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Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-2060 9vA nithsM SE31 American Legion

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April 15 — June 15, 2018

www.ALCH372.com

## Commander's Message



It seems nowadays the term Hero gets overused sometimes. Unfortunately, Times of War can bring out the best in people. I came across a littleknown story involving

a pilot from WW2 that may help define a real Hero. Lt. Louis Curdes, a P38 Lightning pilot flew in Europe and managed to shoot down 7 German and 1 Italian planes. He then was shot down, captured by the Italians and sent to a POW camp. There he escaped and Uncle Sam sent him to the Pacific where he flew a P51 Mustang, successfully shooting down a Japanese reconnaissance airplane. He then was one of only three US pilots to have "kills" in three War zones. Germany, Italy. And Japan. While attacking the Japanese-held



island of Bataan, his wingman was shot down, ditched, and Louis flew cover protecting him and helped to guide a rescue. While performing this, he noticed an American C-47 transport attempting to land on this Japanese island. Realizing that pilot was making a fatal mistake, Louis tried to radio the plane and use his own plane to wave him off with no success. He then made a fatefully Heroic decision. Carefully lining up to ging of Locustwood, Memorial the rear of the C47, he shot out an engine. The plane continued toward the airfield. He shot out the other engine forcing the plane to ditch in the ocean. The plane came down in one piece about 50 yards away from his wingman. Nightfall and low fuel now forced Louis to return to base. Next day he escorted a PBY rescue aircraft that picked up the 12 passengers and crew, including 2 female nurses, from the downed C-47, all survived. If that airplane had landed on Bataan the nurses and passengers would have surely been killed at the hands of the enemy.

A true Hero that made a split second decision that ended up saving lives. For the unlikely event of shooting down an American transport plane Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the

Distinguished Flying Cross. His P-51 (named "Bad Angel") had 10 'kill" flags painted on the fuselage. 7 German, 1 Italian, 1 Japanese, and 1 American, and now resides at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Arizona. Louis also wound up marrying one of the nurses carried on that C-47.

We have a busy month in May with honoring our veterans. Flag-Day, Legion Statewide Services see inside Scoop for details of all. Installation of new officers will be held at 7pm on May 22nd. Get Involved with YOUR post, Participate, Volunteer, Support and Vote.

For God and Country. Commander Timothy Kraft Post 372

#### Remember their names...





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## Legion History & Schedule for Flagging of Graves, Memorial Day Services and NJ Legion Statewide Services

In 1932, the Locustwood Cemetery Association deeded free grave sites to the American Legion for use by Legionnaires and their spouses, and erected a monument memorializing their service.

As part of the transfer of grave sites, the American Legion committed to holding an annual memorial on the first Sunday after Memorial Day, known as the NJ American Legion Statewide Services - a tradition that has continued since 1935.

Keeping with this tradition, American Legion Post 372 members gather prior to Memorial Day weekend, in preparation of Memo-

rial Day and Statewide Services and to honor and remember our veterans by placing American Flags on all the veterans graves.

While the flagging of the graves is usually done the Sunday prior to Memorial Day weekend, this year it is scheduled for Sunday, May 6th.

Over the last several years, the

American Legion Post 372 tradition of flagging the graves has grown to include our Cherry Hill Community, bringing volunteers and participants from the Camden County Veterans Affairs Office/ Freeholders, Cherry Hill Township, Cherry Hill Police Department, Cherry Hill Fire Department, Jewish Family Center Services, Boys Scouts and others!

It's a great opportunity for our young and old to learn about this annual tradition and the meaning behind it as we honor our fallen veterans.

On Memorial Day, the American Legion holds Services at the American





Sunday, June 3rd, 2018

Join in the 83rd Annual NJ American Legion Statewide Services – The Annual NJ Statewide American Legion Services kick off with the Parade on Sunday, June 3, 2018 at 1:30pm at Locustwood Cemetery(Rt 70, Cherry Hill), followed by a Ceremony, with Guest Speakers including NJ American Legion Officers, S.A.L. Officers, Auxiliary Officers, Gold Star mothers and others. Afterwards there is a Social/Buffet at American Legion Post 372,1532 Martin Ave, Cherry Hill. Be sure to come out and meet members/officers from all our NJ American Legions !! Its a great opportunity to mingle, share news and events with our fellow Legions !!



## American Legion Post 372 "7he Scoop" Quarterly Newsletter

EDITORS: Sue Quinn-Morris, Jim Arcinese DESIGN/LAYOUT: Sue Quinn-Morris DISTRIBUTION: Jim Arcinese, Charlie Alberti ADVERTISING: Sue Quinn-Morris PRINTING: Main Street Graphics



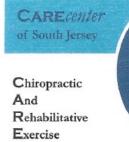
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### **MESSAGE** from Riders Director



getting close, well for some it never really stopped! Check over your bikes and maybe change the oil but defi-

nitely give them a once over before riding them hard. Be especially cautious out on the roads for not only the cagers that can never seem to see us... but the POTHOLES!

Thank you for all that volunteered as well as participated in the Halloween Party. Although it was not a big suc-

Another year has past cess, we did have some fun and and the riding season is that's what counts! Be sure to check months is as follows: Regularly out the Legion's website as well as Patriot Connections for any upcoming events. And as always, if you have events that have not been posted please forward the information to myself and/or Sue Quinn for immediate distribution.

> This year I expect as many Riders as possible to come out on runs! Whether we do an organized ride or just a Legion Riders only FUN-RUN it doesn't matter... camaraderie is camaraderie!

Our agenda for the next few scheduled meetings every 4th Monday @ 7PM; Nominations and Elections for the 2018-2019 Rider's year; Installation on May 22 @ 7:30PM (we will discuss keeping or skipping the May meeting in April); and RIDE RIDE RIDE!!!! Thank you and be safe! Art Schneider Your Friendly Neighborhood Director, ALR Post 372

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**Scholarship Presentations** 



## **American Legion Post 372 Announces** Sponsorship Packages

Established in 1952. American Legion Post 372 of Cherry Hill has been helping and supporting our veterans and active military in the community for over 60 years!

From honoring our fallen veterans on Memorial Day, to providing scholarships, sponsoring Legion Baseball High School Team and Boys/Girls State Programs, hosting veterans resource fairs, to welcoming home active military, and much more in between, we are always busy keeping up with our mission!

We are excited to announce that we have started a Sponsorship Program that will not only help us, but also help promote our local community businesses, such as yours!

With 5 levels of sponsorship available, there is something to fit everyone's budget! The American Legion Post 372 of Cherry Hill NJ is a 501c 19 non-profit veterans organization devoted to helping our active military and veterans. Your sponsorship/ donation is tax deductible! For complete information, visit our website at www.alch372.com





Legion at 9:30am, followed by services at Locustwood Cemetery at 10 and then proceed to Cherry Hill Township services at 11am.

The Sunday after Memorial Day, the NJ American Legion Statewide Services and Parade, are held in front of the American Legion monument at Locustwood Cemetery and brings NJ American Legion officers, Honor Guards, members and guests from throughout the state. Afterwards there is a Social/Buffet at American Legion Post 372. Be sure to come out and meet members/officers from all our NJ American Legions!! Its a great opportunity to mingle, share news and events with our fellow Legions!! If you haven't participated in in prior years, please do this year!

These events/traditions have deep roots which include a commitment to fulfill a promise made between the NJ American Legions and Locustwood some 83 years ago.

GUESS WHO !? - The two men depicted below are photos of deceased Legionnaires when they were in the service. Can you guess who they are? Give it a go before checking the answers on page 10!



Over the last several years, this American Legion Post 372 tradition has grown to include our Cherry Hill Community, bringing volunteers and participants from the Camden County Veterans Affairs Office/Freeholders, Cherry Hill Township, Cherry Hill Police Department, Cherry Hill Fire Department, Jewish Family Center Services, Boys Scouts and others I

It's a great opportunity for our young and old to learn about this annual tradition and the

The new additions to this event includes generous donations from many including Cherry Hill Township, JFCS and as always, the American flags, are donated by Camden County Veterans

Due to the increase in size of the event, participants are required to fill out waivers prior to flagging. Please fill out the form attached, or sign one the morning of flagging.







Your donations help benefit the Cherry Hill American Legion Veterans programs.

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### Hollywood actor reunites with dog tag lost in Vietnam



April 4, 2018—Courier Post—Before he found fame as a Hollywood and Broadway actor, Robert Gunton Jr. survived the Battle of Firebase Ripcord, one of the bloodiest of the Vietnam War, by evacuating on the final helicopter.

He later returned home from Vietnam with a Bronze Star for heroic service at Ripcord, but one of his two military dog tags didn't make it home with him.

Somewhere near the end of his yearlong tour of duty in 1970, Gunton lost one of the Army-issued metal identification tags imprinted with his name, ser-

vice branch and other information.

But on Tuesday, he was reunited with the lost relic during a ceremony at Cherry Hill American Legion Post 372.

The improbable reunion happened 25 years follow-

ing its discovery among hundreds of tags by a veteran from Deptford, and years of research by the locally based Patriot Connections Dog Tag Project Mission.

"I've been in a state of shock about this many Trekkies. In 2010, he completed little piece of myself, this little piece of tin that made a journey of thousands of miles through many decades back to me ... and it means so much," said the 72-year-old Gunton, perhaps best known for his portrayal of a corrupt warden in the hit movie "The Shawshank Redemption."

"His brother is right here," he happily told an audience of nearly 100, holding up a still shiny tag that he carries on a key chain with his tiny military can opener, another memento he cherishes from his Vietnam days.

Gunton lives in Los Angeles, but rode a train Tuesday to Philadelphia from New York City, where he's working on episodes of "The Blacklist," an NBC crime series starring James Spader.

He received a hero's welcome from the American Legion Riders and Nam Knights motorcycle groups, who escorted Gunton from the 30th Street Station in Philadelphia to Cherry Hill with help from both Philadelphia and Cherry Hill police.

Gunton has acted in film, theater and television for nearly 50 years, often playing authoritarian characters. He has appeared in some of the biggest films, such as Oliver Stone's "JFK" and "Born on the Fourth of July," and movies including "Glory," "Broken Arrow," "Patch Adams" and "Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls."

He was nominated for Tony Award nominations on Broadway for "Sweeney Todd," in which he played the title role, and his 1980 portrayal of

Juan Peron in 'Evita." He won an Obie Award for portraying 21 characters in an off-Broadway play about Vietnam. which launched his

film career in 1981 with a part in "Rollover" starring Jane Fonda.

His appearance on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" as Capt. Benjamin Maxwell is considered a classic by his third season in the role of Ethan Kanin on "24."

In Vietnam. Gunton was a radio telephone operator with Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, and was assigned to Fire Support Base Ripcord atop a mountain in the A Shau Valley during a 23-day seige.

He and a comrade were awarded Bronze Stars for returning to the base to retrieve important but forgotten radios in the evacuation's final moments so they would not fall into the hands of adelphia-New Jersey region.

the enemy North Vietnamese Army, which was about to capture the base.

Gunton doesn't know exactly where he and his dog tag part-

the advice of the military, he had separated the pair and usually kept



one tied in his bootlaces when he was in the jungle.

He surmises he lost it either when he left Vietnam from Da Nang without his boots or when he jumped onto a helicopter to evacuate from another firefight on Rocket Ridge, west of Hue. "What happened to it since has astounded me," said Gunton, who admitted he is still "trying to process" the Vietnam War as one of its veterans. He called the tag a "symbol that's so meaningful to us."

"When you see these, you realize how important they are and how some (tags that have been found) may have even belonged to someone who never made it out of there."

From there, the tags went to POW/MIA Awareness of New Jersey, which later became the Patriot Connection Dog Tag Project after its leader died.

Sue Quinn-Morris, a Post 372 auxiliary member, operates the dog tag proiect and



the Patriot Connections page on Facebook listing veterans events and activities in the Phil-

## History of MEMORIAL DAY



Memorial Day, an American holiday observed on the last Monday of May, honors men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, at least, it marks the beginning of summer.

#### **EARLY OBSERVANCES OF ME-MORIAL DAY**

The Civil War claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history, requiring the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries. By the late 1860s Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

#### Did You Know?

Each year on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.

It is unclear where exactly this tra-

dition originated; numerous different communities may have independently initiated the memorial gatherings. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day. Waterloo-which had first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866—was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

#### **DECORATION DAY**

On May 5, 1862, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land," he proclaimed. The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there. Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday.

Many Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor their dead on separate days until after World War I.



#### **EVOLUTION OF MEMORIAL DAY**

Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, originally honored only those lost while fighting in the Civil War. But during World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars.

For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees; the change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.

#### **MEMORIAL DAY TRADITIONS**

Cities and towns across the United States host Memorial Day parades each year, often incorporating military personnel and members of veterans' organizations. Some of the largest parades take place in Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C. Americans also observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries and memorials.

## **D-Day June 6, 1944**

During World War II (1939-1945), resulted in the Allied liberation of ny's control. Codenamed Operation Overlord, the battle began on June 6, 1944, also known as D-Day, when some 156,000 Ameri-



can, British and Canadian forces the Battle of Normandy, which last- landed on five beaches along a 50 ed from June 1944 to August 1944, -mile stretch of the heavily fortified coast of France's Normandy re-Western Europe from Nazi Germa- gion. The invasion was one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history and required extensive planning. Prior to D-Day, the Allies conducted a large-scale deception campaign designed to mislead the Germans about the intended invasion target. By late August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and by the following spring the Allies had defeated the Germans. The Normandy landings have been called the beginning of the end of war in

The Normandy American Cemetery, overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel, was established on June 8, 1944, as the first U.S. cemetery in Europe during World War II. It holds the graves of more than 9,300 U.S. servicemen who died in the D-Day invasion or subsequent missions



## FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

Monday, June 11, 2018 - 7pm

Join American Legion members, Boy Scout Troop #70 and friends for the Annual Flag Retirement

I am the silent sentinel of freedom for the greatest sovereign nation on earth I am the inspiration for which America patriots gave their lives and fortunes; I am the emblem of America. I have flown through Peace and War. Through strife and Prosperity, and amidst it all, I have always been respected. My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation. My white stripes, the burning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons in battle. My blue field represents God's Heaven under which I fly, and my stars, clustered together, unify the fifty states as one for God and Country.

I am "Old Glory" and I proudly wave on high. Honor me, respect me, and defend me with your lives. Never let our enemies tear me down from my lofty position, lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy, and keep me always as a symbol of freedom, liberty, and peace in our country.

When it comes the time when I am old and faded, do not let me fly in disrepair, rather Retire me from my duties only to replace me with a new flag so that I may continue to symbolize our country. With this, renew your commitment to what I stand for and pledge your allegiance to me one final time:



Hosted by Boys Scout Troop #70 (Christ Our Light Church) and American Legion Post 372



## Hollywood actor reunites with dog tag lost in Vietnam



For seven years, Quinn-Morris has meticulously researched all 400 tags, plus about 100 others she received, and so far has returned about 100 to veterans or their families in 20 states. Through the internet and other searches, Quinn-Morris said, she found multiple men with Gunton's name and was stunned three weeks ago when she finally realized whose tag it was, while coincidentally watching an old episode of the TV show "Monk" in which Gunton was a guest star. "The tag couldn't be his!" I told myself. "What are the odds it would be a Hollywood actor?" "It's rare that we have any tag to present locally, so today we are honored to have Robert Gunton receive a long lost piece of his history, and I am humbled and overwhelmed that he took the time out of his schedule to come here and show so much interest," Quinn-Morris told the crowd. Gunton captured his audience while reminiscing about his Vietnam service, for which many veterans were wrongly maligned and often misunderstood by the

He said his best friend in Vietnam was Joey Patterson of National Park in Gloucester County. After Patterson was severely injured in fighting at the base of Ripcord, Gunton called for an evacuation helicopter while on the mountaintop.

"I never saw him again and never knew he lived or died," Gunton recalled.

That changed years later.

While portraying Argentine president Juan Peron in the original Broadway cast of "Evita," Gunton said, Patterson recognized his face in a play advertisement and contacted him via the show.

"I got him and his wife tickets and we reunited, and have seen each other and spoken since then. And he is still coping with those injuries,' Gunton said.

On Tuesday, the actor also received a Vietnam coin and other symbolic coins from appreciative veteran groups. One was presented by Leo Ethier of Delanco, a member of Nam Knights and Vietnam Veterans of America Inc., Chapter 899. "He is one of my brothers," Ethier said of fellow veteran Gunton, "and we want to make sure he and every vet who served gets their missing

Knight brother Jack Philbin of Palmyra added, "Being here helps us as much as it helps him." To view dog tags that have not been

dog tags back."

reunited with their owners, visit www.patriotconnections.org/dog-tag -project/







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## Message from the SAL Commander



I hope everyone had a wonderful had our share of chilly days and quite a few warmer

days than expected too. Now spring is in the air and the summer breezes are not far behind. Flowers on all the graves of the Veterans. are starting to bloom, and the trees a beautiful time of the year.

Post 372 over the past few months. Our members accompanied the Ladies Auxiliary on another visit to the Home of the Brave Veterans Center bers take place in March and April in Camden. The Auxiliary brought lunch and gifts for 30 Veterans that day! The Vets were very appreciative of the generosity. It's a quite a moving experience to sit and listen to Veterans talk about their experiences. The SALs gave the Auxiliary a donation to help offset their costs for this wonderful day.

on February 4th and what a day that at the Convention Center there are was to be a Philadelphia Eagles turnout at the post was terrific. Many post members donated their time, and many brought home cooked dishes for all to enjoy. The Ladies Auxiliary hosted a Valentine's Oldies Dinner Dance on February 10th. The night was sold out! The food and music were terrific and everyone that attended had a fun time. This is an event we all can look forward to every year. On to new events. The Poker April. Each night was exciting with the many different Dealer's Choice poker games played. We will can-

cel the games through the summer months, May through August, and winter season. We pick up again in the Fall.

Post 372's long standing tradition of "Flagging of the Graves" will take place on May 6th at Locustwood Cemetery. Keep an eye on our website for the details. We'll place flags There are many events ahead of us, will be once again full of leaves. It's too many to list in this article. Please visit our website for information on Here's a brief recap of the events at upcoming events like the Gathering of Louis Lowery was with them and Heroes, Memorial Day and other Post and Statewide Services.

> Nominations for the SAL Board membachi's slopes cheered the raising with the election in April. The Installa- more Marines headed up to the tions will take place on May 22nd. Congratulations to the SAL Board members. Please continue to support ciated Press, met them along the our Board Members as we have done way and recorded the raising of the over the vears!

The American Legion Convention is coming up. It runs from Thursday June 7 through Sunday June 10. Try Our post hosted a Super Bowl Party to attend if you can. Friday morning always interesting speakers. The Pafan! The game was exciting and the rade on Saturday is truly impressive with floats from many Posts. It is another opportunity to talk with Veterans and won him a Pulitzer Prize. The and SALs from around the area. Remember our SAL meetings are on the third Wednesday of each month. Your input is very valuable at these meetings. With each year we grow stronger in our dedication to improve this great organization. If you are not receiving the emails from the SAL Commander, please provide your email address at the next meeting or nights at our Post continued through you can leave it at the Canteen. During the summer the SAL monthly meetings will be canceled. We'll skip the June, July and August meetings

and officially pick up again in September.

Lastly, I want to share a snapshot of history – "1945 – U.S. flag raised on Iwo Jima". During the bloody battle for Iwo Jima, U.S. Marines from the 3rd Platoon, E Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Regiment of the 5th Division take the crest of Mount Suribachi, the island's highest peak and most strategic position, and raise the U.S. flag. Marine photographer recorded the event. American soldiers fighting for control of Suriof the flag, and several hours later crest with a larger flag. Joe Rosenthal, a photographer with the Assosecond flag along with a Marine still photographer and a motion-picture cameraman.

Rosenthal took three photographs atop Suribachi. The first, which showed five Marines and one Navy corpsman struggling to hoist the heavy flag pole, became the most reproduced photograph in history accompanying motion-picture footage attests to the fact that the picture was not posed. The second was like the first but less affecting, and the third was a group picture of 18 soldiers smiling and waving for the camera. Many of these men, including three of the six soldiers seen raising the flag in the famous Rosenthal photo, were killed before the conclusion of the Battle for Iwo Jima in late March.

By March 3, U.S. forces controlled all three airfields on the island, and

### Message from the SAL Commander

on March 26 the last Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima were wiped out. your support. I'm looking forward to nese defenders were captured alive. More than 6,000 Americans died tak- For God and Country, ing Iwo Jima, and some 17,000 were Dave D'Orazio wounded. The photo became a sym- SAL Commander Post 372 bol of victory of WWII.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for Only 200 of the original 22,000 Japa- seeing everyone soon at the Canteen and any Post 372 Events.



## MESSAGE from Auxiliary President



**Our January** 13th trip to Home of the Brave in Camden was a delight. With the help of the SALs. we were able to pur-

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chase scarves, gloves and hats for each one of the 30 Veterans who reside there. We treated each Vet to a hoagie, chips, soda and Terry Cosgrove supplied her home baked goodies for them to enjoy. We also delivered puzzles and books. They were all very appreciative and one gentleman even wore his new items out that day. What a great feeling to see smiles on their faces. Keep your ears open as we may be planning another trip to HFB this April. Our 50's 60's Dinner Dance was a

sold out HUGE success. 56 Chinese auction baskets and 3 Big ticket items. Thanks goes out to Elliott & Tracy Adkisson for donating a beautiful bicycle, and Kevin Culligan/Nam Knights for the mini refrigerator and microwave for our event. Kudos goes out to Joe Flynn, who won the mini fridge, but donated it back to the Auxiliary for a future event. Thanks again Joe.

who attended, donated baskets, Items for our baskets, gift certificates, and food. We could not have done this without your help. A shout out to SAL members Dan, Doug and

Phil and to Legionnaires Elliott and Tim for pitching in and helping with the "manual labor". There are

> too many of you to list al who helped make this successful, just know we really did appreciate your help. 100% of our profit will be used to help Auxiliary our vets in need. Last,



but not least, I need to thank the Auxil-And a BIĞ thank you to everyone iary ladies for all their help. They stepped up and made our Dinner Dance work. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!!!

> May is approaching fast. Plan on helping us with our annual Post flagging of the graves, statewide services and Memorial Day services. Keep an eye out for dates.

Come out and join our Auxiliary. Our meetings are held the 1st Monday of every month at 7 pm from September to April. It's a great way to show our vets we care about them.

For God and Country Lynn Collings

President



