



# Post 1758 Newsletter

January 2025

Est. 1949

**Special Notice:** If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call

**988 and press "1"**

or this toll-free number

**1-800-273-8255**

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

**Next Meeting: February 11, 2025**  
at the East Fishkill Community

"If my mind can conceive it, if my heart can believe it, then I can achieve it." —*Muhammad Ali*

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*Happy New Year*

## Upcoming Activities

**Tuesday, February 11th – 7:00 PM** Post Monthly meeting at the East Fishkill Community Center

**Wednesday, February 19th – 6:00 PM** Our Post hosts the County Meeting at the East Fishkill Community Center

**Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 10:00AM** Buddy checks on Post 1 members

**Tuesday, March 11th – 7:00 PM** Post Monthly meeting at the East Fishkill Community Center

## DUES

80% of our post members have already renewed for 2025....thank you to those that have renewed. Now let's get the other 20%!!!!

## Good of the Legion:

Carl Eyler's name was drawn for the Pot O' Gold at our October 8th meeting. Carl was not in attendance and the pot is now \$393.00.



**Don't forget to check out our Post web site at [al-ny1758.org](http://al-ny1758.org) where you will find a wealth of information.**

Some pages are for members only and can be viewed only by signing on to the site. If you need a logon id and password please contact post historian Bill Kriebel at [Historian@al-ny1758.org](mailto:Historian@al-ny1758.org) or by calling 845-226-6895.

## **Protect Your Deed**

### **“DUTCHESS DEED WATCH” WEBSITE NOW AVAILABLE**

Deed fraud is a crime in which thieves record a fraudulent document to try to take ownership of a home that isn't theirs. Deed fraud scams were first announced by the FBI in 2008, and the scams have remained stubbornly persistent since then, especially in areas with limited housing availability. For example, here's a recent news story about [deed fraud cases in nearby Schoharie and Rensselaer Counties](#).

You may have seen infomercials and received mailers from companies wanting to sell you protection against deed fraud – but there's no need to buy any of that.

The [office of Dutchess County Clerk Brad Kendall](#) has rolled out a new [Dutchess Deed Watch website](#) that's free to use. Visit [dutchessny.gov/countyclerk](http://dutchessny.gov/countyclerk) and scroll down to the Dutchess Deed Watch section.

**You may also go directly to: [Sign Up for Dutchess County Property Alerts - Dutchess Deed Watch](#)**

We had a great turnout at the Post Christmas Party .... 47 people enjoyed a nice dinner and some great company. Thanks to Bill Meyer and John Polasko for coordinating and setting up the event. Several items were raffled off and brought in a little money. The final cost to the post was \$883.





### VA History | Congressman Claypool's "\$1 Per Day Pension" Ribbon

In the 1880s, the Grand Army of the Republic launched a lobbying campaign to expand pension benefits for Union Civil War Veterans. Its activism sparked a political fight in Congress that continued off and on for the next 30 years. The ribbon proclaiming support for the "[\\$1 per day pension](#)" is an artifact from the pension battles of the era. The ribbon bears the signature of Horatio Claypool, an Ohio Democrat who was elected to Congress in 1910 on the strength of the "old soldier vote."

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### Sick Call

Please keep all those who are ill or suffering in your thoughts and prayers. Lately we've had several members who have had surgeries or illnesses among them Dan Briscoe, John Lyons, Bruce Coneeny, Joe Paterno, and James Lynch. Let's wish them all a speedy recovery.

## John Jay's "Heroes Homecoming"

Commander Reynolds was invited to John Jay's first "Heroes Homecoming" on January 9<sup>th</sup>. This is a new program honoring John Jay Alumni who are first responders. In addition to school district staff County Executive Sue Serino and a representative for senator Rob Rolison were in attendance. There were 12 or so JJ graduates that were honored, most were firefighters and a couple of police officers. Each were presented with a certificate and congratulations from Principal Kedzielawa and Sue Serino. I kind of got the feeling that next year they may include veterans that graduated from John Jay.



## **Dutchess Resident upgraded to Medal Of Honor**

**Some of you may be familiar with Charlie Johnson's name and seen the memorial in Arlington High School honoring him and other alumni killed in action. On January 3, 2025 his Silver Star was upgraded to the Medal Of honor.**

Charles R. Johnson was born Aug. 11, 1932, in Millbrook, New York, to Robert and Pearl Johnson. He was the third of six children, and his family called him "Buddy." He was a very talented athlete and musician who lettered in football, baseball and basketball, played the trumpet and sang in the choir.

Johnson attended Millbrook High School for three years, and transferred to Arlington High School in Poughkeepsie, New York, for his senior year, where he was elected as class vice president and served as co-captain of the basketball team. He was also selected by his schoolmates to receive the Babe Ruth Award for good sportsmanship and fair play.

Johnson attended Howard University for one semester in the fall of 1951 and played for their football team. In 1952 he was drafted into the military. His sister Geraldine urged him to join the Army band, but he told her, "If other mother's sons have to fight, I feel I need to do the same thing."

Pfc. Charles R. Johnson distinguished himself while serving with Company B, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, while defending Outpost Harry against overwhelming odds, and making the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of his comrades in the Republic of Korea during the period of June 11-12, 1953.

He was serving as a Browning automatic rifleman when Chinese forces attacked his unit during a massive nighttime assault involving more than 3,000 enemy soldiers. Johnson fought alongside his high school friend, Pvt. Don Dingee, who he later dragged to safety after their bunker was attacked by grenades.

"Charlie was a great Soldier, and the word hesitation was not in his vocabulary," Dingee later recalled. In addition, Johnson administered first aid to other injured Soldiers, despite being wounded himself. After recognizing their situation as untenable, and with disregard for his personal safety, he placed himself between the enemy and his injured comrades, and told them he would hold off the enemy forces as best as he could. His brave and selfless efforts saved the lives of as many as 10 Soldiers.

The Silver Star Medal, the third highest Department of Defense award exclusively for valor in combat, was posthumously awarded to Johnson in 2010, 57 years after his valiant actions. He was also honored in 2014 when the Johnson Fitness Center at Fort Stewart, Georgia — an 80,000 foot facility that features an indoor swimming pool, running track, climbing wall and cardio rooms — was named after him under the 3rd Infantry Division.

At Arlington High School, there is a Charlie Johnson Hall, which features a bronze statue of Johnson pulling Dingee to safety, and a Wall of Remembrance that lists the names and stories of Arlington alumni who were killed in action while serving in the armed forces.

Johnson's friends and classmates, along with students, staff and administrators from the Arlington School District, established the Charlie Johnson Legacy Project, which helps teach lessons inspired by Johnson, including loyalty, brotherhood, selflessness, courage, compassion, responsibility, patriotism and integrity. Each year the project awards scholarships to male and female students who reflect the most Charlie Johnson-like qualities.



## **June 11-12, 1953 | Outpost Harry, Korean Peninsula**

### **3rd Infantry Division**

Pfc. Charles R. Johnson distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity beyond the call of duty while defending Outpost Harry against overwhelming odds, and making the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of his comrades in the Republic of Korea, June 11-12, 1953.

Johnson was serving as a Browning automatic rifleman with Company B, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, when Chinese forces attacked his unit during a massive nighttime assault. During the ensuing battle, overwhelming numbers of Chinese troops assaulted the trenches and bunkers defended by Johnson and his squad.

Johnson, wounded from a direct artillery hit on his bunker and subsequently from a hand grenade, administered first aid to those more seriously injured. Understanding the seriousness of the situation and being under direct fire from the enemy, Johnson dragged a wounded Soldier to a secure bunker, stopping intermittently to aid injured Soldiers and kill several enemy troops in hand-to-hand combat.

Departing the safety of the second bunker, he conducted a search for weapons and ammunition, then returned to rearm the others. After recognizing their situation as untenable, and with disregard for his personal safety, he exited the bunker, placing himself between the enemy and his injured comrades, and told them he would hold off the enemy forces as best as he could.

His brave and selfless efforts saved the lives of as many as 10 Soldiers. Johnson's extraordinary actions in close combat with the enemy, his unyielding courage and bravery, and his profound concern for his fellow Soldiers are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

## Veterans in Congress

Sixteen new veterans will join 84 incumbent members of Congress with military experience, but that total will drop by two within days of the start of the new legislative term. That's because two veteran members are headed to the executive branch in the next few weeks.

Ohio Republican Sen. JD Vance is set to leave his Senate seat to be sworn in as vice president on Jan. 20, and Florida Republican Rep. Mike Waltz has been tapped to be President-elect Donald Trump's national security adviser.

### **Congress will open next session with more veterans than two years ago**

Advocates say the surprise increase in lawmakers with military backgrounds is a positive sign for the veteran community.

Still, even a one-person jump in the number of veterans in Congress is significant, because an increase in members with military backgrounds has only happened four times in the last 50 years.

Because of their backgrounds, veterans serving in the House and Senate are often seen as critical to discussions of military operations and veterans benefits. But the number of veterans in Congress has declined almost steadily since the mid-1970s, as the military shifted from an end strength of largely drafted individuals to an all-volunteer force.

In 1973, only one in every four members of Congress had never served in the military. In 2025, about one in every six members will be veterans.

Here's a look at the incoming class, by the numbers:

- Nine women veterans will serve in Congress in 2025, the largest total in history.
- The group includes 28 Democrats and 72 Republicans.
- Congress will have 46 Army veterans, 25 Navy veterans, 16 Air Force veterans and 13 Marine Corps veterans.
- About one-third (31) began their military careers after January 2000. Twenty-one started before 1980.
- Twenty veterans will serve in the Senate, and 80 will serve in the House.
- Texas has the largest caucus of members with military experience (11), followed by Florida (9) and California (7).





### **Venture Crew/Youth Shooting Sports**

Norm Dauerer presented a Challenge coin to the top shooter in our 3 position Air Rifle Program that we run at the Whortlekill Rod and Gun Club. The program is under the auspices of the American Legion Venture crew. The awards that the shooters earn are governed by the NRA/Winchester program. The use of the range is donated by the gun club. The Unit challenge coin was given to Norm by an Army buddy and was presented to our top shooter Nicholas Arshanus (left picture). Norm also presented one of his personal coins to the next runner up, Lakota Tenoso.

### **Upcoming “Buddy Checks”**

Lance Ashworth is coordinating a Buddy Check for Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 10am – 2pm involving teams comprised of 2 volunteers (each) that will visit 5-6 of the “Post 1” member addresses and conduct an in-person buddy check at the Legionnaire’s residence. Whether the Legionnaire is home or not, the Buddy Check team will leave a letter behind (either given to the member or on the front door in a clear plastic bag). The goal of the Buddy Check is two-fold: check on veterans in our geographical area and attempt to recruit Post 1 members into Post 1758.

**VA is implementing a new authority to provide outer burial receptacles (OBRs) for graves with casketed burials in [VA grant-funded cemeteries](#).** Typically placed in a gravesite before a casket is lowered, OBRs reduce maintenance costs at cemeteries by preventing the ground over and around the casket from sinking and by preventing grave headstones from sinking or tilting. Further, OBRs assure the continuation of regular surface contours in cemeteries, advancing both aesthetic and public safety purposes.

Beginning on Nov. 9, 2024, VA will accept applications for payment of a monetary allowance for privately purchased OBRs and for OBRs provided by a grant-funded cemetery, when the OBR is placed at the time of interment. This allowance may be paid for burials that occurred on or after the effective date of the new authority which is Jan. 5, 2023.

In the case of a privately purchased OBR, the monetary allowance is payable to the individual who purchased the OBR. For OBRs provided by a grant funded cemetery, the monetary allowance is payable to the State or Tribal Organization when the OBR was provided at no cost to the decedent's family.

The allowance amount is updated each year based on the average cost of government purchased OBRs for use at VA national cemeteries, for placement at time of interment. For interments that occurred in calendar year 2023, VA will pay \$400; for interments that occurred in calendar year 2024, VA will pay \$411. The amount for calendar year 2025 will be [posted in a notice to the public in the Federal Register](#), once the amount is determined.

This expansion of the OBR benefit to burials in VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries was made possible by Section 2203 of Public Law 116-315, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which amended 38 U.S.C. 2306(e) to expand applicability of the OBR benefit to burials in VA grant-funded cemeteries.

Previously, VA was authorized to provide OBRs for casketed burials in VA national cemeteries, which meant Veterans and their families did not have to pay for an OBR when their loved ones were interred there. However, Veterans and their eligible family members who chose to be interred in a grant-funded Veterans cemetery sometimes would have to pay the cost of an OBR, as determined by each State or Tribal Organization. In some instances, the State or Tribal Organization paid for the OBR out of its own funds, so the allowance is a new benefit for them as well as for families. Since Congress expanded VA's authority to provide OBRs for casketed burials in grant-funded Veterans cemeteries, VA may help cover those costs as an expanded benefit to Veterans and their families, and to our State and Tribal partners.

Prior to the date of implementation noted above, NCA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program will provide information directly to the state and tribal organizations regarding the process for claiming the monetary allowance and their role in verifying individual claims for the monetary allowance for privately purchased OBRs used at the grant funded Veterans cemetery. Individuals who would like more information on how to claim the monetary allowance for a privately purchased OBR should contact the grant funded Veterans cemetery where the interment took place but may also contact NCA's Finance Service at [VANCAOBRallowance@va.gov](mailto:VANCAOBRallowance@va.gov).

A list of VA grant-funded cemeteries with contact information is available on NCA's [VA Grant Funded Cemeteries](#) website. Please contact the cemetery directly for information about burials there. Information about VA burial and memorial benefits is available [online](#), at [VA national cemeteries](#) or by calling toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

## Veterans Appreciation by John Jay Basketball

On January 14<sup>th</sup> the John Jay Boy's Basketball Team honored local veterans. Each veteran was individually introduced and walked from under the basket to center court. Participating veterans were: Lance Ashworth, Fred Beck, Jim Broughton, John Call, Bill Meyer, Al Nalbandian, John Polasko, and Jim Reynolds



## **Pentagon drops ban on servicemembers displaying US flags horizontally at big events**

American servicemembers can once again display the U.S. flag horizontally at sporting events and other official ceremonies, the Pentagon said in a memo that reverses restrictions enacted two years ago.

Defense Department personnel may now show the flag, “regardless of its size or position, at eligible public sporting and other community events, provided that such displays are done in a respectful manner,” a DOD memo issued Friday said.

The updated guidelines follow changes to the U.S. Flag Code under the latest National Defense Authorization Act. The purpose of the code is to provide guidance on properly displaying the flag, including details regarding size, placement and handling.

Under the old rules outlined on Feb. 10, 2023, uniformed service members were barred from participating directly in the “unfurling, holding, and/or carrying of giant horizontal U.S. flags.” Military jump teams also were formerly prevented from incorporating the U.S. flag in their demonstrations if it couldn’t “be caught reliably and handled respectfully by ground personnel.”

It remains against DOD rules for flags to land on the ground during parachute demonstrations in which they are attached to the jumper, according to the memo, signed by Chris Meagher, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs.

The rules must be followed by DOD personnel handling the flag at events in the U.S. and abroad.

Servicemembers traditionally unfurl the flag at the Super Bowl and other major American sporting events. They have also been used in flag displays at National Football League and Major League Baseball games in foreign countries.

The Flag Code is referenced in DoD regulations. According to the code, the Stars and Stripes should never touch anything beneath it, including the ground, floor, water or merchandise. An exception is made for caskets draped in the flag during funeral honors so long as it isn’t lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

While the revisions maintain that the flag usually should not be carried flat, they allow for exceptions that “may be necessary in limited circumstances.” That stipulation was absent in the 2023 DOD guidance.

Pentagon officials have been concerned with flag protocol in recent years and addressed troops on the issue in earlier memos. In 2020, DOD issued a policy that banned the display of unauthorized flags on military installations, buildings and vehicles.

It effectively prohibited Confederate flags and other controversial banners without spelling out which flags were off-limits.

In the wake of the 2023 memo that was overturned last week, Meagher encouraged bases “to work with sponsors of community events to develop other ways to showcase the patriotism and capabilities of our military.”