



THE AMERICAN LEGION FIRST CALL!

UTICA POST 229

ANTHONY PALLADINO, COMMANDER

MAY 2011

JACK LAPAGLIA, MEMBERSHIP

POST MEETINGS ARE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:30 P.M. (OPTIONAL DINNER AT 6:15)

POPPY DESIGNS WIN 1ST PLACE

Two members of the Junior Auxiliary took first place awards in the county auxiliary's poppy usage contest April 16:

- Angela Ciccone, 5, for a poppy tabletop favor.
 - Colette Bora, 16, for a poppy-decorated bonnet.
- (See photo on Page 8.)

INSIDE

- Commander's Call 2
- Notes from Community 2
- Monument Damaged 2
- Parade Grand Marshals 2
- Chaplain's Corner 2
- Top Cops Honored 4
- Meeting Highlights 5
- Jr. Auxiliary in Action 6,7,8
- Auxiliary President 7
- Auxiliary News 7

MAY

- 2 Jr Auxiliary, 5:30 pm
- 3 Bingo, 6:30 pm
- 4 Bloodmobile, noon-5
- 5 Post Meeting, 7:30 pm
Auxiliary Meeting, 7:30
Joint Dinner, 6:15 pm
- 7 Installation Dinner, 6
- 9 Vietnam Vets of Am., 1
- 10 Bingo, 6:30 pm
- 14 DAV, noon
- 17 Bingo, 6:30 pm
- 18 Bloodmobile, noon-5
- 19 Executive Board, 7 pm
- 24 Bingo, 6:30 pm
- 31 Bingo, 6:30 pm

UTICA POST HONORS TOP COPS, UTICA PD



Officers of the Year James Holt, left, and Robert Kopek flank Police Chief Mark Williams, who accepted the Department of the Year Award on behalf of Utica PD. See PAGE 4.

WWII VETS NAMED GRAND MARSHALS



World War II veterans John Loperfido, left, and Phil Capraro, both members of Post 229, will be the grand marshals for the Memorial Day Parade on May 30. See PAGE 3.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

- May 30
9 a.m.
Service for fallen Vietnam veterans, Utica Post 229.
- 10:45 a.m.
Wreath-laying at six sites, starting at Oneida Square.
- 2 p.m.
Parade, Genesee Street (Oneida Square to Parkway)

MEET THE BOWLING CHAMPS

PAGE 5



ELECTION SCHEDULE

- Thursday, May 5
Election of officers.
- Saturday, May 7, 6 p.m.
Installation of officers.
Social hour and dinner.
\$10 per person. Call post asap for reservations.



COMMANDER'S CALL

ANTHONY PALLADINO

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your commander for two years.

I want to thank the officers, the auxiliary, the Sons of the Legion, and all the volunteers for the outstanding job they do to make our post one of the best.

I WANT TO encourage everyone to come

to the post on Memorial Day (Monday, May 30) and take part in our annual observance. We're adding something new this year – a 9 a.m. service to honor Oneida County's deceased veterans from the Vietnam War. It's being sponsored by Utica Post 229 and Vietnam Veterans of American.

Then we'll head out to lay wreaths at six monuments, starting at 10:45 a.m. at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Oneida Square.

And bring the whole family to see the Memorial Day Parade, which steps off at 2 p.m. at Oneida Square and heads up Genesee Street to the Parkway.

EVEN THOUGH this is my last time to address you as commander, I am looking forward to working with the new commander and the other officers.

REMEMBER to keep our military in your thoughts and prayers.

For God and Country...

NOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY

JROTC CADETS

On behalf of the Notre Dame NJROTC unit, I would like to thank you for the phenomenal effort put forth on behalf of our military ball. The ball would not have been such a success without the hard work and time generously donated on our behalf.

-- C.O. Justin Hayward

SALVATION ARMY

Thank you so much for your generosity as a member of Friends of The Army this past year.

Whether it's food for the hungry, clothes for the poor, activities for the elderly, hope for the hopeless, comfort for the lost, or countless other

acts of kindness, The Salvation Army is there to meet human needs without discrimination – and your ongoing support makes that possible...

May God richly bless you,
-- Captain Frank Picciotto
Utica Salvation Army

NEWS BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive FIRST CALL by email, instead of a printed copy in the mail, send a request to firstcall@uticapost229.org.

DAV MEETS ON 3RD SATURDAY

Disabled American Veterans, Leo B. Wheeler/Stars and Stripes Chapter 82 meets at Post 229 at noon on the third Saturday of the month.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT TOPPLES POST MONUMENT



A motor vehicle accident in March resulted in a vehicle careening across the lawn and smashing into the brick wall and monument in front of the post home. Officers are working with the insurance company to have the damages repaired.

VVA MEETS ON 2ND MONDAY

Vietnam Veterans of America, Utica Chapter 944, meets at Utica Post 229 on the second Monday of the month at 1 p.m.

JOIN JR. AUXILIARY

Any member of the post or auxiliary who would like to register a daughter or granddaughter for the Junior Auxiliary should contact Mary Stronach at 796-9284. The girls will be involved in service projects and fun activities.

WWII VETS ARE PARADE GRAND MARSHALS



Vice Commander Chris Urban read aloud the combat records of John Loperfido (2nd from left) and Phil Compraro after Paul Wojcik (right) announced that the two World War II vets would be the grand marshals for the Memorial Day Parade.

Utica Post 229 has named two World War II veterans as the grand marshals for the Utica Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 30.

“Representing ‘The Greatest Generation’ will be **John Loperfido and Phil Capraro**,” Parade Chair Paul Wojcik announced at the post’s general membership meeting April 7.

Both men reside in Utica and are long-time members of Utica Post 229.

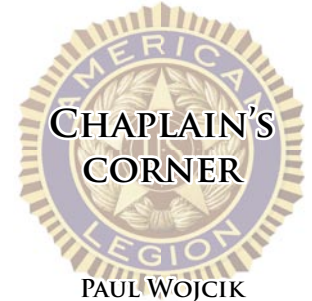
John Loperfido served in the Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1946. He was attached to the Amphibian 336th Engineer Combat Unit, spending time in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, and coming

within 50 miles of Berlin by the end of the war. Loperfido was part of the landing forces that stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day. He earned the Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, European Theater Occupation Medal, and the French Croix De Guerre Medal.

Phil Capraro was drafted into the Army in 1943. After completing basic training, he was assigned to the 42nd Infantry Rainbow Division. He was wounded during the D-Day landing at Omaha Beach as part of “Operation Overlord.” Later, while engaged at the Siegfried Line, Capraro was wounded for a second time, and was awarded two Bronze Stars for heroic ac-

tion. On December 16, 1944 at the “Battle of the Bulge,” Capraro was in charge of four machine gun placements when he was wounded for a third time. At the end of the war, he was part of the occupation forces. Capraro remained in the Army and was called up for the Korean War. He retired from the Army in 1975 after serving 32 years. In addition to two Bronze Stars, he earned three Purple Hearts, Good Conduct Medal, Battle of the Bulge Commendation, WWII Victory Medal, and European Theater Operation Medal.

The parade begins at 2 p.m. May 30 and is sponsored by Utica Post 229 and the City of Utica.



MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE

Do not stand at my grave
and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that
blow.
I am the diamond glints of snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened
grain.
I am the gentile autumn rain.

When you awaken in the
morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the soft stars that shine
at night.

Do not stand at my grave
and cry
I am not there, I did not die.

REST IN PEACE

Paul Nuccio
Robert J. Davis Sr.
Salvator A. Vanno



A few of the parade participants from last year. This year’s parade steps off at 2 p.m. May 30 on Genesee Street.

UTICA POST HONORS UTICA PD, 2 OFFICERS OF YEAR

Utica Post 229 is honoring the Utica Police Department as Police Department of the Year and two of its members as Police Officers of the Year, Post Vice Commander Chris Urban announced at the post membership meeting Thursday, April 7.

Urban introduced Law and Order Chair Paul Wojcik who presented the awards to Police Chief Mark Williams and Officers of the Year Robert Kopek and James Holt.

Utica PD is being recognized for both its upcoming 150th anniversary and its work resulting in a reduction in violent crime, he said. The department is the largest in Oneida County, with 180 men and women officers, and is frequently asked to assist other law enforcement agencies with personnel and technical expertise, he said.

Wojcik noted that Utica PD set forth a plan to reduce violent crimes in the city. "The hard work of the officers paid off," he said. "Last year the homicide rate was the lowest it has been since 2001. Aggravated assaults, or assaults involving weapons, dropped significantly to the lowest it has been since 2004. Robberies also dropped to the lowest they've been since 2005."

Last year, he added, Utica police responded to more than 55,000 calls, made 6,247 arrests, responded to 3,530 motor vehicle accidents, wrote 8,570 traffic summonses and 17,780 parking tickets.

Investigator Robert Kopek is the senior investigator in



From left: Law & Order Chair Paul Wojcik, Police Chief Mark Williams, Investigator Robert Kopek, Officer James Holt and Vice Commander Chris Urban.

the night unit of the Criminal Investigation Division. He is regarded as the "go to" investigator, providing assistance in the majority of cases CID has handled over the past two years, and is a mentor to newer investigators, Wojcik said. He was the lead investigator in a number of homicide cases, including the slaying of Officer Thomas Lindsey, which resulted in

the arrest and conviction of Wesley Molina-Cirino. He also assisted the investigation in the slaying of New Hartford Officer Joseph Corr and in the 2010 bank robbery that led to the shooting of an Oneida County Sheriff's Deputy. Kopek is currently assisting the District Attorney's office in the 25-year-old murder of Kim Simon. He joined Utica PD in 2002,



Utica Post's Officers of the Year are, from left, Investigator Robert Kopek and Officer James Holt.

after working for both the Whitestown and Whitesboro police departments, and transferred to Criminal Investigations in 2005.

Officer James Holt is a member of the Special Operations Unit and is regarded as "one of the hardest working officers" that the Utica PD has, noted Wojcik. In 2010 alone, he arrested 187 persons, made 143 drug-related arrests, including 32 felonies, and was involved in three incidents in which loaded handguns were removed from the street. He is the unit's liaison with the Utica PD's Drug METRO Unit.

"Officer Holt also formulated an Officer Initiated Investigation which addressed criminal activity related to corner stores throughout the city that were involved in food stamp fraud," Wojcik said. "This investigation was highly successful and resulted in numerous arrests."

Holt joined Utica PD in 2007 after serving with Herkimer Police. He began a life-long dream of being a police officer after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps for four years, including a 14-month combat tour in Iraq.

The awards ceremony followed a dinner attended by Legionnaires, auxiliary members, the families of the honorees, and a number of Utica Police personnel.

Wojcik said Post 229 would submit the officers of the year for the County level award, and the Utica PD for state-level honors.

APRIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE NOMINATIONS

In addition to the annual top cop awards, the April 7th membership meeting boasted several highlights.

MEMORIAL DAY Chair Paul Wojcik announced grand marshals for the Memorial Day Parade – World War II veterans **John Loperfido** and **Phil Capraro**, who were given a standing ovation. Both men were part of the landing forces that stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day. John spent time in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Phil was wounded three times – Omaha Beach, Siegfried Line and Battle of the Bulge – and was awarded two Bronze Stars for heroic action.

VICE COMMANDER Chris Urban presented **John C. Edwards** with a Certificate



Vice Commander Chris Urban, right, presented John C. Edwards with a certificate recognizing 50 years of membership.

of Continuous Membership, honoring him for 50 years

as a “dedicated member of American Legion Post 229, Department of New York.” The certificate was signed by National Commander Jimmie Foster, National Adjutant Dan Wheeler and Post Commander Anthony Palladino.

URBAN INTRODUCED the post bowling team champions, who took the Oneida County Legion title as well as the roll-off against runnerup Clark Mills. Champs Joe Roach, Wayne Dapre, Gene Bensock and Richie Maloon were greeted with a round of applause.

SCOUTING CHAIR Dave Manore reported an active Scouting program and thanked the post for agreeing to sponsor a campership fundraiser to help send scouts to summer camp.

THE NOMINATING committee presented a slate of 2011-2012 officers. It was accepted, with no other nominations from the floor. Election of officers will take place at the May 5th meeting. Those nominated are:

- Commander: Chris Urban
- 1st Vice Cmdr: Len Lascala
- 2nd Vice Cmdr: Jim George
- 3rd Vice Cmdr: Bob Stronach
- Adjutant: Rich Maloon
- Treasurer: Jim Haggerty
- Chaplain: Paul Wojcik
- Historian: Jim McGuire
- Service Officer: Dave Wilson
- Judge Advocate: Albert Alcuri
- Sgt. at Arms: John Stenson

Executive Board:

- Tom O’Toole
- Jack LaPaglia
- Vin Zaleski
- Frank Cassella
- Tony Palladino

Scholarship Committee:

- Vin Zaleski
- Paul Wojcik
- Jim McGuire
- Tom O’Toole
- Jim George
- Chris Urban
- Jim Haggerty

MEET THE COUNTY BOWLING CHAMPS



The Utica Post 229 Bowling Team took the Oneida County American Legion Traveling Bowling League title as well as the roll-off against runnerup Clark Mills. From left: Joe Roach, Wayne Dapre, Gene Bensock and Richie Maloon.

CERTIFIED

Howard Keyes, left, and Jim George are now certified instructors for the shooting range, Vice Commander Chris Urban announced.



GIRLS DESIGN POPPY BONNETS, BAKE COOKIES FOR TROOPS



Alia Sharaan works on her poppy-decorated hat.

Seven girls baked eight dozen cookies for the post's adopted troops in Afghanistan at the Junior Auxiliary meeting April 4 at the post, and then took on a creativity challenge by designing poppy hats and centerpieces as part of an Auxiliary poppy usage contest.

The young ladies were: Colette Bora, Julia Bora, Sara Criscione, Franki Laufer, Gabrielle Kelly, Isabella Kelly, Alia Sharaan.

The girls baked chocolate

chip and butter cookies, and decorated them with a rainbow of sprinkles, reported Junior Auxiliary Co-leaders Mary Stronach and Mary Ann Ciccone.

Then the young ladies experimented with creative uses for red crepe paper poppy flowers, as a way of promoting the annual Auxiliary poppy fundraiser.

Connecting the visual image of the poppy with the sacrifice of service made by veterans has been an impor-

tant goal of the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program since its inception in 1921. Around Memorial Day and Veterans Day, millions of red crepe paper poppies -- all handmade by veterans as part of their therapeutic rehabilitation -- are distributed across the country in exchange for donations that go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans.

SEE PHOTOS
PAGES 7 & 8

7 BOXES OF GOODIES FOR TROOPS

On Thursday, April 14, I mailed out seven boxes of goodies to our adopted unit in Afghanistan for Easter.

Thanks to all who baked the dozens of cookies (especially our Junior Auxiliary). They are so appreciated.

-- Pat Dodge



NOTRE DAME CADETS POST COLORS

Notre Dame High School Naval Jr. ROTC cadets helped to open the April membership meeting by posting the colors, and received appreciative applause from everyone present. From left: Gaetano Morreale, Ben Gelfuso, James Millett and Matt Cabot.

BINGO REPORT

Date	Income	Prizes	Expenses	3%	Profit
03/01/11	\$2722.00	\$2017.00	0.00	21.15	683.85
03/08/11	2843.00	2635.00	0.00	6.24	201.76
03/15/11	2427.00	1978.00	0.00	13.47	435.53
03/22/11	2403.00	1974.00	0.00	12.87	416.13
03/29/11	2280.00	1967.00	50.00	7.89	255.11

BINGO WORKERS

- Albert Alteri.
- Stu Bailey.
- Phil Capraro.
- Frank Cassella.
- Mike Cavanaugh.
- Chuck Dailey.
- Wayne Dapre.
- Pat Dodge.
- Jim George.
- Jim Haggerty.
- Frank Jakubowski.
- Al Kohler.
- Jack LaPaglia.
- Rich Maloon.
- Dave Manore.
- Jim McGuire.
- Evelyn Muench.
- Tom O'Toole.
- Tony Palladino.
- Dan/Virginia Pieloch.
- Scott Sebastian.
- Chris Urban.
- Paul Wojcik.
- Vin Zaleski.

DONATIONS: ND NJROTC \$1000, Utica Unit \$75.

EXPENSES: First Call \$1182.96, Scholarship Print & Mail \$178.68, Garbage \$183.37.

DAV VAN AT POST ON JUNE 1

The Disabled American Veterans' Mobile Service Office -- the DAV van -- will be at Utica Post 229 on Wednesday, June 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to help veterans and their families file or check on claims. Interested veterans should bring their DD214.

By literally putting service offices on the road, the DAV is increasing accessibility to the benefits our nation provides to its veterans. The van's visit is sponsored by DAV Leo B. Wheeler/Stars and Stripes Chapter 82, which meets at Post 229 on the third Saturday of the month.



THERESA JENSEN, PRESIDENT

AUXILIARY

MEMBERSHIP AT 105%

BY ROSE A. CONIGLIO

There was a mistake in our assigned quota for this year. Instead of 244, our quota is 222.

As of April, we have 238 paid members, including ten new members. So our percentage is actually 105.13%.

If you haven't paid your dues for 2010, I cannot accept your 2011 dues.

Please send your dues to:
Rose A. Coniglio
607 Jay St., Apt. C2
Utica, NY 13501

WELCOME!

I would like to welcome a new member and a transfer from Unit 1113:

- Sally M. Clarke
- Karen Robbins

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THERESA JENSEN



Dear Auxiliary Member,

On Thursday, May 5, there will be an election of new officers and executive board members. Please come and vote.

On May 7, we will have our Installation and Dinner, for our newly elected officers. Congratulations to all.

I would like to take this time to sincerely thank all the officers and members of our unit.

My sincere gratitude to our commander, Anthony Palladino, and all the legionnaires at Utica Post 229, for all their help they have given us this past year.

Pray for mothers everywhere on this Mothers's Day.

Poppy mailing night was held on April 11, and it was a great success. I would like to thank everyone that helped.

On this Memorial Day and every day, remember our veterans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice so we may live free.

Yours in service.



GAIL GRECO

THE DOGWOOD TREE

When Christ was on earth,
the dogwood grew
To a towering size with a
lovely hue.
Its branches were strong and
interwoven
And for Christ's cross its
timbers were chosen.
Being distressed at the use of
the wood
Christ made a promise which
still holds good:

"Not ever again shall the
dogwood grow
To be large enough for a tree,
and so
Slender and twisted it shall
always be
With cross-shaped blossoms
for all to see.

The petals shall have
bloodstains marked brown
And in the blossom's center a
thorny crown.
All who see it will think of Me
Nailed to a cross from a
dogwood tree
Protected and cherished this
tree shall be
A reflection to all of My agony.

SYMPATHY
Dorothy Alteri
Adeena Moore

GET WELL WISHES
Pat Dodge



JR. AUXILIARY IN ACTION: *Isabella Kelly models a bonnet, Julia Bora displays a poppy centerpiece and favor, and Franki Laufer and Alia Sharaan decorate cookies for the troops.*

GIVE BLOOD

The American Red Cross bloodmobile is at Utica Post 229 every first and third Wednesday from noon to 5.

**Utica Post #229
The American Legion
409 Herkimer Rd.
Utica, NY 13502**

First Call is a monthly publication of
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members and local communities.
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Since its founding in Paris in 1919, The American Legion has been an advocate for America's veterans, a friend of the U.S. military, a sponsor of community-based programs for young people and a spokesman for patriotic values.

JR. AUXILIARY GIRLS DESIGN POPPY BONNETS, BAKE COOKIES FOR TROOPS



Gabriella Kelly, left, and Colette Bora model the poppy hats they created while Sara Criscione helps decorate some of the eight dozen cookies that Junior Auxiliary girls baked for

the post's adopted troops in Afghanistan. Colette's bonnet took first place in the poppy usage contest at the county auxiliary meeting April 16. See PAGES 6 & 7.