



**The New Jersey**

# ***SALute***

***The Official Publication of The Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of New Jersey***

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Sons of the American Legion  
Detachment of New Jersey  
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<b>Commander</b>	<b>Henry F. Hasselhan</b>
<b>Vice Commander</b>	<b>Keith Barnes</b>
<b>Vice Commander</b>	<b>Richard Hodum</b>
<b>Vice Commander</b>	<b>Mark Natale</b>
<b>Vice Commander</b>	<b>Steve Sangemino</b>
<b>Vice Commander</b>	<b>Gregory Shaffer</b>
<b>Adjutant</b>	<b>PNVC Thomas Marsden</b>
<b>Finance Officer</b>	<b>PDC C. David Page</b>
<b>Chaplain</b>	<b>PDC Matthew Thalasio</b>
<b>Judge Advocate</b>	<b>PDC John "Jay" Gillman</b>
<b>Historian</b>	<b>PDC Nicholas Wingler</b>
<b>Nat Exec Comm</b>	<b>PDC Len Free</b>
<b>Alt Nat Exec Comm</b>	<b>PDC Robert Phillips Jr</b>
<b>SAL Chairman</b>	<b>Anthony Gladden</b>



***For God and Country***

## ***From the Commander:***

Greetings fellow Sons:

So far it's been a busy year with visiting Posts and Squadrons and their events. I may show up to one of your events unannounced as I do not have all the Squadron Officer reports for the Squadrons across the state.

The Department only received 30 Officer Reports this year so far. This is the only way for us to contact our fellow SAL Brothers to keep them informed of Detachment happenings. These forms must be renewed every year even if officers do not change.

The Detachment is adapting to new concepts. We are striving to mirror the American Legion with the DEC (Detachment Executive Committee).

The Vice Commanders are now assigned Districts that are the same as the American Legion with the Vice Commanders of the Legion and the SAL presenting our goals to the Counties. I, along with the Vice Commanders of the Counties, have been invited to attend Official American Legion County Visits with Commander Dunn to further our programs of the SAL and to promote SAL County organizations. Times are changing and we must change with them or be relegated to a footnote in history.

For God and Country, Henry F. Hasselhan, Commander



## Introducing the Detachment Officers 2021 – 2022

### Elected Officers

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#### Commander

**Henry Hasselhan** Squadron 311 - Camden County

#### Vice Commanders

**Keith Barnes** Squadron 58 - Bergen County, District 1

**Mark Natale** Squadron 338 - Monmouth County, District 2

**Greg Shaffer** Squadron 174 - Passaic County, District 3

**Steve Sangemino** Squadron 105 - Essex County, District 4

**Rich Hodum** Squadron 166 - Ocean County, District 5

#### Finance Officer

**C. David Page** Squadron 455 - Ocean County

#### NEC (2020-2022)

**Lenny Free** Squadron 147 - Bergen County

**Robert Phillips Jr.** Squadron 262 - Camden County

#### Appointed Officers

Adjutant **Thomas E. Marsden** Squadron 348 - Ocean County

Assistant Adjutant (None)

Chaplain **Matthew C. Thalasin** Squadron 232 - Ocean County

Judge Advocate **John "Jay" Gillman** Squadron 370 - Camden County

Historian **Nicholas J. Wingler** Squadron 166 – Ocean County

Sergeant At Arms **Darryl Cunningham** Squadron 58 - Camden County

Assistant Sergeants At Arms **Anthony Liberatore** Squadron 279 – Morris County

Commanders Aide **Henry Hasselhan V** Squadron 311 – Camden County

\*\* NOTE: Additional Assistant Sgt-at-Arms TBD\*\*

*Many thanks to those officers serving two terms, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 due to no elections being held in 2020, as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. On the Detachment, County, and Squadron levels, you served us well and we salute you.*

## New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



(Left Photo) Francis Carrasco, left, Chairman, New Jersey Mission of Honor (NJMOH), and Jerry Skorch, center, Chaplain and Vice Chairman, NJMOH, salute during the 35th NJMOH ceremony at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Wrightstown, N.J., July 28, 2021. The cremains of World War II U.S. Navy veteran Benjamin J. Bryant Jr., World War II U.S. Army veteran Chester Corby, World War II U.S. Navy veteran John Cuttic, World War II and Korean War U.S. Army veteran Zebbie James Jr., World War II U.S. Army veteran Joseph V. Kennelly, Cold War era U.S. Marine Corps veteran Walter W. Locke, and Cold War era U.S. Army veteran Richard Ramsthaller were honored during the ceremony. Some of these cremains had gone unclaimed for as long as 45 years. NJMOH's mission is to identify, retrieve, and inter the cremated remains of veterans forgotten in New Jersey funeral homes. Camden County SAL Commander Myron Jones is at right, Squadron 473.

(Right Photo) U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Matthew S. Mueller, left, presents the American flag to Larry L. Platt, American Legion, Department of New Jersey, during the 35th New Jersey Mission of Honor ceremony at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Wrightstown, N.J., July 28, 2021.

(New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs photos by Mark C. Olsen)

### *A Night at the Blue Claws, Friday July 9:*



Friday, July 9, the State crew attended the "American Legion Night" Blue Claws game. Department Cmdr Daniel Dunn, Dept Pres Jane Babli, and Detachment Cmdr Henry Hasselhan pose with Buster, the Blue Claws mascot.





Commander Henry, Commander Dan, and President Jane throw out the first pitches.



Past and present SAL Detachment Officers: Patrick Gallagher, Bob Bascou, Bob Phillips Jr., Lenny Free, Keith Barnes (in back), Henry Hasselhan, Greg Shaffer, Dave Page, Carl Alber Jr., and Tony Gladden enjoy a night of baseball.



*Proud Possessors...*

*Of a Priceless Heritage...*



Return of New Egypt Squadron 455's Famous Breakfast on Sunday, August 1. Unit 455 President Deb Lasky, Detachment Commander Henry Hasselhan (Henry the 3<sup>rd</sup>), Department President Jane Babli, Department Commander Daniel Dunn, and Post 455 Commander David Snody. In front is the Commander's Aide, Henry Hasselhan (Henry the 5<sup>th</sup>). Photo by Charline Gladden.

***The Emilio Carranza Memorial ceremony:***



The SAL Detachment of NJ attended the annual Emilio Carranza Memorial Ceremony On Sept 10. Pictured are the monument, Commander Henry Hasselhan, Aide Henry 5<sup>th</sup>, and PDC Matt Thalasinis returning from placing a wreath at the monument, all of those who placed wreaths at the site, and the Detachment's wreath pictured at the center. An excellent article on the history of this event can be found at Mount Holly Post 11's website: [www.post11.org](http://www.post11.org).





***Birthday celebration for 100 year old World War Two Veteran Earl Young:***



100th Birthday celebration for Purple Heart recipient Earl Young. Auxiliary President Jane Babli, Commander's Aide Henry Hasselhan V, F.W. Grigg Post 68, and the Camden County American Legion Family, along with the Pitman NJ Police and Fire Departments. Earl is the oldest living retired Pitman Police Officer. HAPPY BIRTHDAY EARL YOUNG!



## SCAM ALERT

We have received a few phone calls from members who have been in contact with a gentleman by the name of Billy Newman. This guy is fishing for information and tells them he is a member of The American Legion. Some have talked to him about purchasing a life membership and is trying to get them to provide their bank account information. On one of them, he has a phone number and the caller ID comes up unavailable. The phone number that was given to me about this is 317-967-6675. I called the number and the voicemail message says he is Billy Newman with The American Legion.

An investigation has been opened and below are the case and complaint numbers:

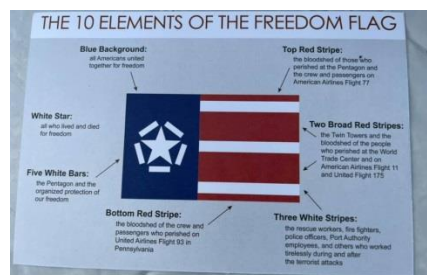
Indiana Attorney General's office – Case#11641793  
Federal Trade Commission – Case#138205801  
Federal Communications Commission – Case#4946314

If you hear from others who have fallen for this scam, please send it to me. I have a file started on this and want to keep records on it. Also, if you do talk to them, ask them how this Billy Newman contacted them. – what initiated the call? Was a fishing scam? Were they trying to get a hold of someone at the National Headquarters?

Ken A. George, National SAL and ALR Liaison  
[kgeorge@legion.org](mailto:kgeorge@legion.org) Call or text: 317-630-1376



September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial Ceremony at Neptune Post 346. Post, SAL, and Unit took part, along with aerial ladder truck from Ocean Grove's FD displaying the new Freedom Flag.





## *At Belleville Post 105:*

*“What we honor is a reflection of what we value.”*

On Sunday 9-Aug-2021, Belleville Post 105 dedicated two monuments, as well as the new John X. Bezerra Patio. The two monuments in front on Washington Ave were done by Mike Perrone and donated by the Belleville Historical Society, in honor of the Military Order of the Purple Hearts Chapter 366 and SAL Squadron 105. They also unveiled a plaque dedicating the patio in Legionnaire John X. Bezerra's name. With probably around 200 people present, they were absolutely stunned by the turnout. Thanks to all of the members of the 105 family, Mike Perrone, Mayor Melham and his council, and members of the SAL Detachment of NJ for supporting the 105.



**Honoring SAL Sq 105 and Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 366.**

**Plaque honoring John X. Bezerra.**



**Post 105 Cmdr Joe Cobiانchi, Detachment VCs Greg Shaffer & Mark Natale, PDC Carl Alber, SALute Editor Gary Crawford.**



**Dual member Ed Hall and Essex DEC Rusty Myers handled the hamburgers, hot dogs, and sausage.**



**Commanders Steve Sangemino and Joe Cobiانchi shake hands as the Legionnaires and Sons gather for the group photo. (Photos by Belleville's Lauman Goon)**





Post 105 Commander Joe reads the dedication.



Just some of the crowd on hand.

*Editor's note:* I was pleased to be able to attend this great event. I finally had the chance to meet, in person, so many I had only known through pictures, Facebook pages, emails, and Zoom meetings. Nice to meet you guys!

### *At Stone Harbor Post 331:*



Stephen C. Ludlam Post 331 of Stone Harbor celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 7-August at their Post home, a former lifesaving station 126 years old, dating from 1895. The station itself dates to 1854 as the Tatham Life Saving Station.

Post Commander Thomas P. McCullough says a few words. Seated L to R: CMC Commission Director Gerald Thornton, CMC Commissioner Brigadier General Jeffrey Pierson (Retired), Avalon Council President Barbara Juzaitis, Stone Harbor Mayor Judith Davies-Dunhour, Post Chaplain Fr. James Betz, SAL 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander John Tracy, Post 331 Member Robert Rullo.

Some great history here. Check out their website: <https://stephencludlampost331.org/>

*At New Egypt Post 455:*

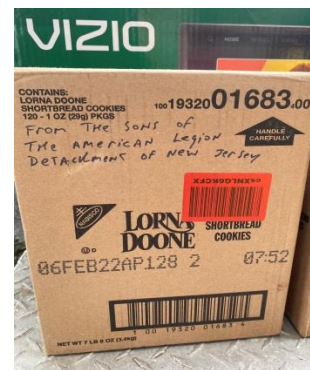


Two great years! Congrats and ***Thank You*** to PDP Ruby Cramer and PDC Matt Thalasinis, Aug 14<sup>th</sup> at New Egypt Post 455's Summer Bash and the commemorative cake. Photos by Shirley M. Beck.

*Visits to VA Hospitals:*



Commander Henry at work on Aug 13. Delivering TVs to Veterans at Menlo Park VA Hospital, and electric razors to Veterans at Paramus VA Hospital, assisted by PDC Patrick Gallagher, who took the photos.



Five TVs and lots of cookies for Vineland, Aug 20.

From the SAL, Detachment of NJ



***At the Atlantic City Stand Down:***



SAL Cmdr Henry Hasselhan, Department Cmdr Dan Dunn, Ms. Universe, and DVC Jack Dunne at the Atlantic City Regional Stand Down tent at the AC Air Show on August 18. Henry is caught “pinning” Ms. Universe. Many are curious how Ms. Universe managed to infiltrate Miss America’s “turf”.



**New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**

The NJDMAVA Veteran Outreach Campaign was at the Point Pleasant Boardwalk August 13. In the first photo, Army Vietnam Veteran John Cassetta, facing camera, talks with Brick veteran service office secretary Kelly Fonville. In the second photo, veteran service officer Joe Nyzio answered questions about veterans benefits. If you are a New Jersey Veteran and want to know what Veterans benefits are available to you, contact your county veteran service office by following this link: <https://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/services/vso/> (NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs photos by Chuck Robbins).





*National Convention Highlights, Phoenix AZ, Aug 27-28-29.*



(Left) Sons of the American Legion National Commander Michael C. Fox, 2021-2022.

(Right) New Jersey's own Gary Nelson, National Vice Commander of the East, presents CWF Certificate for highest per capita per Detachment to John Waite, NEC of the Detachment of Vermont.



(Left) The American Legion Post 124 (Westfield, Massachusetts) Honor Guard under inspection. Post 124 Honor Guard was the first to have representation from each member of The American Legion Family: The American Legion, The Sons of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, and The American Legion Riders. Representing the SAL was Joseph Delaney, Vice Commander of Westfield Squadron 124. Their Honor Guard won two awards. (Right) Some of those attending the Phoenix Convention, with New Jersey well-represented.

## *On The Homefront:*



A family affair. *SALute* editor Gary Crawford with SAL grandsons Murphy (in red) and James. New rope for the flagpole and thirteen flags for those lost in Afghanistan. All members of Neptune Sq. 346.





***More Belleville Post and Squadron 105 Goings-On:***



Belleville Post and Squadron 105's annual picnic. Over 300 attended the sold-out affair.  
(Below left) Everyone was invited. (Right) DEC Rusty Myers and crew, all members of 105 Family.





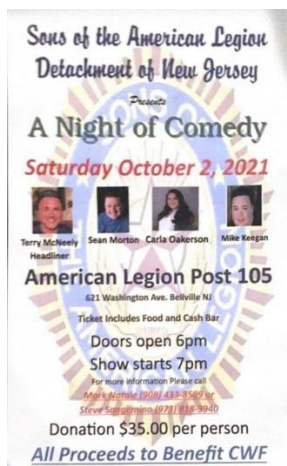
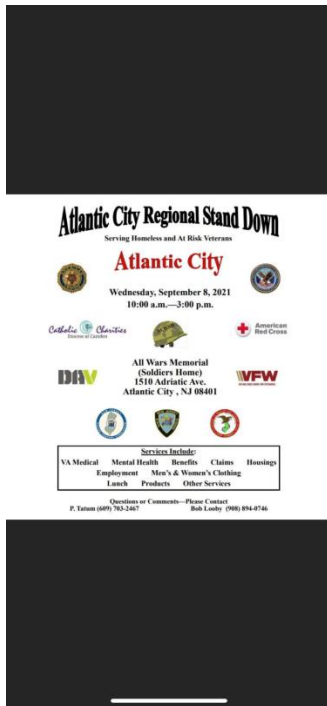
***POW / MIA Ceremony at Gen. Doyle Cemetery:***



On October 2, New Jersey's Legion Family met at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery to honor POWs and MIAs. (Left) Chairperson Lisa Natale (Unit 338) addresses the audience. (Right) LtoR: SAL Chairman Tony Gladden, DVC Mark Natale, PDC Mike Arner, and PDC Carl Albern attend the ceremony.



**Recent, Upcoming, and Ongoing Events. Support your local Post / Squadron / Auxiliary**



**Correction:** In the last issue of the SALute, in the photo of the Flag Retirement at Neptune Post 346, Vice Commander Heath Bertini was incorrectly identified as Heath Ledger. (He doesn't mind the fan mail, tho.)

## ***THE MOUNT HOOD STORY – A FAMILY CONNECTION***

By Gary S. Crawford, SALute Editor



The AE-11 USS Mount Hood in service.



The explosion reached 7,000 feet into the sky.

Practically every family in New Jersey was affected by World War Two. Whether family members were on the homefront or overseas serving in some fashion, while others kept the home fires burning, everyone did his or her part. My grandfather, a civilian MP at Sandy Hook, brought home British sailors assigned to the Berkeley-Carteret Hotel in Asbury Park to the family house in Belmar for home-cooked meals and a little family-style time, as many other local civilians did. My grandmother kept a scrapbook of local GIs featured in the local papers, (a copy now on file at the Belmar Historical Society) including such young men as (later) Congressman James Howard. My mother's cousin, Freddie Abbott, just two months away from graduating high school, heard the call and enlisted in the Navy in April 1944. Freddie's first assignment: AE-11, the USS Mount Hood ammunition ship.

Sailing from Norfolk VA, the ship arrived at Seeadler Harbor, McManus Island, Admiralty Islands in Papua New Guinea on 10-November-1944.

### ***Disaster!***

On 10 November, the ship was lying in Berth 380, in the central part of the harbor near the harbor entrance, instead of being moored well away from the main anchorage. This was done for reasons of convenience, as it afforded calmer water, shortened the boating distances for ammunition transfer, and allowed cruisers to come directly alongside her for munitioning. She was loaded with an assortment of munitions, including 100lb. and 250lb. bombs; 5in., 6in., 8in., and 14in. shells and powder charges; .30 cal., .50 cal., and 20mm machine-gun projectiles; aerial depth charges; and rocket projectiles and mortars. In all, these comprised approximately 3,800 tons of ammunition.

The ship was surrounded by small craft, including several medium-sized LCM landing craft. All five of her hatches were open, and 500lb. bombs were being loaded into #3 Hold.

At 0830 on 10 November 1944, a party consisting of Communications Officer Lt. Lester H. Wallace and 17 men left the ship and headed for shore to collect the ship's mail. At 0855, while this party was walking on the beach, the explosion occurred. Even at a distance of 4600 yards from the ship, the force of the explosion knocked Wallace and most of his men from their feet. Scrambling back into their boat, they headed back to the ship, only to turn around again shortly thereafter as "There was nothing but debris all around..."

*Mount Hood* had been anchored in about 114 feet of water. The initial explosion caused flame and smoke to shoot up from amidships to more than masthead height. Within seconds, the bulk of her cargo detonated with a more intense explosion. Mushrooming smoke rose to 7,000 feet, obscuring the ship and the surrounding area for a radius of approximately 500 yd. *Mount Hood's* former position was revealed by a trench in the ocean floor 300 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 30–40 feet deep. The largest remaining piece of the hull was found in the trench and measured no bigger than 16 by 10 ft. No other remains of *Mount Hood* were found except fragments of metal which had struck other ships in the harbor and a few tattered pages of a signal notebook found floating in the water several hundred yards away.

No human remains were recovered of the 350 men aboard *Mount Hood* or small boats loading alongside at the time of the explosion. The only survivors from the *Mount Hood* crew were Lt. Wallace and the 17 enlisted men who had left the ship a



short time before the explosion. Two of the crew were being transferred to the base brig for trial by court martial; the remainder of the party were visiting the base chaplain or picking up mail at the base post office. Charges against the prisoners were dropped following the explosion.

The concussion and metal fragments hurled from the ship caused casualties and damage to other ships and small craft within 2,000 yards. The repair ship *Mindanao* which was broadside-on to the blast, was the most seriously damaged. All personnel topside on *Mindanao* were killed outright (including a crewman from *Mount Hood* who had been working on *Mindanao* at the time of the explosion—he was the only one of *Mount Hood*'s deceased crew members who was positively identified.) Dozens more men were killed or wounded below decks as numerous heavy fragments from *Mount Hood* penetrated the side plating. Eighty-two of *Mindanao*'s crew died. 22 small boats and landing craft were sunk, destroyed, or damaged beyond repair, while damage to other vessels required more than 100,000 man-hours to repair. 371 sailors from ships in the harbor were injured.

The destruction was so complete that witnesses described the *Mount Hood* as “gone”. Others used the word “vaporized”. Although not occurring during combat, it was said the explosion and its effects were second only to the damage inflicted during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Listed first in the alphabetical listings of casualties, is my second cousin Frederick Abbott.

Excerpts are from this excellent detailed article on the *Mount Hood*. The whole history can be found at:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Mount\\_Hood\\_\(AE-11\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Mount_Hood_(AE-11))

The History Guy has a good video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMGog4QJsls>.

For those generous enough to contribute to the **SALute**, please text or email me your pictures and information. Anything posted on Facebook tends to become buried or disappears before I can get to it. Email is best: [njSALute@gmail.com](mailto:njSALute@gmail.com).

As always, let us know what is going on. Your events, reopening after the pandemic, elections and installations, anything you wish to have known, please keep sending them in. If sending group photos, PLEASE list who the people are. The editor does know a lot of the Legion Family members, but certainly not all of them. Check spelling of names as well.

You might have noticed that the **SALute** has increased in size, from what was once a mere four pages to issues now with pages in the teens. That's because of submissions to the newsletter, what you have been sending in. Keep it up! And thank you!

Contributors to this edition of the **SALute**:

Detachment Commander Henry F. Hasselhan, Atco Sq. 311.  
PDC Matthew Thalasinis Barnegat Sq. 232.  
PDC Patrick Gallagher, Neptune Sq. 346.  
PDP Doreen Gallagher, Neptune Unit 346.  
PDC Carl Alber Jr., Neptune Sq. 346.  
PNVC Thomas Marsden, Brick Sq. 348.  
DVC Mark Natale, Leonardo Sq. 338.  
DVC Greg Shaffer, Wayne Sq. 174.

DEC Rusty Myers, Belleville Sq. 105.  
1stDVP Colleen Breen-Lopez, Totowa Unit 227.  
Historian Gary Cooper, Am. Legion Dept. of NJ.  
Mount Holly Post and Sq. 11.  
Toms River Post and Sq. 129.  
Stone Harbor Post and Sq. 331.  
New Egypt Post and Sq. 455.  
ALA Dept. of NJ.

Thank you all for your contributions! We actually had too much to share in this issue. More will follow in the next issue. But keep on sending in your information. Let us know what's going on at your Squadron. We won't know if you don't tell us.