

## Richmond County American Legion Minutes of February 20th 2026

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 by Commander Mark Kelly. The roll call was taken and recorded.

A motion by Paul Dietrich and seconded by David Martin to suspend the normal order of business for the purpose of guest speakers was passed.

Commander Kelly introduces Lynda Thompson from FDNY who spoke about the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> celebration including an international review showcasing 25 US warships and 25 foreign ships. A limited reviewing area is available for veterans and Lynda must have the names. USN Commander spoke about organizing functions to entertain the 16,000 service members who will be in port during the week.

The available dates are July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. A motion to resume by David Martin and Paul Dietrich at 10:37 was passed.

A motion by Al Klingele to accept the minutes of the December meeting as distributed was seconded and passed. Jamie Gonzales suggested a multi-post event be planned for the troops along with sharing the expense.

Boys State: Second District chairman, David Martin reports that only 24 of the 62 counties have signed up boys. The second district has signed up 17 boys; Brooklyn 9 and Staten Island 8 of its 15 boy goal.

The cost per boy is \$425 not including transportation. The bus is expected to cost \$6800 with a per county cost of \$1700.

**Children & Youth:** Jamie Gonzalez reports the luncheon will be held at the Staaten on April 11<sup>th</sup> 12:00 and that forms and a self-addressed envelope has been sent to all Posts. Some schools have yet to respond.

Jamie requests all Post get the number of attendees to him ASAP, the cost for the lunch is \$75 per person.

Commander Kelly reported on the awarding of the Medal of Honor to Michael Ollis. Sick Call: Dennis and Mary McLoone are starting to get better but have a ways to go, Bob McKeever is recovering as well.

Jamie Gonzales reports that due to the ongoing government shutdown several members of the Armed forces cannot attend the Four Chaplains luncheon. Jamie thanked Pablo Hidalgo for his work on the luncheon and the Sons of The American Revolution for their performance.

The March meeting will be a celebration of the American Legions 107<sup>th</sup> birthday and a lunch will be provided.

**Oratorical Contest:** Al Klingele reported that the Staten Island contestant finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> at the zone contest and the same girl as last year was the winner. Membership: Paul Dietrich reports that the county is only 49 members short of the 100% goal, 3 new member applications were lost because of manual transmissions of the forms and this seems to be a recurring problem. Paul also reports 7 posts are above 90% and that Joseph Merrell- Father Capodanno Post is at 101%. National Security: Vanessa Tavitian reports military growth, tighter border security and increased NATO spending with a focus on AI and operational readiness. Protestors are targeting military personal and there are multiple scams going around. Anthony LoCasto read Dennis McLoone's POW/MIA report highlighting the battle of Iwo Jima during WWII and that according to the latest data for FY 2025, the DPAA identified 231 missing in action troops exceeding their goal for the first time since 2019. New Business: a motion by Al Klingele for the county to subsidize the bus to Antun's was tabled pending a review of the cost. Frank Saladis is

chairing a committee looking into the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration for the troops and interested parties should be contacting him. Gold Star Post will be hosting its annual egg hunt of April 29<sup>th</sup> from noon to 2:30 all children are welcome to attend. A motion to adjourn was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:39.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Frank LaMarsh, PDC  
County Adjutant.

**The next meeting is March 20<sup>th</sup> at Cespino Russo at 12:00**