

The Greenlawn Bugle

The Newsletter of American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244

September 2020

Founded March 15, 1943

Volume 14 Issue 3

Thanks to St. Joseph Council Knights of Columbus



Post Commander Donna Boyle presents a plaque to L-R Past Grand Knight John Pelkonen and Grand Knight Mike Martinez

American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244 formally thanked St. Joseph Council 4810 Knights of Columbus on September 18 for their many years of support for organization and our veterans.

Commander Donna Boyle presented a plaque as a token of our thanks and spoke to the gathered knights and expressed our deep appreciation for their having provided us with a meeting place for decades. Past Commanders Dennis Madden and Bob Santo were also in attendance.

Years ago, our meetings were held downstairs from the main hall. Thirteen years ago, as our membership began to grow and as our older members became more frail, we were offered the use of the main hall where we now meet every month.

This year, our July and August meetings were held outdoors in the council's back yard due to the pandemic. The Council, in recent years has provided it's beautiful, shady back yard for the post to hold our annual Memorial Day cookout. We are truly blessed!

Until further notice, we will be conducting our monthly meetings online. We will still meet on the second Wednesday of each month. However, our meetings will be conducted via the Zoom application. Several officers will be at the K of C hall. The rest of the members will be online and can see, hear and participate in the meeting.

Notification and instructions to access the meeting will be posted in the Post 1244 Veterans Weekly Bulletin. Contact Bob Santo at bobsanto2@verizon.net. The health and safety of our members is our primary concern.

Boys State and Girls State 2021



We are about to embark on our annual journey to interview and select about 25 of our local high school juniors to participate in the 2021 Boy's & Girl's State program. As you know, the 2020 program was curtailed because of the pandemic, which left quite a number of very disappointed people in its trail. At this time, we are going to proceed forward in the hopes that all will be under control by the time the program is due to be underway, which is the end of June 2021.

For the sake of our sanity, I hope we will be back to the new normal much before then!

It is going to be particularly challenging as we get started. Will the schools be ready and willing to participate, and be part of this activity which is scheduled so far in the future? Will the students and their parents be comfortable by that time with the thought of their sons and daughters being in a dormitory and auditorium environment with other students from all over the state? What plans and protocols will be in effect for the transportation and oncampus activities of the students? Will the size of the

programs have to be altered to accommodate social distancing?

There are many other questions that must be answered in order to alleviate the concerns that the schools, parents, and the students may have, and to assure everyone's peace of mind and health.

But with all this said, we must start the process in the fall, with the belief that all questions and issues can and will be properly addressed as we go along, and that this most valuable program will be able to continue into the future.

When you get comments from the students that have attended like: "Boy's State was undoubtedly an amazing experience, and I am extremely grateful for being able to attend" or "My Boy's State experience was unforgettable," it makes us want to work harder to be sure others have the opportunity to attend.

We are ready to get started!

Charlie Armstrong
Boys and Girls State Co-Chairman

Post 1244 Legionnaire of the Year Hal Dieterle

We are pleased to announce that Hal Dieterle has been named our Post's Legionnaire of the Year" for 2020. Always a gentleman, Hal has been a member, and more importantly, a contributor to our Post since 2017. He can always be counted on to support many of our activities including Color Guard honors, parades, raffle support, sponsored breakfasts, MIAP and other unclaimed/indigent veteran interments, and Poppy distribution.

Perhaps his most significant Post related accomplishments were his Herculean, individual efforts in fundraising for our various journals. He single-handedly raised over \$10,000 in support of our journals, spending many hours of his own time knocking on doors to raise money for our Post.

In addition to his Post activities, he is an active member of the Patriot Guard Riders of NY and has stood many of its flag-lines, providing solace to many families of our fallen veterans. He is a proud member of his church and a valued volunteer at the Northport VA Medical Center. He has worked at the Medical Center for the past several years transporting veterans via wheelchair or stretcher to their scheduled clinics; always with a smile and a kind word. In



addition, twice a year at the VA, Hal helps to distribute 3'x5' American flags to the most critically ill of its patients.

As you can see, Hal is a humble, proud, hard-working member of our Post that is more than worthy of receiving this honor. Thank you, Hal, your many Contributions to our Post Commander Post.

A Moment with Chaplain Charlie



One of my neighbors proudly flies "Old Glory" from a pole mounted outside his front door. Although still beautiful, it has seen better days. I had a few 3'x5' flags left over from our distribution at the Northport VA Medical Center, and offered to give him one of those to replace his. He thanked me, and knowing that I was a

member of the Legion, asked if I could take his weathered flag and retire it honorably. I told him it would be my honor to do so. As I looked at its tattered red and white stripes, and faded blue canton, it reminded me of our Post's participation in the flag retirement ceremony on Flag Day last year at the Covanta Resource Recovery facility in Huntington.

As our Post's Chaplain, it was a privilege that day to offer the benediction as the ceremony ended. Before the benediction, however, I read a piece written by Vietnam POW, Col. Leo K. Thorsness, entitled "Mikes Flag." It is a poignant story of his time in the "Hanoi Hilton" and his recollection of a fellow prisoner's courageous act. It tells of Mike Christian's crafting of a makeshift American Flag from scraps of tattered cloth that he colored with ground up roof tiles. It was meant to keep hope alive for all of his fellow prisoners.

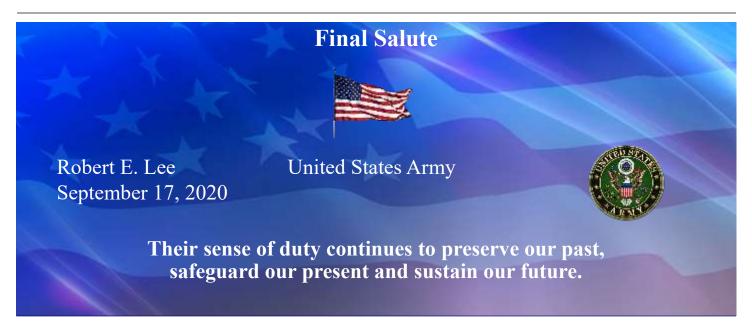
At the table closest to the stage, the table of honor, sat 4 or 5 WWII veterans and wives; all in their 80's and 90's, equipped with wheel chairs, canes, hearing aids and the

like. They listened intently as I described the horror that the young Navy pilot faced when his flag was discovered by his captors. Mike paid a severe price for his audacity. The brutality didn't stop him from fashioning a second flag, as soon as he was able, despite knowing the beatings he would receive once again, if it, too, was discovered.

I made eye contact with those seated at that special table throughout my reading. They listened intently during my 3 or so minute presentation, perhaps remembering their own pain in a vastly different war. I returned to my seat after the reading and benediction to chat with a few of the other presenters, then sought a table to break bread with some friends. On the way to the table, someone tapped me on the shoulder. When I turned around, I saw one of those WWII heroes reaching out to shake my hand. His eyes were sad. He said he was sorry for all I had endured in that POW camp. At first, I was confused, then realized he thought that I was the actual prisoner, not merely a reader of the story. My immediate instinct was to correct him, but compassion and respect told me otherwise. I opted instead, to firmly shake his outstretched hand and follow it up with a hug; a sincere, veteran-to-veteran show of brotherhood. Neither of us uttered a word, yet we both accomplished our intended results. Discretion, as they say, is often the better part of valor. I sometimes wonder if I made the right decision....

Charlie Tritto Chaplain

American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244



Operation Enduring Care

"Operation Enduring Care" is currently very active in providing donated hygiene items to the inpatients of Building 64 and the Community Living Centers at Northport VA Medical Center every two weeks.

The collection is also evolving to become accessible to donors. The website page is being finalized and will soon be operational. The website will contain information about the origin of the collection, American Legion Post 1244's key support and our mission. In today's arena of current events, the needs of our veterans are pushed aside. The website page will allow many to get insight into the ongoing hardships our veterans are dealing with, in addition to current events challenges.

I am very grateful to Anthony Klinger-Cooley for his donation of artwork (right) to enhance our webpage. His artwork shows the universal words that exemplify our service. The hand, our grasp of our values.

Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 Virus, monetary donations are preferred. Access to areas of the VA Medical Center is restricted or closed. Storage of large material donations is a problem. Monetary donations allow the purchase of items as needed without the worry of expiration dates, delays needing extended storage or awaiting appointments.

All contributions and support of our Legion Family members is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Al Statton Chairman Operation Enduring Care



We Will Never Forget

Monetary donations <u>in any amount</u> are especially welcome

Checks payable to: American Legion Post 1244 *Memo line: Operation Enduring Care* PO Box 238 Greenlawn, NY 11740



American Legion Post Decals

Display your pride as a member of American Legion
Greenlawn Post 1244
These long lasting vinyl decals can be displayed on your rear windshield.

They are available for \$6 each. E mail us at Post1244@verizon.net to order yours.



You Earned It!



Veterans day is right around the corner. Long Island businesses would like to honor you and you can take advantage of these resources and honor yourself! Visit https://

militarybenefits.info/local-

area-veterans-day-deals-for-veterans/ to find sales, deals and discounts for veterans in honor of Veterans Day.

Use this website to find restaurants offering free meals for veterans at https://longislandweekly.com/these-long-island-establishments-offer-veterans-day-discounts-to-vets/

No matter when you served, where you served or which branch of the military that you served in, trials and tribulations you may experience in civilian life may affect your health, relationships and quality of life. Veterans share the common bonds of duty, honor and service to our nation and it is important that veter-

ans connect with resources that support, manage and confront issues they may have to find solutions to improving their lives.

To locate Veteran resources that may be most helpful to you, try visiting www.maketheconnection.net/ resources and type in your ZIP code. Here you can find out where your local VA services can be found are located, including: Outpatient Clinics; Vet Centers; PTSD Programs; Suicide Prevention Coordinators; VA Chaplains and Veteran Benefits Administrative Offices.

You took care of our country now let our country take care of you!

Sincerely,

Michelle Martin

American Legion Post 1244 Service Officer Cell: 646-937-2940 Email: mmartin@sus.org

Making a Difference: The Starfish Story

Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work. One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.

As he got closer he called out, "Good Morning! What are you doing?" The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die." Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young man listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the ocean, past the breaking waves and said:

"It made a difference for that one."

While we cannot hope to solve all the problems in the world or help everyone in need, we can - each of us - make a difference, however small. When you have the opportunity to help in even the smallest way - do it!

And remember, fellow veterans, <u>together</u> we can make a big difference!

Adapted from an essay by Loren Eiseley (1907–1977)

Missing In America Project

It's been many months since our crew attended an MIAP ceremony. The reason is unimportant. What is important, it that we must never, ever, forget our fallen; especially the forsaken among them whose unclaimed ashes may be languishing in old paint cans, shoeboxes and other makeshift urns across our nation; literally, Missing in America. I wrote this poem as a voice... from them to us. I call it.....

From Our Forgotten

We're calling to you from across our land From dark closets and churches of old, From dented cans and tarnishing urns In musty attics and basements so cold.

We died alone and were set aside And forgotten like yesterday's news, But we know that you'll never forget us Because we each are veterans too.

We once stood tall and wore uniforms all And served under our red, white and blue, Some during the peace and others in war But all nobly, and faithful and true.

We yearn to join our brothers now passed Who are at peace and now lie at rest, Beyond the twilight and the evening star In that Heavenly realm in the West.

So, keep searching for us, dear comrades As only veterans know how to do, 'Til the day you render your last slow salute And we're forgotten no more, thanks to you.

Chaplain Charlie

MIAP Interment Scheduled



Missing In America Project of American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244 and Suffolk County American Legion will conduct a committal service for two unclaimed veterans on October 15.

The veterans are:

Jack Tuff, 89. US Air Force, 1950-1953 Morris D, Hackney, 76. US Army, 1962 -1963

Please meet at the parking lot behind the administration building by 12:45 pm

All veterans groups and members of the public are invited to participate and pay respects to these forgotten veterans. These veterans have no known next of kin to claim their remains or attend the committal service. On this day we will be their family.

Hart Island Veteran Recovery Project

Just east of City Island in the Bronx, lies Hart Island, the Potters Field of New York City. Barely a mile long and a third of a mile wide, it occupies 131 acres at the western end of Long Island Sound.



Unclaimed bodies being buried in a mass grave on Hart Island.

More than a million bodies have been buried in mass graves since mass burials began there in 1875. A single white marker identifies each group of 150 adults within. The dead came to rest there for a variety of reasons. Most were indigent, unidentifiable or unclaimed.

One such soul, was Hugh William Woods. He was buried in February of 2019 among the forgotten in one of the mass graves that dot the island. By chance, it was later discovered that he was in fact, an honorably discharged Korean War Navy veteran. On September 30 I was notified by a Funeral Director colleague that Hugh was being disinterred and relocated to Calverton National Cemetery the next day for an unattended burial. He knew of our commitment to unclaimed veterans and asked if we wished to attend the service. Some phone calls were made and our group of regulars stood proudly within the Calverton chap-

el as Veteran Woods received the military honors he earned and deserved.

I'm convinced that Veteran Woods was not, literally, one in a million. I believe there are additional veterans, scattered within the graves on Hart Island. Our challenge is to identify them.

Recently, I started the "Hart Island Veteran Recovery Project." What we have so far are two goals: how to minimize the interment of future unclaimed veterans on the Island, and identifying the unclaimed veterans that have been interred there in the last few years.

Perhaps these more recent fallen veterans can be relocated to one of our national cemeteries for a proper military sendoff with the help of organizations like the MIAP or Dignity Memorial Chapels. I've made some preliminary inquiries, and sent up some trial balloons, but thus far, nothing has panned out.

If any of you have ideas on ways we can accomplish these goals, please let me know. These are daunting tasks, but ones well worth the effort. I can be reached via email at chaplain1244@gmail.com, or on my cell at 631-786-3842. Together, we can do this!

Thanks in advance for any help you can provide. Stay tuned for future updates.

Chaplain Charlie



We wish to sincerely thank everyone who helped with our Raffle Fundraiser this year.

As you know, unlike some posts, we have nothing to rent or sell. Our only sources of income, other than the small part of your dues that we get to keep, are our fundraising raffle, poppy sales and individual donations.

In spite of the hardships we all experienced as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic, your generous response to our appeal was exceptional. Even with the shutdown of most venues where we normally would have been able to sell raffle tickets, you all came through!

You, each of you, make it possible for our post to not just survive, but thrive!! Everything we do, depends on you!

Post 1244 Monthly Meetings
St. Joseph Council K of C 24 Boulevard Ave. Greenlawn
The 2nd Wednesday of each month at 8:00 pm

(Via Zoom until Pandemic subsides)

By Former Service Officer Donna Boyle, March 2011



To help them and ensure they have all the necessary details for filing a claim, please compile these documents:

- Your DD214 or Discharge Certificate
- Your VA claim number
- Your Social Security number
- Government life insurance policy
- A copy of your marriage certificates
- A copy of any divorce decrees
- A copy of each child's birth certificate
- A copy of any adoption order
- Your birth certificate to determine parents' benefits

HELP FOR THE ONES YOU LEAVE BEHIND

No one wants to think about their own mortality but you must in order to care for your family. This article is to assist those you must leave behind.

The anxiety and fear of the unknown is an unpleasant experience. Add to that the exhaustion that dealing with your funeral has caused and that many families are simply overwhelmed. Completing the numerous claims forms for VA survivors' benefits is difficult but important.

Without the veteran's form DD 214 or Discharge Certificate, a funeral director cannot get a place of burial for the veteran in a National Cemetery such as Calverton, render military honors or have or the Nation's Flag to be presented to the next of kin at the time of burial.



That way they will only have to obtain your death certificate

Your family should know where to go for help. I suggest obtaining a copy of "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" (An informative pamphlet) in addition any VA service representatives can answer questions about benefits eligibility and application procedures. Contact the nearest VA benefits office at 1-800-827-1000 for help.

Reprinted from the Greenlawn Bugle March 2011 and March 2013

American Legion Post1244 requests a copy of every member's DD 214 for two reasons:

- So that we can verify the eligibility of our members in the event of an audit by the IRS.
- So that we can provide a copy of your DD 214 to your family in the event they cannot locate a copy upon your death.

Unsure if we have a copy? Contact 2nd Vice Commander Fred Tucillo at: guitars610@aol.com

Pre-need Eligibility for Burial in a VA Cemetery

You can apply to find out in advance if you can be buried in a VA national cemetery. This is called a pre-need determination of eligibility—and it can help make the burial planning process easier for your family members in their time of need. Follow the steps below to apply.

To apply, you'll need your (or your sponsor's):

- Social Security number
- Date and place of birth
- Military status and service history (like service dates, discharge character, and rank—commonly found on the DD214 or other separation documents)
- Discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents)

Note: If you don't have discharge papers see:

www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/

- If you're applying as a spouse, surviving spouse, or unmarried adult child, you'll also need your personal information, including your Social Security number.
- For more details or if you're applying on behalf of someone else, or if you're applying for an unmarried adult child of a Veteran or service member, please go to: https://www.va.gov/burialsmemorials/pre-need-eligibility/

Commander Boyle Honored



L-R: Post 1244 Cmdr. Donna Boyle and Legislator Tom Donnelly

Suffolk County Legislator Tom Donnelly honored Post Commander Donna Boyle with a proclamation at our July 8 Post meeting. Donna was the Legislative District 17 Honoree for the inaugural Suffolk County Women Veterans Appreciation Day.

Legislator Donnelly recognized and thanked Cmdr. Boyle for her military service. Cmdr. Boyle achieved the rank of Command Sergeant Major in the US Army.

A member of American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244, CSM Boyle has served as commander since 2019. She also serves on the Town of Huntington Veterans Advisory Board. Raised in Western Pennsylvania, Command Sergeant Major Donna Boyle joined the United States Army in 1978 under the GI Bill and used it to earn a Civil Engineering degree. She served as a Field Artillery Surveyor in Field Artillery units from 1978 to 1986, a Survey Party Chief in an Engineer Brigade and as the first Sergeant of Combat Heavy Engineer unit from 1986 to 2003. She then served as an instructor and the Sergeant Major of a Training unit from 2003 until her retirement in 2007.

CSM Boyle was awarded the "Legion of Merit" in 2007, a military award of the United States Armed Forces that is given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. Amongst the numerous other awards she received were a Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medals, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal and Kuwait Liberation Medals from both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

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American Legion Riders



Hello from the Riders. These last few months has been hard for all of us. We all have had to learn how to live our lives in a different way. With that said, the Riders have had to do things differently at funerals and with pretty much everything else we are doing.

When we are riding, we are keeping our 6' distance between motorcycles. Riders Chaplain Mike Williams has even been doing parking lot ceremonies for some of our Veterans since the national cemeteries have not been allowing us at graveside.

Please take a few minutes out of your day and say a prayer for Herb Walker. Herb has been having a tough time with his cancer. We all know Herb, who would do anything for anyone, and has many times. Now in his time of need we need to be there for him. Say a prayer, make a call and just ask how he is doing. Little gestures always mean a lot.

Last month we had a little going away party for one of our Riders, Jim Scheff. Jim is leaving New York and heading to North Carolina. Jim sold his house in one day and then took a ride down to North Carolina the following weekend and bought a house the same day. When the stars line up everything seems to work out. Thank you, Jim for everything you have done with the Riders and for our veterans.

But Jim is not the only one bailing out of New York. Chuck Bishop is following Jim heading south. He will be going to the state of retirement, the state of white-haired people, the state of the early bird special... yes, I am talking about Florida.

These last few months the Riders have been helping those who have not been able to get out of their homes. We just made a \$1000. donation to Long Island Cares. We did this because Long Island Cares has tremendous food buying power. This \$1000 would be the same as if we went out and bought \$4000 worth of food. This food was distributed to our local veterans in need. It was impressive to see the internal workings of this organization.

I have to say the Riders of Post 1244 have stepped up these last few months when nobody else would. Sometimes the weather is hot and sometimes cold but the Riders of Post 1244 are always there standing proud.

Bruce Blanco
Director
Legion Riders Chapter 1244

Sons of The American Legion



. HELLO SONS I hope every one is well during these trying times. Unfortunately we have not been able to get together for any meetings or fundraisers but I hope in some capacity you are reaching out to a veteran in some small way.

Just a tip of your hat or saying thank you in a super market can may make a big difference to our heroes. Never know what type of day they are having at that moment and it may make it better and brighter for

that day or even week. So please keep that in mind when you are out and about . Thank you

Angus Kennedy

Commander, Sons of The American
Legion
angus.kennedy@cbre.com
516-512-1196

About Membership in Our Sons Squadron:

Due to IRS regulations, we have had to place a limit on the number of members of our Sons of The American Legion.

- In order for a veteran's organization to be tax-exempt, it must consist of at least 75% war-time veterans.
- In order for <u>donations</u> to a veteran's organization to be tax-deductible, it must consist of at least 90% war-time veterans.

To comply with the second point, have chosen to limit membership in our squadron to 10% of our overall membership.

Vice Commander's Call to Members



With the first three months of our membership year behind us, we still have a lot of members who have yet to renew their membership in our post.

A big part of my job is to see that as many members as possible renew every year and to encourage and recruit

new members. Your membership in our post makes possible all the programs we carry out. Even if you are unable to participate directly, you are an important part of who we are.

The influence of the American Legion with our elected officials is directly related to it's membership of nearly 2 million members. A reliably influential block of voters.

The future of the Veterans Administration is always in doubt. Your American Legion membership

helps to sees to it that no eligible veteran will be denied health care.

So please help us to help more veterans, their families and the children and youth of our community. No need to wait for another renewal notice. You can easily renew online at:

www.legion.org/renew

Or simply send a check for \$50 payable to: "American Legion Post 1244" and mail it to:

Carlo Giordano 202 E. 23rd St.

Huntington Station, NY 11746

Carlo Giordano

1st Vice Commander Membership Chairman



"Veterans Weekly Bulletin"

One of the great challenges we face is communicating



important and timely information to our over 200 members.

With all that we do in this area, we are one of the very best Legion Posts in the U.S. at using all forms of media to reach our members.

Over the past 7 years, we

have continued to improve our "Veterans Weekly Bulletin" in response to the suggestions of our faithful readers.

We do try to limit it to once a week, unless there is an important special announcement.

If you would like to receive this source of information tailored to veterans and their families, please let me know at bobsanto@verizon.net. Or call 516-458-7881.

You can unsubscribe at anytime!

Bob Santo

The Commander's Corner



I hope everyone is staying healthy and enjoyed their summer. I know this season seemed to race by for me. We had to cancel our in-person meeting this month. There is not room enough to spread out in the hall. Set up three chairs in your living rooms spaced 6 feet

apart and you will understand.

Did you Zoom in and watch our live drawing for the raffle prizes? I hope you did. Please join me in congratulating the winners and thanking all the members who contributed to the raffle's success. A special thank you to Past Commander Bob Santo for all the coordination he did. It really is a lot of work.

Our meetings on both October 14 and November 11 will be very similar events. We will have a few members meet in the hall and will invite everyone else to join us on Zoom. Please watch your email for the invites and join us. I

assure you I never wanted to be a video star and will return to in-person meetings as soon as they are permitted.

We have planned a small ceremony for Veterans Day. It will occur at 11:00 am in the Greenlawn Memorial Park on the corner of Pulaski Road and Broadway. The currently approved "Outdoor Gatherings" in Phase 4 is up to 50 people (as opposed to the 10 we were permitted in May for Memorial Day).

So, I invite you to wear a mask and join us at the only ceremony held on Veterans Day in the Town of Huntington. I hope to see there in your mask.

Best wishes.

Donna Boyle Post Commander



The Greenlawn Bugle



National American Legion Press Association First Place Award 2018; Second Place Award 2019 *****

> New York American Legion Press Association's Best Paper Award 2009-2012-2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019



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The Greenlawn Bugle: Editor, Publisher, Writer, Photographer and Reporter Bob Santo Contributing Writers: Charlie Armstrong, Bruce Blanco, Donna Boyle, Carlo Giordano, Angus Kennedy, Michelle Martin, Charlie Tritto Photos by: Charlie Armstrong, Bob Santo, Charlie Tritto, and many unknowns Copy Editor, Envelope Labeling, Stuffing, Circulation and Morale Officer: Madelaine Santo





Chad A. Lupinacci Supervisor Town of Huntington



100 Main Street, Room 200, Huntington, NY 11743 CLupinacci@huntingtonny.gov 631-351-3030



Mark A. Cuthbertson Councilman Town of Huntington



Thank you for your Service
Huntington Town Hall
100 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743
631-351-3172
MCuthbertson@huntingtonny.gov



Thank you to our Veterans and their families for serving our country.

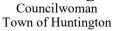
Councilman Eugene Cook Town of Huntington 631-351-3174 ecook@huntingtonny.gov



Councilman Edmund J.M. Smyth, USMCR, Veteran Semper Fi <u>esmyth@huntingtonny.gov</u> 631-351-3175



Joan Cergol



100 Main Street Huntington, NY 11743 (631) 351-3173 jcergol@huntingtonny.gov

Proud member of American Legion Auxiliary Greenlawn Unit 1244



Kevin S. Orelli

Superintendent of Highways Town of Huntington



Highway Operations Center 30 Rofay Drive Huntington, NY 11743 (631) 499-0444

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Steve Stern
Member of Assembly
10th District
Suffolk County



630 New York Avenue Ste. D Huntington, NY 11743 (631) 271-8025

sterns@assembly.state.ny.us



William R. Spencer, MD

Suffolk County Legislator 18th Legislative District

224 Wall St., Suite 303 Huntington, NY 11743 (631)854-4500 Fax (631)854-4503





We join you in support of Our Troops. We thank them for their dedicated service and sacrifice for our Country.



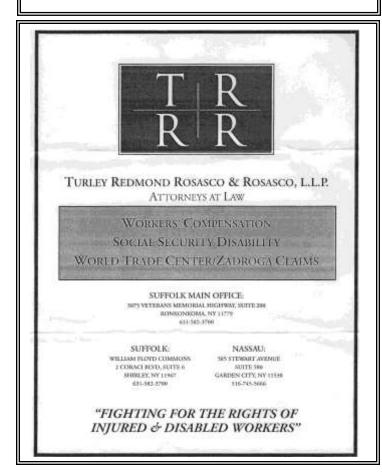
Susan A. Berland, Esq.

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR 16th Legislative District

6080 Jericho Turnpike – Suite 307 Commack, NY 11725

631-854-5100 Fax: 631-854-5103 susan.berland@suffolkcountyny.gov







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Locations in:

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