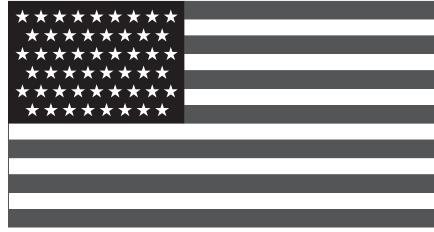


Veterans of Mount Prospect Illinois



VOL19 June 2021

In Rememberance Editor Emeritus Bob Fey



When Lt. Col. Bill Starr (USA, Ret.) welcomed the 1,500+ attendees to Lions Park for this year's annual commemoration of Memorial Day hosted by Mount Prospect's own Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 and American Legion Post 525 (of which Lt. Col. Starr is the Commander) he reminded them that they were continuing a 153 year American tradition. In 1868, an Illinois Civil War General, John A. Logan, issued General Order #11, which called upon all citizens to decorate the graves of soldiers who fell in that war. He called it Decoration Day, but the name was later changed to Memorial Day to honor all Americans who served their country in all of its wars.

Commander Starr began the ceremony by introducing Boy Scouts from Mount Prospect Troop 23 who Posted the Colors, followed by an invocation by Pastor Russ Bechtold and The Pledge of Allegiance led by Col. Bob McKillup (USAF, Ret.). Music has always been a major part of our Memorial Day ceremonies and this year was no exception. The Prospect HS Marching Knights and Color Guard, led by Director Chris Barnum, played a medley of patriotic songs. Soloist Debbie Schreiner of St. Paul Lutheran Church then led everyone in the singing of America the Beautiful. Later in the program Ms. Schreiner lent her amazing voice to God Bless America.

US Army Major Paul Knudtson was introduced as the key Note Speaker. Major Knudtson has served in the armed forces for over 25 years in a number of leadership positions. In his address, he focused on his deployment to Afghanistan where Major Knudtson commanded a Provisional Reconstruction Team and where he lost three close friends who died there. For him Memorial Day has a deeply personal meaning.

This theme was continued by Commander Starr. He introduced Post 525 Adjutant, Ron Vleck, and Post 1337 Commander, Les Durov, to read the names of 21 fellow Legionnaires and six VFW Comrades who

passed away in the last two years. These men were all close friends and will be deeply missed. Very personal indeed. Commander Starr then pointed out the symbolic grave in front of the stage that represents the final resting places of all of many departed comrades. He said,

"Where ever the body of a comrade lies, there the ground is hallowed. Our presence here today is a solemn commemoration of all of those men and women. Indeed, today we express our tribute to their devotion to duty, to their courage, to their patriotism and to their sacrifice."

Past VFW District Commander, Joe Scanlon, placed an American flag at the symbolic grave followed by several members of both Posts, Mayor Paul Hoefert and Mt. Prospect Park District Executive Director, Jim Jarog, all of whom laid bouquets of flowers to decorate grave.

Commander Starr then spoke about the annual Mount Prospect veterans' essay contest for Jr. High and Middle school children. He announced this year's top three entries and invited the First Place winner, Kochiti Churi of St. Emily School, to read aloud her winning essay on this year's theme, "What Memorial Day Means to Me."

The Marching Knights and Color Guard were asked to play the National Anthem followed by bagpiper, Kevin Chapman, who performed Amazing Grace. Commander Starr then called upon the Rifle Detail, composed of members of Post 525 and Post 1337, to execute a 21-gun salute. Traditionally, long time Legionnaire bugler, Steve Chmela, played Taps, following the salute. Sadly, Mr. Chmela recently passed away. Chris Barnum offered to have the Marching Knights step in and they played Taps beautifully. After a benediction by Fr. Oswaldo Guillen of St. Cecilia Catholic Church Commander Starr closed the program by thanking the many local citizens and organizations whose volunteer efforts made the ceremony as entertaining as it was meaningful.

Mount Prospect VFW Post 1337's Patriot's Pen Awardees Capture First & Second Place Honors at District Level.



At its regular monthly January meeting Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 presented Certificates of Appreciation to two local students in recognition of their winning the Post's annual Patriot's Pen essay contest for Junior High School students, the topic of which was "What is Patriotism to Me." The entries of Alina Rimas an 8th grader at Lincoln Middle School in Mount Prospect, and Matthew Doland, an 8th grader at Saint Theresa School in Palatine, were forwarded to the Illinois VFW's District 4 competition where they were judged against the entries from the other 14 posts in the District. On January 23, 2021, at the 4th District's annual awards banquet (held virtually this year), Matthew was announced as the District 4 First Place winner and Alina has placed second. – a one-two sweep for Post 1337!

At Post 1337's recent February meeting, both students were recognized with plaques from the 4th District for their achievements in this year's District Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. The plaques were presented by the 4th District Commander, Steve McInnis of Arlington Heights Post 981 and this year's contest Chairman, Joe Wein of Schaumburg Post 2202. Alina attended the ceremony with her mother, Karina Rimas and her brother, Edward. Guiding her in the project was her social studies teacher, Trina Courtney. Alina will be attending Prospect HS this Fall. Matthew attended with his parents, Jason and Desiree Doland, his brother, Lucas, and sister, Maggie. He received assistance with the essay from his English teacher, Cherie Maday. Matthew read his winning essay to a large group of veterans and was rewarded by a long and loud ovation. He will enroll at St. Viator when the 2021 school year begins. Matthews's winning entry will advance the State finals that will be held later this month.

Also, Margaret Krupp, a Senior at William Fremd High School in Palatine, received a Certificate of Appreciation from Post 1337 Commander, Les Durov, in recognition of her achievement in the VFW's Voice of Democracy Essay Contest. Margaret's entry was on this year's national topic, "Is This the country the Founders Envisioned." Joining her at the ceremony were her proud parents, Ray and Rhonda Krupp. After graduation, Margaret plans to continue her education at William Rainey Harper College.



Top Left Margaret Krupp receives certificate from Commander Durov, 4th District Commander MacInnes and VOD Chair Wein present second place award to Alina Rimas then, present first place award to Matthew Doland



Voice of Democracy

Established in 1947, our Voice of Democracy audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in regards to a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay. Each year, nearly 64,500 9-12 grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$2 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

Patriot's Pen

Each year more than 165,400 students in grades 6-8 enter the VFW's Patriot's Pen youth essay contest for a chance to win their share of more than \$1.4 million in state and national awards. Each first place state winner receives a minimum of \$500 at the national level, and the national first place winner wins \$5,000!

Mount Prospect VFW Post 1337 & American Legion Post 525 join in open house with our community partners



For the first time in memory, the major service and fraternal organizations in Mount Prospect had a joint open house on 24 April at the Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 660. The brainchild of this event was Post 1337 All American Commander Les Durov. Post 1337 Jr Vice Commander Tony Cuellar brought out a Humvee from his Army unit, which was a total hit. Being the first time this event was held, we didn't know what to expect. Now, we plan to do this annually and build on our experience. To live in an area where there is so much common good and cooperation truly is wonderful. Our partners at the Moose and Lions are staunch supporters of our veterans community and we urge our members to support these organizations in any way they can. On 30 June to 4 July, we will be once again be supporting the Mount Prospect Lions club by manning the wine tent.



Post 1337 & 525 Honor Rolling Meadows

Last month Mount Prospect's VFW Post 1337 learned that their home town would not be having a parade on Memorial Day again this year. They were very disappointed because the parade has been a long standing tradition in the Village and because their member like to don their dress uniform and carry their flags as salute to their fallen comrades. Very soon, however, Post 1337 Chaplain, Ron Willer, a resident of Rolling Meadows, announced that he was Chairmen of the Rolling Meadows Veterans' Committee that included QM Chuck Ohrn and they were the primary organizer of that city's Memorial Day parade to be held on Saturday, May 28, 2021. He was confident that he could get an invitation for the post to march in the parade. They quickly said yes and very soon thereafter the invitation was confirmed – the post's preparations began at once. A Color Guard was organized. AL Post 525 joined in. Post 1337 member, Tony Cuellar, an active duty Army NCO, procured an Iraq-era HumVee combat vehicle to participate. The son of another post member, Casey Bachara, contributed the use of his 2016 Anniversary model of a WWII era Army Jeep. It is inscribed with the name "8th Army" which was Casey's outfit in Korea. Both vehicles carried veterans who waved flags and smiled broadly at the enthusiastic crowd. Near the front of the parade, proudly carrying the American flag was Post 1337 Commander and Color Guard member, Les Durov. Other marchers included VFW 4th District Commander, Steve MacInnes, a US Coast Guard truck and trailer, various federal, state and city officials, groups of Boy and Girl Scouts, the Rolling Meadows HS band and a terrific group of bagpipers. The parade ended at the Rolling Meadows Veterans Memorial. Chairman Willer led a short ceremony that included the laying or wreaths to salute each branch of the US armed forces and a keynote address by Post 525 Commander, Bill Starr. In accordance with tradition, the program concluded with the 21-gun salute provided by Rolling Meadows Police firing detail and the playing of Taps to honor all of our departed veterans.



VFW Memorial Day Essay Contest Winners

The 2021 1st Place Essay Contest winner, Xochiti Churi of St Emily School, pictured here with Commander Les Durov and Commander Bill Starr receiving her prize. 2nd prize went to Anthony Pham, also of St Emily School. 3rd prize winner Jakub Rapala is from St Alphonsus school.



Bring The family!
Mt Prospect Veterans Picnic
15th August
Moose Lodge 660 Noon
Games, Food, Fun
Please give S.O. Dutch a head count!



Leagion Award Recipients

COL Bob McKillop and Legionnaire Brian Mulcrone award the prestigious All School Medallion to graduates Luis Damian, Gil Lara, and Zarina Gargrove of Holmes Junior High.



Memorial Day Photos Mike Zarnek





VFW Post 1337 Awards Citations of Excellence to Mount Prospect 1st Responders By Jim Parker

At the last regular meeting of Veterans of Foreign Mount Prospect Wars Post 1337 Post Commander, Les Durov, presented First Responder Americanism Certificates of Merit to two worthy recipients who exemplify excellence as public safety employees of the Village. They are Police Detective Dirk Ollech, who was nominated by Chief John Koziol, and Emergency Management Coordinator James Miller, nominated by Fire Chief Brian Lambel. The awards are made annually by Post 1337 as part of a program developed and sponsored by the national organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Attending the presentations from the Mount Prospect were Mayor Arlene Juracek along with Police Chief Koziol, Deputy Chief Michael Eterno and Detective Commander Joseph Garvis. Also attending from the Village were Fire Chief Brian Lambel, Deputy Fire Chief John Dolan and Assistant Fire Chief Bryan Loomis.

After graduating from Luther North HS in Chicago, Detective Ollech joined the US Army where he served for three years as an infantry sergeant. He followed that with a six-year stint in the Illinois National Guard where he became a Platoon Leader and achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. After completing his higher education at the College of Du Page and the Police Training Institute in Champaign he started his career in

law enforcement. Detective Ollech has served in that capacity for over 30 years, the last 20 of which has been a member of the Mount Prospect Police Department. Beginning in 2001 he has steadily risen through the ranks to his present title of Detective. As such he is responsible for conducting criminal investigations and managing a heavy caseload. While serving the Village he has received many department commendations, including Officer of the Year in 2011. Chief Koziol describes Detective Ollech as a "consummate profession" whose hard work, charterer and leadership make him a "highly valued member of this Department." Looking on proudly at the ceremony were Detective Ollech's wife, Adriana, and his son, Kurt. Also attending were fellow Detectives William Ryan and Miguel Trejo.

Jim Miller began his service to Mount Prospect more than 25 years ago. Starting as a Fire Protection Specialist, his knowledge of fire protection, dedication to the job and extraordinary management skills have resulted in many promotions to leadership roles in almost every area of his Fire Department. Jim's leadership ability was recognized early on when he was named the Coordinator of the Community Emergency Response Team. This primarily volunteer group served the Village on planned events such as traffic control and parades and in emergency callouts when they were

need to respond to weather emergencies, traffic accidents, downed power lines and ground searches. From there he moved on to Lead Fire Investigator where he oversaw investigations to the origins and causes of fire events. Jim was then promoted to lead Fire and Safety Educator. In that role he developed fire safety and education programs for schools, churches, daycare centers and other locations where an educated citizenry saves lives. In 2017 Jim was promoted to his current position as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the entire department. As such he has oversight responsibility for all emergency preparedness activities of the Village. This includes all events (weather, fire, chemical terrorism) and all personnel (coordination among village departments, citizens, the State of Illinois and FEMA). At his side during the presentation was his friend, Jodie Gray. His son, Alex and daughter-in-law, Clara, both active duty naval officers, were able to join virtually. Also at the event was the Mount Prospect Community Emergency Response Team ("my guys") consisting of Mike Dziadus, Mike Nagle, Keith Galle and Mike Zarnek.

VFW Post 1337 is honored to salute these talented, dedicated and brave men who make Mount Prospect a better place to work and live by keeping it safe.

Grave Decoration Day 2021

By Jim Parker

In accordance with a tradition as old as our country, Mount Prospect's American Legion Post 525 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 gathered last Thursday to place flags of honor and remembrance on the graves of many local veterans. A rainy forecast did not discourage about 18 members of both Posts who, along with some family members, assembled early in the morning and received their assignments. By late afternoon they had placed almost 300 American flags at locations in 20 area cemeteries. At St. John Cemetery and St. Paul Cemetery flags were placed on the graves of all veterans that could be identified from cemetery records. At others, including All Saints, Memory Gardens, and Wheeling Township cemeteries, the final resting places of deceased members of both Posts were honored.

The practice of decorating veteran's graves began in America soon after the Revolutionary War. In many communities in several States, local residents made decorations and picked fresh Spring flowers to honor the gravesites of heroes who helped win their independence. Over the next several years many more towns and villages did the same and it became an annual event. After the Civil War in 1868 General (later, president) James Garfield delivered a speech about veterans to about 5,000 people gathered at Arlington National Cemetery. After the speech those in attendance decorated graves of about 20,000 soldiers from both sides. The event became known as Decoration Day. Following WWI observers began to honor the dead of all of America's wars and both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars made it an annual ceremony. In 1971 the U.S. Congress made "Memorial Day" a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Monday of May.

Long before that, however, the Village of Mt Prospect, proudly the home of a great many American veterans, began to honor its fallen heroes in a similar fashion. This has been part of the traditions of both posts since their inception. American Legion Post 525 was formed in November of 1930. VFW Post 1337 was chartered in April 1925.

Every year on the "official" Memorial Day, cities and town across America plan parades and festivities. Families have reunions and bar-b-ques. AL and VFW members also enjoy these activities. Grave Decoration Day, however, is not held on the "official" day. Rather, Post 525 and Post 1337 decorates graves on a quiet weekday, like last Thursday, when they can place their flags with somber respect and remember their departed comrades. As veterans, they understand, perhaps better than most, the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Post 525 90th Anniversary Dinner Save the date 11 September



American Legion Post 525 Cordially invites you to our 90th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, September 11th, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 660

601 N. Main Street Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

\$40.00 per person

The evening will include dinner, dancing, camaraderie,
cash bar and raffle prizes!

Buffet Dinner

Dress is Business Casual

VFW Recognizes the Nation's Top Publications



April 30, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has announced the winners of the 2021 National Publications Contest.

VFW Department District Post Publication Contest Winners Covering the 2020 calendar year, this year's Publications

Entries for the contest derived from 35 Posts/Districts and 10 Departments, there were four submissions for the "Best Magazine" category and 12 submissions for "Best Feature Article." Of the 56 entries, 16 placed.

Two non-VFW-affiliated journalism professionals served as judges for the competition. This is designed to guarantee impartiality and objectivity in the judging.

The VFW congratulates all entrants for their hard work and service to their respective members. The pool of entries this year proved to be very competitive. Awards will be mailed in June to each Department for distribution.

The winning category:

Small Frequency (printed 1-4 times per year)

Grand Award:

Veterans of Mount Prospect (Post 1337)

John DeGroot, Editor

Department of Illinois

Editors Note: Comrades, this was most unexpected and to say I was floored is an understatement. Much Thanks to Comrade Parker who has certainly been more than helpful with submissions as well as writing skills. Also thank goodness for our proof reader Jan DeGroot. Commander Starr, as I write this, has submitted our publication to the American Legion as well.

Save The Date

30 June - 4 July Lions Festival Wine Tent

4 July Parade

15 August Mt Prospect Veterans Picnic

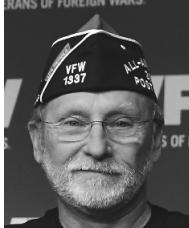
11 Sept Post 525 90 Anniversary

2 October Veterans Benefits Workshop

7 October Post 525 Golf Classic

11 Nov. Veterans Day

From the Commander of the VFW



What a great start to the new year. Even with COVID we managed to get our mission completed. Our VFW Post 1337 made All State for the third year in a row. It was accomplished by team work. Everyone working together made it happen.

I want to thank everyone for one of our greatest Memorial Days. Thanks to the invite from Rolling Meadows, we still managed to have a parade along with two ceremonies. The turnout from our post was amazing. I would like to congratulate the great job that our post put forward by participating in the parade. We were well received by the community. Kudos to everyone. We looked sharp.

Our Poppy Day proceeds set a new record. Thanks for a great job go to Comrade Erickson. The post had a few new members out to help this year and they made it happen. We were out at Mt Prospect Cruise Night and we had a good night there. We need to keep this up with the Farmer's Market until September. Come out and support the cause. This will make it easy to help all the Veterans that need our help.

Thanks to Dana for another successful Grave Decoration Day. The weather was a bit cold and it did rain. Despite all of that, we did get all the flags placed on the all the graves the next day. We can always use some more help. Next year come out and give us a hand.

Comrades, keep up the great work that you all do and let's make this next year even stronger. We can even try for the fourth year in a row for All State.

Les Durov, All State All American Commander

From the Commander of the American Legion



Several American Legion and VFW official functions serving our community are now in the rear view mirror. We did it and we did it well. I would like to say how very proud I am of all of my comrades who came together to achieve excellence in each of these important functions; Poppy Day, Grave Decoration Day, Junior High Awards, Essay Contest and of course, the many facets of the Memorial Day ceremony itself.

Thank you for your leadership, selfless participation, execution and follow up toward mission success. We do have a few things in the wind so please be aware and save the dates for (1) 4th of July Parade and Wine Booth; (2) August 15th - the Mt Prospect Veterans Picnic; (3) September 11th - Post 525 90 Anniversary Party (really 91st); (4) October 2nd – Veterans Benefits Workshop; (5) October 7th - The 5th Annual Legion Golf Classic; (6) Veterans Day on November 11th. Let's keep doin' what we're doin'!

My Best, Bill Starr - Commander

From the Service Officer



Wow....what a year and there is more to come. As your post S.O. My job of helping veterans and our posts never ends. So many positive things happening and it is all because of you, our post members. Seems there is never a lack of volunteers to take on the task. Good ideas are constantly coming in to improve and move forward. We continue with our mission of helping veterans, educating our youth, & being at the forefront of our communities.

We are more involved with the VFW, District, Department of Illinois, & National, contributing on committees and chairing programs. Our community partners, the Mount Prospect Lions Club & Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 660, are cherished and have made us stronger. Please support them.

You'll notice as your newsletter editor we had to go to 8 pages and that was hardly enough to even partly cover what we do. Looking forward to the rest of the year. Don't miss the picnic. We still need volunteers. The picnic invite is extended to all your family members.



Post 525 Adjutant Taps Across America

By Ron Vlcek Adjutant, Post 525

Several years ago CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman, (On The Road With Steve Hartman), did a piece for the nightly news about a trumpet player in New Orleans who played Taps every night from his balcony at 6:00 PM. Through the years that piece stuck in his mind and then he began to wonder what it would be like if musicians across America all played Taps at the same time. He contacted Jari Villanueva, who is considered the country's foremost expert on military bugle calls and Mr. Villanueva coordinated the 2020 event called Taps Across America. Musicians were asked to play Taps at exactly 3:00 PM local time on Memorial Day and if possible to submit a video showing them playing. They didn't know what to expect so they were overwhelmed when they received thousands of videos. As a result, this has now become an annual event.

Last year I sounded Taps from my front lawn using our electronic bugle and I had a few neighbors come out and watch. This year I sent out an e-mail to all the neighbors asking them to come out and be a part of this little ceremony which is preceded by a Moment of Remembrance. I was thrilled that 20 people showed up to help honor those that had gone before us and to remember the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Again, thousands of videos were sent in from all across the country and some from around the world. If interested, you can view them on You Tube at Taps Across America.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPy5mY5ABsg>

Post 525 Bingo Lovell VA

By Lee Jensen Chaplain, Post 525

The American Legion Post 525 has been conducting bingo at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center for the past 24 years. The veterans really look forward to having our post come up there once a month because it gave them something to do and they really enjoy playing bingo. We gave away cash prizes and after bingo provided cookies for dessert. Unfortunately when the COVID 19 pandemic hit the hospital was under quarantine and therefore we were not able to go to the hospital to conduct Bingo.

During the month of April this year the hospital was able to set up a zoom program to connect to the wards so that bingo could now be possible. I am happy to announce that our Post is now conducting bingo remotely in a special room at the hospital that is broadcast to the patients in the wards. Names of bingo winners are recorded and the cash prizes are distributed to the winners by the nurses. Until things get back to normal that is how we will have to conduct bingo. Our post also provided snacks for the veterans during four months of this past winter because the veterans were not able to go to the canteen because of being quarantined. They were very happy to receive them.