



# *The Patriot*

Spring 2018 - May

Kells - Grennie Post # 316  
PO Box 10096  
Staten Island, New York 10309-0096  
718-351-9233

The Patriot is published quarterly. The next edition will be for May - July. Any information you would like published is due no later than July 16, 2018.

Patriot Editor ..... William Baumwoll



## Important Phone Numbers

VA Benefits	1-800-827-1000
VA Out Patient Clinic	1-718-761-2973
SI VA Vet Center	1-718-816-4499
Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Medicare-A	1-800-433-9592
Medicare-B	1-800-333-7586
NYC Health Line	1-800-521-9574
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222

## AMERICAN LEGION WEBSITE LINKS

Post 316 - <http://www.alegion316.org/>

Face book - Amer Legion Edmund Kells Richd Grennie  
County <http://www.alegion316.org/richmond-county-american-legion.html>

NY State - <https://nylegion.net/>

**To Receive this newsletter by E-mail. Send  
your E-mail address to:  
post316newsletter@yahoo.com**

## Post Officers

Commander.....	Carmine Vacirca
Vice Commanders.....	William Baumwoll
.....	Allen Palazzo
.....	Leo Milham
.....	Gaspar LaRosa
Treasurer.....	Carmine Vacirca
Adjutant.....	Lester Modelowitz
Chaplain.....	Joseph Occhipinti
Sgt-at-Arms.....	Gaspar LaRosa
Judge Advocate.....	Robert Mahoney
Historian and Webmaster.....	Lester Modelowitz

## Committees

Americanism.....	Charles Goffredo
Boys State.....	William Baumwoll
Children & Youth.....	Joseph Occhipinti
Houseman.....	David Curran/Bill Knapp
Membership.....	Allen Palazzo
S.A.L.....	David Curran
Service & Welfare.....	Joseph Toronto
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We are finally seeing a change to our weather. Daylight is lasting longer, the temperatures seem on the rise and the flowers are beginning to blossom. Sure signs of spring, after the long and chilling endless winter. Those are not the only changes we have experienced. For the first time in the history of the American Legion, both our National Commander and our State Commander are both women.

I have had the pleasure of meeting both of them, by attending the National Commander's Dinner a few weeks ago. The National Commander gave a very honest and straight-forward speech. She touched on subjects that define the Legion and our mission. I found her knowledgeable and strong-willed. One topic I found interesting concerned veteran's needs

from when they leave the military to when they become older and in need of assistance. More importantly, she spoke of the veteran's wives and their needs, when the veteran has died, leaving her to sort out family affairs with no other family members available to help her.

We will be holding our elections for new officers for the up-coming year. (I cannot believe it's been one year for me as your Post Commander, Thank you! I only hope that I have served you well.)

But, we are asking you as active members to step up and take a more active role in the Post.

I want to thank my staff for all the hard work each has done in the past year and will continue to do. I want to thank you, the Post Members who attend the meetings and participate in our monthly functions.

May God Bless you and May God bless the United States.

*For God and Country, Faithfully  
Yours  
Carmine J. Vacirca,  
Post Commander*



### Post Meetings

Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the New Dorp Moravian Church. The Post will provide a ride to anyone who needs transportation to a Post meeting or event. Please call the Post number **718-351-9233** to make arrangements.

**Need A Notary?** - Contact Post Member Charles Goffredo at **718-440-4330**

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## Vietnam Veterans Day at Tottenville High School

Vietnam Veterans' Day is a day of appreciation, remembrance and tribute to those who heroically served and fought for the United States during the Vietnam War.

Forty five years ago, on March 29, 1973, the last 2,500 troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam, thus ending military involvement. Due to the country's perception of this war, soldiers were not properly treated upon their return home despite their sacrifice and courage. 58,195 brave souls fought and died serving our country. Of the names listed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, 4,120 were from the State of New York and 85 were Staten Island natives.

Ten years ago, Vietnam Veteran Lester Modelowitz sought to secure a date that would be recognized formally as Vietnam Veterans' Day in New York State. They worked closely with Senator Lanza and Assemblyman Titone, who authored the legislation (S6472-2008), to forever designate March 29th as Vietnam Veterans' Day in New York State. This legislation ultimately secured the unanimous support of the State Legislature. Gene DiGiacomo, President, VVA Chapter 421 said: "On this day that has been put aside for us, and we gather together as brothers and sisters. Senator Andrew Lanza said: "Thank you and welcome home! It is a great honor to stand here today with these heroes as we pay tribute to their service. These veterans courageously risked their lives in support of our freedom.

Principal Joseph Scarmato of Tottenville High School expressed: "We are grateful for the sacrifices our veterans have made and it is an honor to host the yearly Vietnam Veterans' commemoration ceremony at Tottenville High School. It allows us to not only recognize their valor but it allows our younger generation to remember and learn about patriotism."

More than 250 people gathered for today's special ceremony at Tottenville High School. Those present included, Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Matthew Titone, Congressman Daniel Donovan, District Attorney Michael McMahon, Assemblyman Michael Cusick, and Civil Court Judge Lisa Grey. Attendees were greeted by a special photo display that offered highlights of the past 10 years of commemorations. A "Then and Now" video presentation offered a view of our veterans during the Vietnam War along with them in the present day.

Special recognition was also given for a POW/MIA Chair that was dedicated in the New York State Capitol in March 29th of this year. Senator Lanza was the author of legislation to establish the POW/MIA Chair, which now sits at the entrance to the State Capitol building. He worked with Rolling Thunder Chapter 2 (Staten Island) to develop this legislation.





## Post 316 Honors Veteran's Graves

On Saturday May 19, 2018 Kells Grennie Post 316 honored those service men and women who died in defense of our country. It was a rain soaked day at Moravian Cemetery as 2300 flags were placed on veteran graves.



Volunteers were given ponchos by the Post to cope with the rain. After the flags were placed by the over 42 volunteers, the Post conducted a ceremony honoring the fallen veterans. The Post Commander and members thanked the many organizations for their participation in this event, despite the weather and invited them to help next year and in the future.

The Post provided a bagels breakfast and supplied lunch to the hard working volunteers. David Curran (Spider) and Billy took care of refreshment and the post hall.

Post members present at Moravian included: Commander Carmine Vacirca, Vice Commanders Leo Milham, Charlie Geffredo, Allen Pallazzo and Members John Vivolo, Gus LaRosa, Edgar Widlund and Richie Burdge.

## Funerals

The Post has been called upon more often to honor our Post members who have passed away. We believe these veteran's who are our comrades deserve respect and patriotism for what they have done and what they have stood for. Please join us when you can to perform this ceremony for our Post members when they leave us.... We maintain a Wake List to communicate with each other. Feel free to add your name and number to this list to help out.

The Post was assisted by several volunteer groups including: Northfield Bank; led by Laurie Guinta, the Siller Foundation, retired Verizon employees, the 120 Precinct Police Explorers; led by Officer Roman and Officer Derrick Brown of Patrol Borough Headquarters, and other volunteers.



## Memorial Day Parade

The 100th Annual Staten Island Memorial Day Parade was held on Monday, May 28th, 2018. Thousands came out to Forest Avenue in West Brighton to support groups and schools marching in the parade. Veterans groups included the Vietnam Veterans of America; the Richmond County American Legion and the Staten Island Marine Corps League..



## A New Dorp Service Family Story (from Lester

Modelowitz)

Jim Procopio, was born and raised in New Dorp, a Vietnam veteran and a past 30-year member of Kells Grennie Post 316. He was on Staten Island for a family function in September 2017 and was sad to see the Post building all boarded up and abandoned. What has happened to the Post?! It had been an American Legion meeting place since the 40's ....well over 70 years!

The Kells-Grennie Post 316 played a large part in his family's history. His father, Andy Procopio, whose picture appears several times in the photos on your web-site, was a life time member of the American Legion and Post 316 for 55 years. He served as post commander several times during the 1950's, county vice commander, and post house chairman for 44 years.

His father loved the American Legion-- the friendship, camaraderie, patriotism. He lost a brother in the war so, one way he honored him was being a legionnaire till the day he died. Jim knows that his dad would have be honored That the American Legion honor guard saluted him at his funeral!

Jim's uncle, Eddie Procopio, was a member of the Post for over 50 years. Jim and his brothers grew up spending time at the Post helping our dad set up and clean up after parties. His father spent so much time at the Post, that our mother suggested he move his bed up there!

Jim's first recollection of the Post was around the year 1949 when he was 7 years old. In those days Post membership was in transition from the WW I veterans who started it to the WWII and Korean Veterans who supplanted them. Jim remembers two WW I members, Leo\Balbach and Frank Rooney, founders of the Post who were still active members. Jim also remembers Ferdi. He was a friend of dad's, must be close to 90 now.

New members tended to be first generation Americans, their parents having immigrated from Europe earlier in the century. They were mainly blue collar. Jim knew of only one who went to college and law school. The Post was the center of their social life with dances and parties there. Many of these functions were used to raise money to support the Post. Another way of raising money was rental of the Post for parties, weddings etc. The Post operated their bar serving liquor by the drink, my father was the bartender but his repertoire of drinks was limited to "high balls."

During the Summers in the 1950's the Post ran an annual bazaar/carnival. They teamed up with a carnival owner, his name was Jack Martin.

He supplied the tents and equipment and the Post supplied the manpower to run the week-long show. They set up for several years in a vacant lot on New Dorp Lane opposite what is now New Dorp high school. Later they moved the operation to a vacant lot on Hylan Blvd. which is now the location of ShopRite. The carnival/bazaar ran for a week and had several gaming booths. The Post sold hot dogs and soda at the bazaar.

During the 1950's Post membership was about 250. However maybe 20-30 were active members. If you came to more than 3 meetings in a row, they made you the commander. About 10 members were the most active at the Post. Lou Somma, Lou Caputza, Joe Pietrangelo, Joe Smith, Joe Miller, Ray Swanson ran the Post through the 50's, 60's and into the 70's. They were my father's closest friends. Each served as Post Commander, some multiple times. These guys were involved all activities going on at the Post.

Every Memorial Day they would have an honor guard and lay a wreath at the war memorial on the corner of New Dorp lane and Ninth Street a scant 100 feet from our house at 22 Ninth. After this ceremony they would go to Moravian Cemetery and put flags on the graves of all the veterans. And of course, there was the Post picnic held every summer in back of the Post. Sometime in the 50's they moved the bar from the front room where you come in, down to the basement.

In the late 70's and into the 80's this group began to die off. a lot of them were life time long smokers and died of smoking related cancers..

The last time Jim saw the Post was June 25, 1964 the day he went into the Air Force and left Staten Island. He served 5 years in the AF completing 38 combat missions in Vietnam flying a C-141. Then he joined the FBI as a Special Agent and retired after 27 ½ years of service in 1997.

He now lives in Gainesville, Georgia.





## Then and Now

### Leo Milham

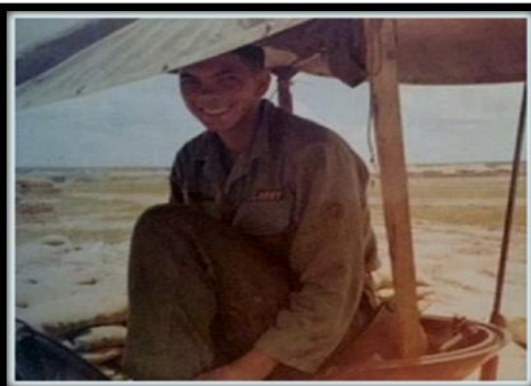
Leo grew up in Brooklyn but has resided on Staten Island for more than forty years. On March 16, 1965 he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served until February 22, 1967. He was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia for eight weeks of basic training and then on to Fort Knox, Kentucky where he took advanced individual training as an Armor Crew Man 11 Echo 20 in tanks.

Following that training he was sent to Hawaii for Jungle Training. After which he was shipped to Cu Chi, South Vietnam with B Troop, 3/4 Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division as a tank crewman. After a few months he was transferred to the 65th Combat Engineers, Company E, 25th Infantry Division and operated a tank retriever vehicle until his tour was up.

Leo reached the rank of Specialist 4th Class. While serving in the Vietnam he was awarded the National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two stars, South Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/palm, Unit Citation Cross w/palm, First Class Unit Citation Badge, Good Conduct Medal and a 45 Caliber Pistol Sharpshooter Badge.

After leaving the Army in 1967, Leo became a member of the New York City Police department and served from November 1967 until his retirement in 1981. Leo is married and has two sons and one granddaughter.

Leo belongs to numerous organizations including, BPO Elks, Fraternal Order of Police, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled War Veterans, American Legion, N.Y.C PBA and volunteers at the St. Edwards Food Pantry. He has devoted his life for the past 25 plus years in helping his fellow veterans and others in the Staten Island Community.



## Then and Now

### Gaspar (Gus) LaRosa

Gus was inducted into the U.S. Army on April 27, 1953 and was sent to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for processing. Three days later Gus arrived at Camp Drum in Watertown, New York. Camp Drum, a National Guard Training Facility that was activated to train regular army troops during the Korean War. Gus was trained as a radioman to assist a Forward Observer in the 278 R.C.T. Artillery. Gus said they trained for eight months opposed to the usual six months. They were ready to ship out when it came to someone's attention that they never fired the 105 MM howitzers. His unit then traveled by truck to Fort Devens, Massachusetts for two months staying near Fort Devens since it was closed at the end of WW II, and was reopened so the unit could practice firing. During this time period, a peace treaty was signed in Korea and the unit went by ship to Iceland. Gus soon found out that sailing the North Atlantic in February is not a pleasant cruise and he was seasick for seven days. When you see sailors getting sick you know things are bad. They later found out that the ship split in half on the return trip. He was assigned to a 4.2 heavy mortars outfit.

He soon learned that the Horizontal Control Operator's tour was over, and he was chosen to replace him. Gus's new job had a lot of good factors, he no longer had to carry the heavy M1 Rifle, and instead he carried a 45 Caliber Pistol. The heavy back pack radio was replaced by a table and chair and he was no longer in air shot of the mortars. To top it all off he was promoted to corporal. No more KP and now instead of standing guard in the middle of nowhere he drove the guards to their posts and went back to a warm hut. In February 1955 he flew back to Springfield, Massachusetts and then to back Camp Kilmer, NJ completing the circle to end his time in service.

Gus has been a loyal member of our Post and now serves as one of the Vice- Commanders and also as our Sgt-at-Arms



## Post Happenings

### Golf Shirts

If you are interested in obtaining White Golf Shirts with the Kells Grennie American Legion Screen Printed Logo, Carmine Vacirca has them available at a cost of \$11.00 per short sleeve shirt and \$16 per long sleeve shirt, a dollar more for XXL sizes. Call 718-702-7578 The Post will pay for one of the shirts.

### Copies of Our Newsletter

We will make available 20 paper copies of our latest Newsletter at our Post meeting.

### Now and Then

Every issue of the News letter we will feature a member of the Post with two pictures Now - a present picture and Then - a picture in when they were in the military. Along with that we will feature a short biography of the member.

This month features our Now and Then Post members are Leo Milham and Gus LaRosa..

### Boys State Girls State

The Post is sponsoring 2 boys and 2 girls for the Boys State and Girls State programs follows:

Neal Morocho Petrides  
Theodore Mercado Petrides

Sarah Lawrence - Notre Dame  
Gabriella Venditti- Notre Dame

### Upcoming Events

- 1.County Convention Friday June 15 at Merrell Post 7:00 P.M.
2. Jul 4 Parade Victory Blvd 11:00 A.M.
3. Department Convention July 19-21 Rochester, NY

### Membership

The Membership chairman Vice Commander Allen Palazzo reports that we are now at 128 paid renewals for 2018 with a goal of 165 we are now at 77.57% of goal. Our 2019 membership renewal notices should start being sent out by June 1. It's in everyone's benefit to send them in ASAP so that the renewal notices don't keep coming to the ones who have already paid. Help us keep current with our membership for 2019 Please talk to your friends who are veterans to enroll in Kells Grennie Post 316.

### Member News

Also Son of the Legion Kevin Goffredo grandson of Charlie graduated from Kean University with a BS Degree in Physical Therapy and will be enrolled in a doctorate program to get a PHD in Physical Therapy.

Fellow Post member Herman Nagora was hospitalized for arm surgery. We wish him well.

Lester Modelowitz 's wife Carole had a hip replacement and is getting her rehabilitation at home. Charlie Geffredo's wife Jean is recovering at home after a stay in SIUH for a intestinal problem.

### Deceased Post Members

(John Vivolo)

If anyone becomes aware of any of our Post members that have passed away, that we're unaware, please notify the Post and/or the Commander and provide the information for the wake so we can properly honor that member.

Anna G. Zalesak (nee Gabriel) passed away on Dec. 12, 2017. She was the beloved wife for 55 years of the late Paul J. Zalesak. He was a post member who passed away a month earlier.

### Worn American Flags

Drop them off at the post so they can be properly disposed of.



#### *Legacy*

*Post Members and their immediate family can name Post 316 as beneficiary on a will. With a gift through your will or living trust you retain full use of your gift property during your life*