



# Post 1758 Newsletter

February 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: March 11, 2025** at the East Fishkill Community Center

"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come without leaving happier." —Mother Teresa

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## Upcoming Activities

**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

**Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup> – 11:30 AM** St. Patrick's Day Parade...meet behind Walgreens, Main St and Rte 9

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

## DUES

85% of our post members have already renewed for 2025....thank you to those that have renewed. Now let's get the other 15%!!!!

## Good of the Legion:

**John Miglis'** name was drawn for the Pot O' Gold at our October 8th meeting. Carl was not in attendance and the pot is now \$430.00.



**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.

Hudson Valley  
Hospice

★ ★ ★

**JOIN US FOR A**

**WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS EVENT**

★ **SATURDAY, MARCH 29 @2PM** ★

**HENRY A. WALLACE CENTER: 4079 ALBANY POST ROAD, HYDE PARK**

## Dutchess County Launches ‘GOGO VETERANS’ Free Transportation Program for Local Veterans

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY — Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino and Dutchess County Veterans Affairs Director Adam Roche have announced the launch of ‘GoGo Veterans,’ a new transportation program providing free rides to veterans in need of reliable transportation for essential services. Officially starting on March 1st, this initiative underscores Dutchess County’s unwavering commitment to those who have served our nation, ensuring they have access to the care and resources they deserve.

Through the ‘GoGo Veterans’ program, eligible veterans can receive:

- Two free rides per month in Dutchess County to medical appointments, including VA hospitals and local healthcare providers.
- One free ride in Dutchess County per month to a grocery store, pharmacy, or personal visit, helping veterans maintain independence and quality of life.

*“Our veterans should never have to worry about how they’ll get to a doctor’s appointment or pick up groceries,” said Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino. “They answered the call to serve, and now it’s our turn to serve them. ‘GoGo Veterans’ is about making life a little easier for those who have given so much, and I encourage every eligible veteran to take advantage of this program.”*

*Dutchess County Director of Veterans Affairs Adam Roche said, “Transportation shouldn’t be a barrier to a veteran’s health and well-being. Whether it’s getting to a critical medical appointment or simply picking up necessities, this program will help veterans stay connected and cared for. We’re proud to offer this support and make a meaningful difference in their lives.”*

Veterans interested in enrolling in the program can call the Dutchess County Office of Veterans Affairs at 845-486-2060 to register for the program. Instructions on how to schedule rides will then be provided to enrolled veterans.

The GoGo Veterans program will enable the County to significantly expand ride availability for local veterans. The County has already successfully been utilizing GoGo services through the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, with nearly 2,000 rides provided to seniors in 2024.

Director Roche noted several veterans have already piloted the program and have been pleased with how convenient and flexible the service is. *“We are thrilled to hear the great feedback from our veterans about how easy it is to use and look forward to serving many more veterans with this new service,” said Roche.*

For veterans who had a ride previously scheduled through VetZero for the month of February, those rides will continue as scheduled.

Dutchess County remains committed to expanding services that enhance the well-being of local veterans. To learn more about the GoGo Veterans program as well as other on available veteran programs and benefits, visit [DutchessNY.gov/Veterans](https://DutchessNY.gov/Veterans).

**More than 1,000 [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) employees were fired** this week as part of efforts by President Donald Trump and presidential adviser Elon Musk to slash the size of the federal government.

The VA announced Thursday that roughly 2.3% of its "probationary" workforce -- those who competed for jobs but had less than a year at the VA or employees appointed to specific positions without going through the standard federal hiring process and have served less than two years -- were dismissed effective immediately.

Advertisement

VA officials did not say what roles the employees filled but added that most of the department's 43,000 probationary workers are exempt from federal workforce reductions because they serve in "mission critical" positions.

"At VA, we are focused on saving money so it can be better spent on veteran care," VA Secretary Doug Collins said in a statement Thursday. "We thank these employees for their service to VA. This was a tough decision, but ultimately it's the right call to better support the veterans, families, caregivers and survivors the department exists to serve."

In separate moves, the [VA announced Jan. 23 that more than 300,000 positions](#) at the department were exempt from a federal hiring freeze announced Jan. 20 and more than 130 job categories [are not eligible for the deferred resignation program](#) offer issued by the Office of Personnel Management on Jan. 28.

The department estimates that the dismissal of probationary workers will save more than \$98 million per year, which it will "redirect ... back toward health care, benefits and services for VA beneficiaries," according to a news release. In fiscal 2023, the VA's budget was nearly \$304 billion, including mandatory spending such as disability payments and pensions.

The Office of Personnel Management's directive to dismiss personnel across government agencies who had not yet gained civil servant employment protections has affected an unknown number of federal workers.

The Trump administration also has targeted some agencies for personnel cuts beyond just new workers, however, starting with the U.S. Agency for International Development on Feb. 3 and the Department of Education this week.

This week, OPM also cut all non-union employees from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, [including the entire staff of seven at the agency's Office of Servicemember Affairs](#), although some may have submitted their resignations under the OPM's deferred resignation program.

In addition to the provisional personnel cuts, the VA also appears to be canceling contracts for research on veteran suicide, opioid addiction, cancer and illnesses related to burn pits.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said Thursday the administration has stopped honoring term limits for researchers and has been dismissing them, a move that will hurt veterans and "red and blue states."

"I'm hearing from longtime VA researchers in my home state of Washington who are right now being told to immediately stop their research and pack their bags -- not because their work isn't desperately needed, but because Trump and Elon have decided to fire these researchers on a whim," Murray said in a statement. "Americans should understand by now when it comes to these kinds of indiscriminate cuts and arbitrary mass firings --Trump and Elon have no idea what they are doing, nor do they care who they hurt in the process."

Democratic lawmakers, union officials and some VA employees held a protest outside the VA building in Washington, D.C., on Thursday demanding protections for VA workers and decrying the operations of Musk's Department of Government Efficiency at the VA.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee's ranking member, said VA employees are reporting impacts that include closures of operating rooms, reductions in the number of available intensive care unit beds, and cuts to inpatient mental health facilities.

"Nine million veterans across the country depend on the VA disability benefits and health care day in and day out. Real-life impacts cannot be ignored," Blumenthal said.

In a statement, Collins insisted the cuts would not hurt veterans.

According to the VA, in order to ensure that veterans services aren't affected by the layoffs, top leaders can request exemptions for specific employees.

"To be perfectly clear: These moves will not negatively impact VA health care, benefits or beneficiaries. In the coming weeks and months, VA will be announcing plans to put these resources to work helping veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors," Collins said.

House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill., said he takes Collins at his word.

"I am looking forward to working with the Trump administration to continue to make necessary improvements and efficiencies at VA to put veterans at the center of everything VA does," Bost said in a statement Friday.

### **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 Joe Paterno, and James Lynch. Let's wish them all a speedy recovery.

## **DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE SUE SERINO ANNOUNCES NEW HONOR-A-VETERAN PROGRAM**

Program to Recognize Deceased Veterans for Their Service; Applications Now Open

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY — Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino is proud to announce the creation of the Dutchess County Honor-A-Veteran Ceremony, a new program dedicated to honoring deceased veterans for their service to our nation and community. Family, friends, and community members are encouraged to nominate a veteran to be recognized through this meaningful ceremony.

“Through the Honor-A-Veteran program, we are privileged to pay tribute to the men and women who selflessly served our country and made lasting contributions to their communities,” said Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino. “This program reflects our deep appreciation for our veterans and ensures their legacies live on in the hearts of our community.”

The Honor-A-Veteran Ceremony will take place at 9 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month, from April to November, at either the Dutchess County Office Building at 22 Market Street in Poughkeepsie or the town, city, or village hall of the municipality where the honored veteran resided.

To be eligible, veterans must meet the following criteria:

Deceased for at least 30 days;

Served in the United States Armed Forces with an honorable discharge, listed as missing in action, or died while serving in the military;

Wartime and peacetime service is eligible, with no specific service dates or length-of-service requirements.

During each ceremony, the individual who submitted the application, or their designee, will receive an American flag that will be flown outside the County Office Building for 30 days in the veteran’s honor. Afterward, the flag will be professionally cleaned and returned to the next of kin.

Adam Roche, Director of the Office for Veteran Affairs, said, “Our veterans dedicated their lives to protecting our freedoms, and it is our duty to ensure their service is never forgotten. This program allows families and our community to come together to recognize and honor those who gave so much. We encourage anyone who has lost a veteran to consider participating in this meaningful tribute.”

Applications for the program are available online at [dutchessny.gov/HonorAVeteran](https://dutchessny.gov/HonorAVeteran) or in person at the Dutchess County Office of Veterans Affairs, located at 1335 Route 44, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. Completed applications can be submitted via email to [veterans@dutchessny.gov](mailto:veterans@dutchessny.gov) or returned to the Office of Veterans Affairs.

All submitted applications must be accompanied by a copy of the veteran’s military separation papers (DD-214, WD AGO 53-55, NBG-22 or report of casualty), obituary, and death certificate.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Dutchess County Office of Veterans Affairs at 845-486-2060.





### **East Fishkill Veterans Memorial Park Status**

At the February 13, 2025 Town Board meeting \$97,000 was approved to hire MJ Engineering for detailed design of the park. Baby Steps!!!! The design we've seen is the conceptual design by Saratoga Associates. MJ will get into the specifics...fill, grading, footers, drainage, utilities, etc.

### **Army training gets modern makeover**

FORT JACKSON, S.C. – On a recent rainy Wednesday, soldiers shuffled into lecture halls, eager for the end of their 10-week introduction to Army life.

The morning's training wouldn't be dedicated to firing drills, marksmanship or hand-to-hand combat. Instead, soldiers would be learning healthy coping strategies, texting etiquette and the signs of a toxic relationship.

At the Army base in Columbia, South Carolina, where about half of new U.S. soldiers train for combat, basic training would be unrecognizable to a soldier of a different era. Drill sergeants now minimize their use of profanity, insults and degrading remarks and strive to become support figures for trainees. Soldiers learn breathing exercises and holistic nutrition. They take yoga classes and are encouraged to sleep a full eight hours.

The Army is teaching incoming soldiers social skills and emotional health in a push to tackle problems in the military's largest branch, such as sexual harassment and poor communication skills among electronics-addicted Gen Z soldiers.

When Tyler Bergman, a drill sergeant at the base, joined the Army in 2013, training was to help you get ready "to go to war."

"That's it. Nothing else," he said. But "nowadays, the Army is looking at the bigger picture."

After years of attacks from some on the right on "woke" policies and programs, President Donald Trump is systematically dismantling federal diversity, equity and inclusion programs from top to bottom.

He has signaled similar intentions for the Pentagon with his new defense secretary, Pete Hegseth. An Army National Guard veteran and former Fox News host, Hegseth spent years accusing the military of abandoning its focus on fighting wars to appease cultural sensitivities.

In recent years, some critics – including Hegseth – have skewered the Pentagon over concerns about “wokeness” in the military. Increasing focus on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and efforts to encourage the recruitment and advancement of women and minorities have dulled the military’s sharp standards for strength and physical fitness, they say.

But officials behind the new training initiatives say standards haven’t lagged – the military’s understanding of what battle readiness means has just evolved. They say a competent soldier is an effective communicator as well as a lethal fighter.

“I don’t see this training as separate from warfighting,” said Col. David Uthlaut, commander of the 165th Infantry Brigade, which trains at Fort Jackson. “We can’t be just focused on the technical and tactical piece. We’ve got to be focused on the cohesion, the trust, the communication.”

When Joshua Fredericks, 19, of Manhattan, Kansas, told his father about the new training, it elicited some jokes from the former drill sergeant. An Army trainee at Fort Jackson, Fredericks said his experience differs dramatically from those of his father and of generations of service members in his family.

If his dad “had an open mind,” mental-health-related training could have had untold benefits for his military career, Fredericks said.

“If he started young and got the training, he would absolutely have done better.”

In June, Army officials first incorporated communication and emotional awareness training at three bases. They plan to expand it throughout the Army as part of its initial training and could use it later on for soldiers more advanced in their careers, said Lt. Gen. David Francis, the deputy commanding general for the Army’s training.

At Fort Jackson alone, tens of thousands of soldiers have completed the training, said Uthlaut, the infantry commander.

Internal Army feedback indicated recruits weren’t as resilient as needed or prepared for the stress of military life or life in general, Francis said. Uthlaut pointed to “corrosive behaviors” among soldiers.

Drill sergeants and soldiers at the base said they experience conflict routinely. When an instructor asked during a recent training session how many soldiers had experienced a fight or conflict, nearly every hand in the room shot up.

Tionna Mack, 21, who’s from Philadelphia, said there were “conflicts all the time” in her platoon. But her drill sergeant helped her deal with her emotions.

She said that once she was so angry she told her drill sergeant, “I honestly don’t know how to process what I’m feeling.”

“He was just like, ‘I just need you to breathe,’” she said.

Nearly half of the Army’s active-duty enlisted soldiers are 25 or younger and face a 21st-century problem: The Army is struggling to reach incoming soldiers with phone and electronics addictions that impede their capacity for face-to-face communication. New trainees at Fort Jackson are usually allowed phone access only



once a week.

“It’s been a big change for me, but I think it’s for the better,” said Cameron O’Brien, 25, of Frederick, Maryland. “I was probably on my phone way too much before I came here.”

Uthlaut said many soldiers come in with “some level of addiction to their phones” and “don’t know how to interact with one another because they’re so used to being in digital-type forums.”

The problem extends far beyond the Army. Half of 12- to 17-year-olds spend four or more hours a day on screens, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of those, a quarter experienced anxiety or depression. Last July, former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called for social media platforms to carry warning labels. He cited research that indicates social media has accelerated a mental health “emergency” among young people.

In response, the Army is employing its own tech gadgets. A pilot group of Fort Jackson trainees is trying out virtual reality goggles that simulate tricky social situations.

In a highly realistic 3D view, soldiers pick responses to situations in a choose-your-own-adventure interface.

In one module, a conflict breaks out in a barracks because a soldier is playing music too loud. The soldier must choose between steps that work toward a compromise or rile up the quibbling parties. In another, a soldier goes home from a bar with someone they had been flirting with. Once they arrive, the other person doesn’t want to have sex. The soldier can opt to talk it out or react in anger.

As one classroom of soldiers pulled the goggles off their eyes to discuss the scenarios, the occasional giggle broke out. One soldier, asked to describe his experience, said he intentionally chose the wrong answers to see what would happen. The instructor doesn’t penalize soldiers for the choices they make; they’re just asked to reflect as a group about their impressions.

Before she came to Fort Jackson, people back home warned Gleny Montenegro Herrera, an 18-year-old from Milwaukee, to take every precaution against sexual assault. “Just stay away from everybody and everything,” friends and family told her. “But I can’t,” she said.

The 2020 murder of Vanessa Guillén, a 20-year-old Army soldier at Fort Hood who said she was sexually harassed, coupled with a 25% spike in sexual assaults from 2018 to 2021, have forced the military to reckon with a long-standing problem in its ranks. Although reports finally declined for the first time in almost a decade in 2023, one study found sexual assault prevalence could run up to four times higher than the Pentagon’s data.

Army leaders also hope emotionally tuned training that teaches about consent, listening and physical boundaries can tackle another part of the problem. Cases of sexual harassment, like grabbing someone’s private areas, continue to occur. “The slow beat of the drum” of these incidents in basic combat training and beyond made the need for the course clear, Uthlaut said.

At Fort Jackson, instructors don’t mince words when discussing sexual consent. “You will be kicked out fast” for messing with consent, Bergman told one class of trainees. When a soldier raised his hand to ask whether the rules changed if both, rather than just one person, were intoxicated during a sexual encounter, Bergman raised his arms over his head in an X. “No!” he said.

## **“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.