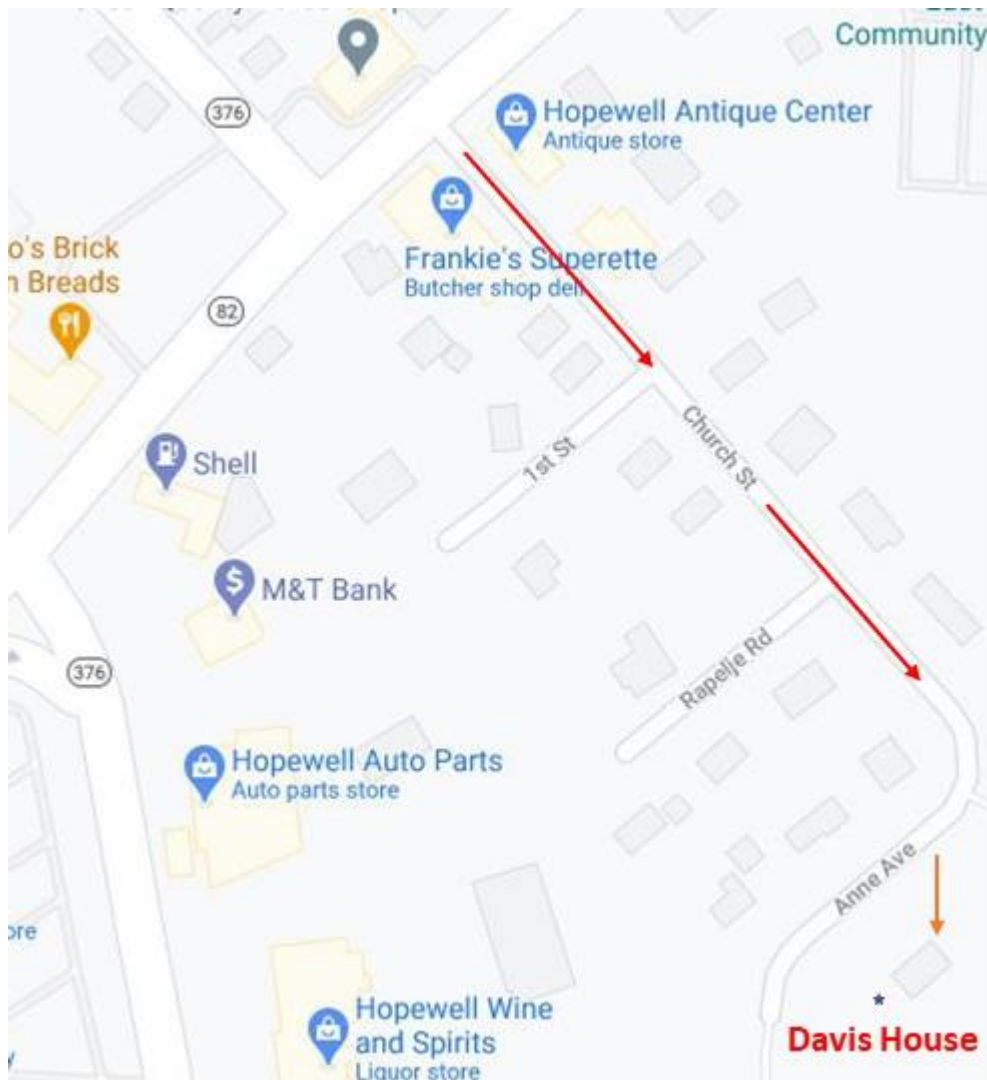
1-800-273-8255

available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.

New Meeting Location

We will **no longer be meeting in the East Fishkill Old Town Hall (OTH)**! The OTH is being renovated and will be used by one of East Fishkill's government offices.

The town will most likely be offering us the use of "The Davis House" which is located on Anne Avenue, off Church Street which intersects with Rte. 82 by Frankie's Superette. The Davis House itself is also being renovated and may or may not be ready by our April 13th meeting.



There is a small driveway that can hold 4-6 cars and additional vehicles can park in the cul-d-sac at the end of Anne Avenue.

Post Elections

Our officer elections, normally held in May each year, had been postponed in 2020 due to the COVID restrictions and the lack of meetings. Current officers agreed to maintain their positions until new elections are held.

At our April meeting we will be seeking candidates for 2021 elections which will be held in May. Some current officers will be seeking re-election, others are stepping down. Don't be afraid to step up and seek an officer's position within our post. We have a good core of active members and they're easy to work with.

New officers will be sworn in at the June 2021 meeting.

POST EVERLASTING

At its monthly meeting every March the Dutchess County American Legion presents a ceremony remembering county members who passed away the previous year.

At this month's county meeting 5 members of Post 1758 will be remembered. They are:

- Mike Tomkovitch -5/16/20 – USAF – 72 yrs old
- John Pizzuti – 6/13/20 – USA – 76 yrs old
- Tom Dolan – 7/25/20 – USA – 76 yrs old
- Marty Nolan – 8/29/20 – USA – 86 yrs old
- Joe Guarino – 12/30/20 – USN – 86 yrs old.

Buddy Checks

The last weekend in February eleven members of our post reached out to 72 other members with "Buddy Check" calls. We were able to connect live with about 50% of the members called. If you received a call on your answering machine and didn't call the caller back please call Jim Reynolds (845-221-7273) with a quick "we're okay" message.

Thanks to the following members for making the calls: Lance Ashworth, Dan Briscoe, Don Burns, John Call, Bruce Coneeny, Carl Eyer, Kevin Hines, Bill Kriebel, Bill Meyer, Jim Reynolds and Bob Spinillo.

MOH

Rank: LIUTENANT

Organization: U.S. NAVY

Conflict: WAR ON
TERRORISM (AFGHANISTAN)

Division: U.S. NAVY SEALS

Date of Action: JUNE 28, 2005

Place: NEAR ASADABAD



MICHAEL P. MURPHY

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as the leader of a special reconnaissance element with Naval Special Warfare Task Unit Afghanistan on 27 and 28 June 2005. While leading a mission to locate a high-level anti-coalition militia leader, Lieutenant Murphy demonstrated extraordinary heroism in the face of grave danger in the vicinity of Asadabad, Konar Province, Afghanistan. On 28 June 2005, operating in an extremely rugged enemy-controlled area, Lieutenant Murphy's team was discovered by anti-coalition militia sympathizers who revealed their position to Taliban fighters. As a result, between 30 and 40 enemy fighters besieged his four-member team. Demonstrating exceptional resolve, Lieutenant Murphy valiantly led his men in engaging the large enemy force. The ensuing fierce firefight resulted in numerous enemy casualties, as well as the wounding of all four members of the team. Ignoring his own wounds and demonstrating exceptional composure, Lieutenant Murphy continued to lead and encourage his men. When the primary communicator fell mortally wounded, Lieutenant Murphy repeatedly attempted to call for assistance for his beleaguered teammates. Realizing the impossibility of communicating in the extreme terrain, and in the face of almost certain death, he fought his way into open terrain to gain a better position to transmit a call. This deliberate, heroic act deprived him of cover, exposing him to direct enemy fire. Finally achieving contact with his headquarters, Lieutenant Murphy maintained his exposed position while he provided his location and requested immediate support for his team. In his final act of bravery, he continued to engage the enemy until he was mortally wounded, gallantly giving his life for his country and for the cause of freedom. By his selfless leadership, courageous actions, and extraordinary devotion to duty, Lieutenant Murphy reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Eisenhower's Threat to Quit

Disagreement with Churchill over Bomber Use

As the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe and leader of the D-Day invasion, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower became legendary for his ability to get officers and armies from different nations to work together to defeat Nazi Germany. But if needed, he was also willing to take a more confrontational approach. In fact, just a few months before the critical D-Day invasion, Eisenhower threatened to quit his command and go back to the United States. Eisenhower had been in heated talks with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill over a controversial plan to bomb the French railway and road system ahead of the Normandy invasion.

The so-called Transportation Plan, largely devised by British zoologist-turned-military strategist named Solly Zuckerman with the help of British Air Marshal Arthur Tedder, called for diverting Allied strategic bombers that had been hammering German industrial plants. Instead, Eisenhower wanted them to temporarily shift to a new mission—crippling the transportation infrastructure that the Germans might use to move troops and equipment to the coastal region, thus hindering them from rushing to counter the Allied invasion force. “Eisenhower wanted to use our heavy strategic bombers, the big four-engine planes that were built to destroy German cities and the economy, and send them to wreck the French roads and railway system,” explains Robert Citino, executive director of the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and senior historian at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

For Eisenhower, the switch in bombing seemed like a no-brainer. He knew that landing a massive invasion force and overcoming the elaborate layers of defenses that the Germans had built along the coast would be an incredibly difficult task, and the consequences of a failure would be catastrophic. “He thought he had to do everything possible to make sure Rommel couldn’t kick them off the beaches,” explains military historian Carlo D’Este, author of biographies of both Eisenhower and Churchill. “The Transportation plan played into that. He probably thought, we’ve got to have every advantage we can get, to avoid a disaster.”

But Arthur “Bomber” Harris, head of the Royal Air Force’s strategic bomber command, and his American counterpart, Gen. Carl “Tooey” Spaatz, didn’t see it that way. They weren’t under Eisenhower’s command, and their crews were accustomed to attacking massive industrial plants and German cities, not railroad switches and stations scattered across the countryside. To them, it seemed like a waste of resources, a diversion from their real mission. “They wanted to keep bombing German cities,” Citino says. “They thought that was the quickest way to end the war. That might seem like the height of naivete today, but people believed it at the time. The air forces wanted to prove that they could win the war on their own. You want to bomb Berlin, and instead you’re being told to bomb some podunk French village because it’s got a railway crossing.”

“That was probably Eisenhower’s biggest frustration—his lack of control over the air forces, and their unwillingness to listen to him and desire to go their own way,” D’Este says. To make matters even worse for Eisenhower, the Transportation Plan had another, even more powerful opponent—Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who already was feeling uneasy about the invasion, since the depleted British army—“they were running on fumes,” D’Este explains—couldn’t afford another punishing setback. Added to that was another dilemma. Eisenhower wanted to drop bombs on France, an Allied country that the British and Americans were supposed to be liberating, and in addition to destroying the railroads, the raids ran the risk of inflicting casualties among the French civilian population.

While Churchill’s concerns about collateral damage were genuine, “to be honest, the humanitarian debate was very much second line,” Citino says. “The real question was who could win the war more

quickly.” The strategic bombing brass insisted that Germany already was on its last legs, and that they could win the war in six months on their own. “They said, let us devise our own plan,” Citino explains. “We’ll bomb oil production facilities, chemical plants, ball bearings plants inside Germany. But it’s really about oil.” Eisenhower told his opponents that their Oil Plan, as they called it, wouldn’t do him much good. As historian Stephen E. Ambrose has written, Eisenhower argued that the Germans had hidden oil and gasoline in camouflaged depots across France, so knocking out their plants in Germany wouldn’t help the invasion that much.

On 22 MAR, Eisenhower dictated a memo that detailed the history of the dispute. By the time that he finished it, he was so irked that he bluntly stated that if his opponents didn’t give in quickly, he planned “to take drastic action and inform the Combined Chiefs of Staff that unless the matter is settled, at once I will request relief from this Command.” He made the threat more explicitly in a conversation with Tedder, the British officer who backed Eisenhower’s plan. “By God,” Eisenhower told him, “You tell that bunch that if they can’t get together and stop quarreling like children, I will tell the prime minister to get someone else to run this damned war. I’ll quit.”

Apparently, the threat worked. The prime minister did express his misgivings in a subsequent meeting with the British War Cabinet, where according to Ambrose, he warned that Eisenhower’s plan “will smear the good name of Royal Air Forces across the world.” But eventually, he too decided to sign off on the Transportation Plan, though he tried to diffuse the responsibility by putting the question to President Franklin Roosevelt for final approval. FDR told Churchill that military considerations trumped the humanitarian question, and that the bombing should proceed. Eisenhower’s gambit had worked.

“Eisenhower, who always claimed not to know anything about politics, actually was a supremely political general,” Citino says. “I think he knew exactly what impact his threat to resign would have.”

D’Este concurs, noting that the incident showed how well Eisenhower understood Churchill. “If you go back to 1942 and look at the reasons that Eisenhower and Churchill hit it off, one of the reasons that Churchill liked Ike so much was that Ike was willing to stand up to him,” D’Este says. “Ike knew that.” Even so, according to D’Este, Eisenhower deftly avoided backing Churchill into a corner, by directly giving him an ultimatum that would have threatened him with loss of face. Instead, he made the actual threat to others, whom he knew would report back to the prime minister that Ike was at the end of his patience. “I don’t think it would have been hard for Eisenhower’s feelings to get back to Churchill.” D’Este says.

Tedder, who had taken the risk of siding with Eisenhower—“he thought Churchill was going to sack him,” D’Este notes—undoubtedly breathed a sigh of relief, before carrying out Eisenhower’s plan. By DDay, the Allies had dropped 76,000 tons of bombs—which Ambrose calculated was about seven times the explosive power of the Hiroshima A-bomb—on French railways. Though some accounts question the effect of the bombing, Citino has no such doubts. “It was extremely effective,” he says. As a result, “the German army had a very difficult time getting around France.” In the end, the way Eisenhower threatened to quit only showed the depth of his dedication to making D-Day a successful operation and defeating the Nazis. It also demonstrated the deft political skill that eventually would help him to reach the White House.

Venture Crew Rifle Team



Our Venture Crew just competed in the American Legion Department of New York match. Our eight young folks did well and placed in the middle of the pack. They are a young team and I'm sure we'll see improvement along the way. Thanks to coaches Dan Briscoe and Norm Dauerer.



Legionnaire of the Year

Commander Reynolds nominated post member Dan Briscoe for Legionnaire of the Year 2020. Reynolds doesn't normally get too excited about the program because he thinks singling one person out can sometimes cause division within an organization. But he felt that Dan has earned some recognition.

Dan enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1971 as a hospital corpsman and operating room technician. Duty assignments included Great Lakes Training Command, St. Albans Naval Hospital, and in 1972 he was assigned the USS New Orleans as part of the Task Force 78 in Haiphong Harbor, Vietnam. He was discharged in May of 1973 and assigned to the reserves until 1976. Dan rejoined the Reserves in 1977 with the 4th Marine Division as a field corpsman. Eventually he was transferred to the Naval Reserve Center in Poughkeepsie and retired from the reserves in 1994.

Dan's "can do" attitude was displayed in 1998 when he founded and was president of the New York State Society of Perfusion. Always ready to meet any challenge he is also Past President of the American Society of ExtraCorporeal Technology (AMSECT), Northeast. As a community leader Dan has served as a Boy Scout leader since 1993 serving as Scoutmaster, District Member, Cub Scout Camp Staff and is currently Dutchess District Commissioner.

Dan joined the American legion in 2000 and has served as post Commander in 2009, post Finance Officer in 2013 and has served as our post chaplain and first vice commander. He has been a member of our Color and Honor Guards since 2017 and is a member of our Executive Committee.

Dan has served as the Dutchess County American legion scouting chair for the past 10 years. This includes meeting with the various boy scout troops throughout the county and coordinates with making sure that they are awarded certificates and medals when they become Eagle Scouts.

Dan is also a charter representative and committee member for Boy Scouts of America venture crew and the air rifle team sponsored by our post. In addition, he researched and obtained grants from the NRA to provide rifles and additional support for our rifle team. Every Sunday from June through October you can find him at the local range leading and instructing our youth rifle team. Additionally, Dan travels with the team to matches throughout the region. He has had a positive effect on many of the youth in our area not only in firearms safety but with leadership skills and civic responsibility.

Dan can always be counted on to support our activities in attending fundraising coin drops, parades, and veteran funeral details. Rarely does this legionnaire miss a post or county meeting.

Dan will represent Dutchess County in District 7 search for Legionnaire of The Year.

Congratulations Dan Briscoe!



East Fishkill Veterans Park

The town is in the process of seeking an engineer for the new park. Once selected the engineer will meet with the EFVC to discuss amenities. The East Fishkill Veterans Committee has been discussing the prospects of a new Veterans Park for a couple of years. At the November 17th meeting Town Supervisor Nick D'Alessandro agreed to approach the Town Recreation Advisory Board for \$50,000 to use for the study and design of the new park. The Advisory Board met on December 7th and approved the request. The Town owns 100 acres across Route 376 from the Town Hall and some of that land will be set aside for the new park. Post members Jim Reynolds, Don Burns, Bruce Coneeny, and Ferg Foley are members of the East Fishkill Veterans Committee.