



North Albany Post 1610 American Legion

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October 2021

A Message from the Commander



To those of you who receive our newsletter by regular mail, I apologize for the late delivery of the September issue. The outfit that prints, envelopes, and then drops off each issue to the US Postal Service for delivery misplaced the file our editor sent out and acted on it only after we realized its absence and made inquiry. Sorry about that.

Where did one of the wettest summers on record disappear to? It seems like a distant memory, doesn't it? And that less wet and beautiful September, what a treat. Now we begin that increasingly crisp autumn of the year we all love so much.

On September 12 the Post, represented by House Chair Jackie Jones and Post Historian John Mullen, joined with members of the Francis A. Kelley Society (a local WWI hero priest, Cohoes native, and Distinguished Service Cross recipient) to honor the Reverend Robert W. Dixon, pastor emeritus of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church, for his service during WWII on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday. In attendance with the congregation in addition to Mullen and Jones were 369th Veterans Association President Ronald Wilson and Vietnam veterans Dave Barnum and Army LTC John Brownrigg, a Silver Star recipient who presented Rev. Dixon with a shadowbox containing the medals Rev. Dixon earned during his military service.

Then Corporal Dixon was a member of the segregated, all black 10th Cavalry, which gained prominence during the "Indian Wars" (circa 1875) and became known as the "Buffalo Soldiers." CPL Dixon's unit was stationed at West Point, where he was Instructor of Horsemanship, teaching the cadets at the US Military Academy those skills. The medals presented to Rev. Dixon this September 12 were never awarded to him at the time of his service (1940 – 1947) as they were not available during the war.

Rev. Dixon is the last surviving member of his unit at West Point and one of the very few, if any others at all, of the 10th Cavalry.

If you come into the post on Sundays or when there are parties scheduled on Saturdays, you'll see a new face behind the bar: Mary Dowling, who before her recent retirement was a fiscal officer and bookkeeper in the private sector. She is also the "Irish twin" of our own Patrick Ellis (his term), his older sister by eleven months. Make Mary feel welcome, won't you?

On Friday, November 5, the post will be hosting the first annual Albany County Hometown Heroes Recognition Banquet sponsored by the Reverend Francis Kelley Society. The Society has held several such banquets honoring Rensselaer County's hometown heroes. This event will be the first to honor

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Albany County heroes. The inaugural recipient will be Vietnam veteran and longtime newspaper journalist Terry Brown. Others recognized will include our own Chuck Lossi and the late Anthony Schmitz. Seating is limited. Cost is \$30.00. RSVP to the Commander at 518-434-6438 by October 31.

Lawrence Wiest, Commander



Sunday, September 12 at Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Albany, on the occasion of Rev. Robert Dixon's one hundredth birthday: from left, Vietnam veterans John Mullen, Dave Barnum, and LTC John Brownrigg, Rev. Dixon and his wife Georgia Dixon, 369th Veterans Association President Ronald Wilson, and Post 1610 House Chair Jackie Jones. (Picture by Lois Dysard)

**Limericks Party to Benefit Post
Saturday Nite, October 16, 5:00 p.m.
Music, Snacks, Raffles, Etc.
\$5.00 Donation**

**Auxiliary Chicken BBQ to Benefit Post
Sunday, October 17, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. -- \$15.00
Contact Judy Benner by 10/13 at 518-817-1240
or judybenner13@gmail.com**

Chaplain's News

Sick Call:

- Mickey Ryan - Legion
- Mike Connors - Sons

If you know of anyone who is sick or has passed, please contact our Chaplains Charles Lossi at 518-438-6336 or Peggy Hovish (518-785-3485 or phovish@nycap.rr.com) or Kathy Schmitz-Morfe (518-495-2955 or ksmorfe@gmail.com). Or, newsletter editor Gretchen Riley (ghodges220@yahoo.com or 518-526-8753).

Dart League



The Dart League kicked off their season on September 24 at 7 p.m. If interested, sign up at the bar or call the bar at 518-465-1402.

Email note from Mickey Ryan:

“Reminder to our membership and friends that Gretchen has been doing the newsletter free of charge for many years. So guys get off your duff and give her a hand. PS: a call to the Post would not hurt. We need all the help we can get.”

Auxiliary News

Well, our first Auxiliary meeting is now over and everyone is anxious to start doing things. Our Maritime Ministry and Birthright collections are still going on accepting men's winter hats, scarves and gloves and items for newborn babies. Just a reminder, aluminum ring tabs, canceled postage stamps and greeting card fronts are also being collected.

RADA knives are still being sold as a fundraiser. If you go to their website and pick out what you would like to order just email me. I will add it to other orders. There will be a small shipping charge as well. Keep in mind they make great shower or wedding gifts or helping someone set up their first apartment.

Takeout BBQ Chicken Dinner is coming up on Sunday, October 17. Dinners must be preordered and paid for by Thursday the 13th. They are \$15.00 each and can be picked up between 3-5 p.m. on that Sunday. There will also be seating at the Post if you would like to eat there and enjoy a cocktail with your dinner. We are also going to have a 50/50 raffle and poppies at pickup. To order a dinner, contact Judy Benner (518-817-1240 or judybenner13@gmail.com). This event is a fundraiser for the Post.

Jan reports that dues are coming in. However, there are still many who have not paid. Please send your check to Jan made out to NA ALA #1610 and mail to her at 1160 New Scotland Rd., Albany, NY 12208. Dues are still \$25.00 and junior members are \$8.00. Let's make Jan's job easier by paying now so she doesn't have to send reminders out.

There are several upcoming events at the Post so make sure you read your newsletter and support our Post. Did you realize it is the last surviving Post in the city of Albany?

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

Sampson Memorial Naval and Air Force Museum (Sampson Naval Base)

I know there are many of us that have been told that our fathers or grandfathers served in the US Navy during WWII, but have you ever wondered how it started and where.

A little over a year ago, I read in the TU that our own Post member, Jack Mullen, had passed away. His obituary stated that he went to Navy basic training at the Sampson Naval Base in Romulus, NY. Not many families mention this particular fact about their loved one in an obituary, but it got me wondering about my father's Navy basic training experience. I have my dad's DD214 and found out that he also went to Sampson for basic training in Nov. 1942. My husband, Larry, and I have been to the Sampson State Park camping, the site of the Sampson Memorial Naval and Air Force Museum and even gone through the museum, never realizing its significance to my father's navy experience. After visiting the museum this past summer and finding their Facebook page, 'Sampson Memorial Naval & Air Force Museum', I have been able to learn some really interesting facts about NYS history during WWII. This base was opened in October 1942 and was processing 2,000 recruits daily!!! They went through 6 weeks of basic training and with my father being in the Armed Guard, he stayed even longer at Seneca Lake. He didn't leave until March 1943, before being sent to Norfolk, VA for advanced Armed Guard training. They graduated over 600,000 sailors during its time before closing in 1946. I saw many comments on the FB page talking about the winter weather there. Many saying it was the coldest time they ever experienced with it reaching 28 degrees below zero at times.

This facility processed six companies of men (and women) at a time and had over 600 buildings. The volunteer that I spoke to while there helped me find my dad's name, Leigh Garhartt, in their books in the library, which gave

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me insight on his length of time there, starting on 11/19/42; two days after my parents were married. (Something my parents never told my brothers and me). He was in one of the very first groups to go through Sampson but stayed on for his Armed Guard training. It makes me wonder how many other families don't realize how close their family member might have been to home before going off to war. I also wonder why when in school and taking NYS History, this important location was never talked about.

The base closed in 1946 only to be reopened by the US Air Force as a basic training facility for the Korean War. They built runways to bring recruits and patients into their 1500 bed hospital and to train airmen.

There are so many interesting facts out there about this base and if you poke around on FB or the internet, you may find others. People are donating Company graduating class pictures and other items that pertain to their fathers' time at Sampson. This Museum is not huge, but I bet Larry and I spent over two hours going through it and asking questions of the volunteers that are there every day. It is definitely worth a trip if you want to see a little bit of history. The buildings are no longer standing, but you still get the feeling of closeness to WWII history when you are there. Oh yeah, the camping is great too!

Submitted by Judy Benner



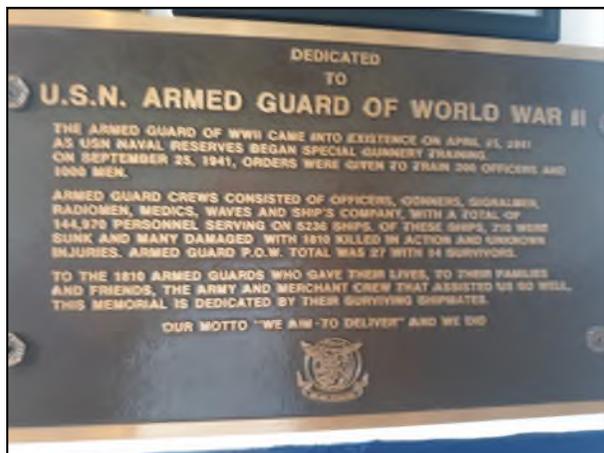
Look how young these recruits are.



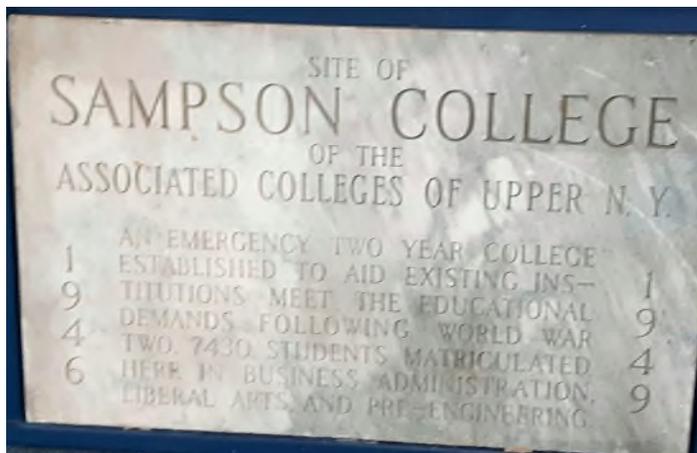
There were also women recruits at the base.

Framed poster behind nurse mannequin says:

“I WISH I WERE A MAN I'd JOIN THE NAVY.”



Plaque telling about the establishment of the Navy Armed Guard.



Sampson College (1946 — 1949) was established to help meet educational demands following WWII. 7430 students matriculated here.