



North Albany Post 1610 American Legion

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February 2021



A Message from the Commander

20 January 2021: We both watched as Justice Sonia Sotomayor, from a distance, swore in the new vice president Kamala Devi Harris using the Bible that belonged to the late Thurgood Marshall, the nation's first black Supreme Court justice.

Then we had to leave. On the car radio, we heard Lady Gaga deliver a stirringly traditional rendition of the National Anthem. Kate Smith could not have done better, we agreed. At some point later, we heard J-Lo medley Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" with "America the Beautiful," then return to her seat on the dais next to A-Rod.

While on Washington Avenue, approaching the uptown SUNY campus, we encountered what the weather people called a snow "shower," snow coming at us horizontally and so completely that all visibility was lost until four minutes later it vanished. And we arrived at the campus's northwest parking lot where we were greeted warmly by Guardsmen who directed us where to park – in front of two adjoining massive tent-like structures where I was to get the first of my two COVID shots at 12:15 p.m. Inauguration Day.

Because of my advanced age and Sara's persistence and computer skills, I was able to get this early appointment. From beginning to end, the site was well staffed with efficient and cheerful Guardsmen, volunteers, professionals, and a trooper or two. The whole process took approximately 25 minutes including a seven-minute post-shot wait in tent 2 to make sure I was steady on my feet. They gave me a card recording the shot and the date and time for Pfizer shot number 2. They welcome escorts. Bring photo ID and your health insurance card or info.

We got home in time to watch the new president and vice president lay a wreath in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington with former Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama and their former first ladies in attendance. Later, before the parade, the three, each in turn, would offer words of wisdom to President Biden from a small amphitheater at Arlington (probably pre-recorded).

Sara and I visited Arlington a couple times with Tri-County Vietnam Vets. The visits included the laying of a wreath at the Tomb. That ceremony is unforgettable, as is the changing of the guard. The two of us would also visit the grave of Sara's uncle CPL Giles R. Kittsley USMC. (Sara made her first visit, solo, while on a business trip to DC in 1987.)

Giles, Sara's dad Darwin's (WWII vet) older brother was a "China Marine," assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment. The regiment was stationed in Shanghai from 1927 until November 1941 to protect US

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citizens and property in the “international settlement” during the Chinese Civil War and the Second Sino-Japanese War. (Remember the movie, “The Sand Pebbles” with Steve McQueen?) CPL Giles Kittsley died under mysterious circumstances on 16 May 1934 at the age of 21. To our knowledge, we were the first family members to visit the gravesite since his interment in 1934.

As an aside, American Legion China Post No. 1 was established in 1919 and chartered April 1920, nominally the only post headquartered in a Communist country. Since 1948, it operates in exile in Henderson, Nevada.



**Lawrence Wiest
Commander**

Chaplain's News

Deceased:

John “Jack” Mosher, Legionnaire - December 19, 2020

Clarence “Gordon” Hayes, Legionnaire, - January 4, 2021

Beverly Ann “Bev” Pach (Dugan), Auxiliary and Limericks - January 3, 2021

Ann Long (Tambolleo), Auxiliary - January 11, 2021

If you know of anyone who is sick or has passed, please contact our Chaplains Charles Lossi at 518-438-6336 or JoAnn DeLisle at 518-426-8463 or jodee4444@hotmail.com. Or, newsletter editor Gretchen Riley via ghodges220@yahoo.com or at 518-526-8753.

Auxiliary News

Attention all, please check your membership card and make sure it says 2021. If it does not,

then your dues are now past due. Our Auxiliary is still trying to help veterans, both in our community and at the VA so your dues are still very important. Currently, it is the only income we have.

Only 65 members are current at this time, while our quota is 87. We are still hoping the remaining 22 members will send in their dues soon. They should be mailed to Janice Precopia, 1160 New Scotland Rd., Albany, NY 12208. Checks should be made out to North Albany ALA #1610. If you are paying for a junior member (under 18 years old), then dues are only \$8.00.

Our Veteran Walkathon this year will be held in April, but will be a virtual walk. We are trying to put together a plan for this and should have more information soon. If you just want to make a donation that is ok too. Your check should be made out to NYS SAL and mailed to me at Judy Benner, 13 Broderick St., Albany, NY 12205. Call me with any questions you may have, 518-869-8668. If your employer is interested in donating, or any other organization you might belong to, that would certainly help.

I hope some of you got the chance to see the presentations from this year's virtual Mid Winter Conference. It is still online thru the state dept website (deptny.org). Click on the MidWinter Conference link to see it. Password is MW2021. It will be online for a couple of weeks so do not delay.

Just a reminder, COVID vaccine shots are being given to veterans who get services at the VA Hospital. Call your primary care doctor to be eligible. I got mine as a volunteer at the hospital (first shot) and it was a piece of cake so I encourage all of you to call.

**For God and Country,
Judy Benner
Auxiliary President**