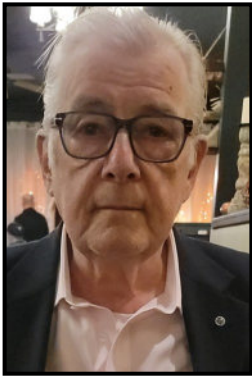




North Albany Post 1610 American Legion

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April 2023



A Message from the Commander

Congratulations and a sharp “hand salute” are in order to our own John Sacca, Post 1610 adjutant, acting fiscal officer, and acting membership chair. He was appointed Grand Marshal of this year’s Memorial Day parade and ceremony by the Albany, NY Joint Veterans Committee. John, a Vietnam veteran, served with the 79th Maintenance Bn during the Tet Offensive, then extended his enlistment, and after a two-week jungle warfare course (“charm school”) at An Khe, was assigned to C Troop, 1-9 Cavalry as a door gunner on a Huey gunship and later as an RTO (radio-telephone operator – a prime target with that whip antenna). John departed Vietnam in February 1969.

After returning home, John continued his service with the NY Army National Guard (including the 210th Armor; 42nd Inf Div), the Army Reserve, and the NY Guard (10th Bde; 2nd Emergency Response Bn, Troy). All the while he studied to obtain his BA in Chinese Studies (UAlbany ‘75), an MA in European History (UAlbany ’76), an MS in Secondary Education (St. Rose, ’79), and a PhD in Education (UAlbany 1989). John has more than 45 years of teaching experience at the Modern English Studio in Kowloon, Hong Kong; University at Albany; the Doane Stuart School; Albany City Schools (including AHS); Siena College; and is presently a lecturer with Sage Colleges.

You’ll remember that in 2019 John Sacca was designated Veteran of the Year by the Friends of the NYS Military Museum and the Association of the US Army (Capital District Chapter).

This past Wednesday afternoon (03.23.2023) I got a phone call from an excited Major David Erickson (director of Albany High’s SGT Henry Johnson JROTC Battalion), telling me that on or about June 19th the army base Fort Polk in Louisiana (named after a Confederate general) will be conducting a ceremony to officially change the name of that post to FORT JOHNSON in honor of Albany’s own WWI hero and Medal of Honor recipient SGT HENRY JOHNSON! AND that a contingent of the JROTC cadets (we don’t know how many yet) could be invited to attend (participate?).

It’s unlikely that SGT Johnson would be so honored had it not been for the drive in the mid 1980’s by Tri County Vietnam Vets and the 369th Veterans Association, spearheaded by the relentless Nam vet and 1st Cav infantryman John Howe and military historian Dr. Leroy Ramsey, both doing the research and the

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hard pushing to finally get Henry Johnson his due: the Medal of Honor. After all, only three American GIs received France's highest honor for valor in WWI – the Croix de Guerre avec Palme – with two also awarded our Medal of Honor for those same acts of heroism; the third, our Henry Johnson not even getting a Purple Heart for his twenty-two wounds, just ignored by a racist military. Stay tuned.

Forever Ukraine.

**Lawrence Wiest
Commander**



Auxiliary News

The Auxiliary will be participating in this year's Veteran Walkathon on April 29 in Cook Park located in the Village of Colonie. If you cannot attend but would like to donate this year you can make your check out to NYS SAL and send to me at 13 Broderick St., Colonie, NY 12205 or drop off at the Post with an envelope marked for the Auxiliary so it will be put in my mailbox. All donations will go to the VA Homeless Veterans Project and the Honor Flight Network of NY. For more information give me a call: 518-869-8668.

I dropped off another 12 patriotic afghans to Community Hospice last week. Thank you to all that are making them. 25% of the people going into hospice are veterans and they have been very excited to receive them.

Dorothy Curran is still looking for people to help distribute poppies in May. Please contact her if you can give us a few hours. Her email is tomdor2000@yahoo.com. Her cell is 518-248-3920.

We will be voting on a dues increase at our next meeting on April 4. There was much discussion at our March meeting and most agreed that we had to put through an increase starting in September in order to cover the increases that the National and State organizations are putting through. We are not happy about this but know it was not an easy decision for our members. Dues on your next renewal notice will be \$35.00. Junior dues are NOT going to increase.

We are in the process of confirming a date for the women's self-defense class that we had to cancel back at the start of Covid. There will be more information in the next newsletter.

Hope all of you had a good St Patrick's Day and are looking forward to a nice, warm Easter and Spring.

**Judy Benner
President**

March 11, 2023 at the post after the St. Patrick's Day parade day.



Our 2023 Miss Limerick, Margaret "Meg" Schwenke, center, and her court members Emma Schwenke (her sister), left, and Emma Howe graced us with their presence this special afternoon. They tore up the dance floor.



Thea Hodges sits on her mom Andrea Cole's lap. Sitting behind them is Marta Cole, Thea's grandma and Andrea's mom. Thea is certainly one gorgeous little colleen!



Volunteer chef and Auxiliary member Lormenzo Jones put in long, hard hours in both kitchens, preparing for and overseeing this corned beef and cabbage dinner afternoon. All 120 pounds of corned beef were sold. Thank you, Lormenzo. A special thank you to unsung hero John Sacca, who spent that afternoon and evening in kitchen No. 2 washing pots, pans, dishes, and "silverware." We used the house china for this occasion.



Bar manager Shirl Hall pauses briefly in the middle of a long day (9:00 a.m. 'til 9:00 p.m.) to have her picture taken. It was a thirsty day from the beginning 'til end, and she sold most all of the Commander's Bloody Marys. On March 23rd, Shirl took charge of the kitchen in House Chair Jackie Jones and her husband Lormenzo Jones' absence. (Happy Anniversary, you two.). With volunteer Wanda Austin-Peters' able assistance Shirl prepared and put out a splendid meal following the very well attended (forty plus Legionnaires, one Auxiliary member) March monthly county Legion meeting held at the post. Thank you twice, Shirl.



Volunteer Wanda-Austin Peters was a most valuable asset in the kitchen at the post's 03.11.23 corned beef and cabbage dinner event. She returned on March 23 to work with Shirl at the aforementioned après county meeting dinner and proved to be indispensable. Born and raised in North Albany (maiden name Brooks) she's familiar with the neighborhood. She's so intense she uses two (2) pairs of glasses. Thank you, Wanda.

(One additional picture can be found on page 4.)

Empire Girls State

As was mentioned in last month's newsletter, interviews were conducted at South Colonie High School on Monday, March 6. Two girls were selected, one as the Citizen to attend this year's Empire Girls State and the second as the Alternate with the good possibility of also being able to attend.

Unfortunately, both girls were unable to commit to attending due to scheduling conflicts. So, plan B was put into place. With the help of Commander Larry Wiest, Auxiliary President Judy Benner and Major (Ret.) David Erickson, JROTC Coordinator at Albany High School, arrangements were made so interviews could be conducted with JROTC cadets.

On Thursday afternoon, March 16, two female JROTC cadets were interviewed. Both of the cadets presented themselves well. It was a difficult decision in deciding who to select as the

Citizen and who to select as the Alternate. After chatting with both young women and with Major Erickson, Cadet Samira Sefadine Ismail was selected to attend this year's session of Empire Girls State. Cadet Adela Hoxha was selected as the Alternate. Then, Zaloga Post Auxiliary Unit 1520 said they needed a girl for Girls State. They will be sponsoring Adela. Both girls will now have the opportunity to attend Girls State. On a side note, Samira is a refugee from Sudan and Adela is an immigrant from Albania.

Unit 1610 wishes both girls good luck as they finish their junior year at Albany High School and in their endeavors at JROTC cadets. We look forward to hearing from them about their experiences at Empire Girls State.

We are sure to see both of these cadets at future events either at our Post, helping to place flags at St. Agnes Cemetery Memorial Day weekend, or perhaps as part of the color guard for the Memorial Day parade.

Chaplain's News

Sick call:

- Don Perry, Legion
- Mickey Ryan, Legion
- William (Spider) Ryan, Legion
- Carole Egan, Auxiliary
- Jan Precopia, Auxiliary
- Janis Sabatino, Auxiliary
- Theresa VanDuyne, Auxiliary
- Sara Wiest, Auxiliary

Prayers are asked for Marc DeLisle, Auxiliary member JoAnn DeLisle's son. Prayers are also asked for Andrew Liuzzi, husband of Auxiliary member Stacy Liuzzi.



Former post bartender Kim Rice made a surprise appearance much to everyone's delight. She looked "simply mah-velous".

Upcoming

April 4: Auxiliary meeting, 7 p.m.

April 18: Legion Membership meeting, 7 p.m.

April 29: Veterans Walk-a-Thon

Note: Last two Friday Fish Frys are March 31 and April 7, 4-7 p.m.