

President Message December 2017

Hi everybody and Happy Holidays

I know it has been a long time since my last message. I guess we all have to blame my buddy Frank, your friendly webmaster. With all his postings, updates and important events on the website he leaves me nothing to pass on to you. Boy do I hate when someone is so efficient. In any case it is the end of the year and I would like review the year with you. A year that I am very proud of. It seems that there is no end to what this chapter can accomplish.

First our membership is still growing; more vets are hearing about us and coming out. They come to a meeting, like what they see and hear, and join. Not only do they sign up but they follow up by attending all the meetings. We average at least 50 members a meeting and when it is a special meeting we have almost twice that number.

Last February was our Valentine Dance, almost 200 attended. It was a great time, so much so that we were asked for a repeat. So this February on the 10th we are going to have another dance. I suggest if you have not been to one treat yourself and your loved one to a great night. Just go to the website for information and a form.

We all know that Vietnam Veterans day is at the end of March. But this year because of scheduling our Borough President Jim Oddo and Senator Andrew Lanza had special events for us the first week in April.

On April 5th Borough President had his first Vietnam Veterans Day breakfast for us at the Excelsior. At the breakfast he presented all of us with a 50th anniversary coin designed for us, truly a beautiful coin

April 8th Senator Lanza had his Annual Veterans Day celebration at Tottenville H.S.

May 3rd USIVO honored our organization at their Night of Honor for our work and commitment to veterans at the Hilton

June 11th was our Day of Remembrance. Over 200 attended to remember and honor our fallen brothers. We have been doing this since 1993 and we the Honor Guard still feel it so emotional overpowering that we are completely exhausted by the end of the day. I guess that it means are fallen brothers are still in our hearts, and I am sure you all feel the same way.

September 17th was POW/MIA Day and we once again held the service at our Memorial Park. Our Chapter took on this service some years ago and we will make sure that it stays as our responsibility for as long as we are around. After all it was our call to bring it to the attention of all so why not.

September 25th was our birthday and we celebrated it with food and cake at our September meeting. It was a great turnout. Everybody pitched in, John Russo, Georgena [his wife], and Joe Skinner did a great job.

October kicked off our Annual Jay O'Donovan Golf Outing. This year we decided to move it to Silver Lake, and thanks to Al Halfenger and his entire committee, it was a gigantic success, the best ever.

Veterans Day was a whirlwind. There were many events. A Veterans Breakfast at St. Adalbert's, a Salute to Veterans at Tottenville H.S., Nicotra's Salute to Veterans at the Hampton Inn, a Salute to Veterans at The Old Bermuda Inn, and the Veterans Day parade in the city.

In 2004 this Chapter made a promise that we would erect monuments in all the high schools our fallen brothers attended. Christopher Meargher went to Cardinal Hayes H.S. in the Bronx and, because of things that were beyond our control, we were not able to complete our mission. I felt for years that was a missing piece in our Chapter's heart.

On December 10th we completed our mission with the installation of a bronze plaque and special service at Cardinal Hayes H.S. Five other names of brothers who attended the school but did not live on Staten Island were also added on the plaque. I feel it important to acknowledge Nick Castoro, Frank Russo, and the Meargher family for working with me to complete this mission.

Finally on Dec 10th was our annual tree trimming at the memorial. We all met at the memorial in the morning. We put up the tree that was donated by Green Side Up. It was a great day we had snow covering everything which added to the holiday spirit. Speaking of spirit, there was enough to fill each glass and toast the holiday. What a great way to finish the year.

We are a great organization and that is all because of you. You are truly all my brothers and sisters. God bless you all. Have a great and safe holiday season.

Your Brother
Gene