

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes, Monday, April 17, 2023, 7 PM

Members Present:

Kristin Reilly
Wendell Rich
Dave Reese
Tom Yaegel
Erik Saracino
Michael Pinciotti

Others Present:

Kristin Marcell – Representative for 178th Legislative District
Paula Gasper - Liaison
Lisa Russo - Administration Liaison
Peter Palestina

MEETING CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – March 20, 2023, Unanimous consent.

GUEST SPEAKER

PA State Representative Kristin Marcell, 178th Legislative District, provided participants an opportunity to introduce themselves and offer suggestions on veteran issues that her office could address through the legislative process.

Representative Marcell left the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- Washington Crossing is hosting a dedication ceremony of George Washington which will be installed at the National Ceremony.
- Washington Crossing Historic Park will hold its annual Memorial Day ceremony on Sunday, May 28 at 1:00 pm at the gravesite of Continental soldiers located near the Thompson-Neely House. The observation will include a colonial color guard, fife and drum music, artillery piece, Revolutionary War reenactors, and veterans, including honorary guest speaker, Major General Tom Matthews (arrive early). After the dedication, American flags will be placed on the graves by the Guardians of Bucks County. The gravesite marks the resting place of soldiers who died during the Continental Army's December 1776 encampment in Bucks County.

- VAC members exchanged ideas needed to honor the burial flags initially presented to the family of Army Master Sergeant Kenneth Elwell, a lifelong resident of Holland, PA, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan on July 19, 2011. The VAC agreed to place Master Sergeant Elwell's burial flags in a framed display case that will be included in the formal dedication of the Richboro Nike Ajax Base video presented to Council Rock North High School.
 - Chairman Reilly and Mr. Saracino plan to meet with Council Rock South officials to discuss the possibility for the dedication ceremony at the school.
- The VAC anticipates purchasing the U.S. Space Force flag which was officially unveiled on May 15, 2020.
- The Northampton Township VAC is attempting to compile a database of veteran alumni residing in the community. We would like to honor your service and recognize your contribution. Please provide us with your name, rank, email, branch of service, and years served so we can contact you for special events and announcements. Please send questions and submissions to Erik Saracino at erik.saracino26@gmail.com.
- A memorial plaque was removed from the intersection of Bristol and Bustleton Road and moved to the Veterans Site in front of the Administration Building. Ms. Russo asked the VAC on behalf of the Administration to create wording for an additional plaque to create symmetry that explains the Brick program.
 - VAC participants provided inputs to Ms. Russo.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Peter Palestina announced that Bensalem Mayor Joseph Digirolamo is sponsoring a Hero's Welcome Home event honoring Captain David A. Christian's Induction into the National Military Hall of Fame is scheduled on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 3:15pm, at the Bensalem Township Municipal Complex, 2400 Byberry Road, Bensalem, PA.
- Mr. Peter Palestina also invited attendees to celebrate Armed Forces Day & the Induction of Hometown Hero, David A. Christian into the National Military Officers Hall of Fame on May 6th from 11am-3pm at the Newtown Athletic Club (NAC). The ceremony takes place during the NAC's Armed Forces Day in the North Field event, which provides local residents an opportunity to show their appreciation for the Military families in our community. There will be Military Vehicles, Joint Tactical Light Vehicles, as well as, food trucks, family games, activities & more.

- Chairman Reilly and Mr. Saracino met with Ms. Kymberly Diglia, Council Rock North High School (CRN), to discuss the possibility for the dedication ceremony at the school. Ms. Diglia leads the CRN Veterans Service Club which consists of a service-based club that takes part in various fun and meaningful events to help local veterans and active-duty servicemembers.

2023 VAC EVENTS

- **MEMORIAL DAY: Monday, May 29th @ Dembowski Park:**
 - M/C: W. Rich (Draft version of the script will be sent to all VAC members for review and comments shortly)
 - Guest Speaker: Lynn O'Brien: confirmed
 - Singer: Lisa
 - Bagpiper: Confirmed
 - Chaplain: Heenan recommended Father Paolino, St. Vincent's Catholic Church, Richboro, PA
 - Fireside Florist: Secured
 - Color Guard: Awaiting confirmation confirmed
 - Firing Squad: Awaiting confirmation confirmed
 - Bugler: Awaiting confirmation Bernie to confirm
 - Scheduled walk-through: May 27, 2023 @ 2:00pm
- **FLAG DAY: Wednesday, June 14th @ NH Recreation Civic Center.**
 - Sound system provided by the Northampton Indians Football and Cheerleading Organization.
 - The VAC seeks to obtain participation commitments from the Northampton Township Baseball Organization and Troop 145 parents & scouts.
 - M/C: Dave Reese confirmed
 - Singer: Christina Keyak, Junior, Council Rock South High School (Awaiting confirmation from Chairman Reilly): confirmed
 - Chaplain: Rev. Ryan Sweet Addisville Reformed Church- confirmed
 - Color Guard: Awaiting confirmation- Boy scouts
- **VETERANS DAY: Saturday, November 11th @ NHT Administrative Building**
 - CR South Marching Band. [*Check on availability*]
 - M/C & Guest Speaker: Erik Saracino
 - Chaplain: Awaiting confirmation
 - Singer: Awaiting confirmation
 - Color Guard: Confirmed
 - Firing Squad: Awaiting confirmation
 - Bugler: Awaiting confirmation

- **HOMETOWN HEROS WREATH LAYING CEREMONY: Saturday, December 2nd @ Union Cemetery, 209 Almshouse Rd, Richboro, PA**
 - M/C: K. Reilly
 - Guest Speaker: TBD
 - Singer: TBD
 - Chaplain: TBD
 - Wreaths: TBD
 - Color Guard: TBD
 - Firing Squad: TBD
 - Bugler: TBD

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15 pm

Respectively Submitted

Erik Saracino, Secretary

Next Meeting: Monday, May 15, 2023