January - March 2016 Newsletter

Post 124 Monthly Meeting, the first Monday of each month at 7 P.M.

Commander: Mo Spradlin, SVC: Cindy Lacoste, JVC: Martin Christian, Adjutant: Jim Fahey, Finance Officer: Tom Pitoniak, Chaplain: Paul Nimchick Jr., Sergeant-at-Arms: Joe Delaney, Historian: Vacant

US Army US Navy USMC

USAF Coast Guard Merchant Marine

Commander's Message

This is my third newsletter, and in this newsletter I would like to talk about the brotherhood we are members of. I'm referring to our military service that we once did or that some are still doing. The definition of brotherhood as defined by Webster's is ": The quality or state of being brothers: fellowship alliance". This is also what we as Legionnaires have in common as an organization. "From this day till the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered-we lucky few, we band of brothers. For he who today sheds his blood with me shall be my brother." (William Shakespeare Henry V) I do not see the little brick building next to the Fire station as a bar, I see it as a band of brothers who because of what they have endured in life are so good at giving back to the community.

I would like to have our membership to become more involved with the community of Westfield. I need brothers and sisters to be able to attain this goal. We started out this year and appointed an Americanism Committee Chairman (Past Commander Gene Theroux) who is responsible for engaging in the community and with the judgment he has, will establish according to American Legion's Four Pillars local programs that we can implement and support in the community. This will include the many programs that have established from the last 97 years of service that Post 124 has been an active participant. I want to expand and initiate some new programs for us to embark on that will help our Veterans in our community, Children & Youth, Americanism and National Defense as well. In February we approved a donation to Boy Scout troop 821 for a $150 for a new tent and in the same month we also approved $400 to Wright Flight program to support one student to attend. These two donations are new ones we wanted to help out in the community and assist our youth to become good citizens. Earlier in the month, the SAL monthly meeting, they voted to donate $ 150 to purchase a tent for Troop 821 and to donate and support the Western Mass Wright Flight Aviation STEM program.

As many of you know I am currently at home convalescing from the recent surgery I had on March 15, 2015. The total hip replacement was a success. I will be home bound for a little while but I do plan on being to attend to Legion business. I would like to say thank you to all that have offered assistance in any way. It is nice to know that I have a "Band of Brothers" that are willing to help me. As a matter of fact PC Todd Gannon stopped by the other night with a care package of food which did go to good use. I also had a visit from Legion member Tom Johnson who stopped by to talk for a while with me. Post Service Officer Al Szenda brought me a card signed by many of you and I appreciate that. I will no longer be Forrest Gimp. Thank You All.

In closing I would like to touch on some of the upcoming events we need to promote, to support, and to participate. The Memorial Day school visits to each of the elementary and middle schools is a critical Americanism event. If we do not go to the schools and tell our stories we shall not be remembered. That would be shameful on our part because our first duty is to remember. If you want to be involved you do not have to have a uniform, just show up and see how it works. You will be impressed what the kids do for us. A schedule for the school visits is on page 6. The Memorial Day Parade and festivities at the post is one we need to have a good turn out as usual. We also have the Post 124 Golf Outing on June 12th that we need to promote, this is our major fundraiser to help fund our Americanism and Youth programs. We need your golf participation or donation to help this event to be successful. We're off to a good start but as always we need to strive for constant improvement.

Committees

American Legion Post 124 has several committee's and we do not have sufficient members to fully support them. If anybody would like to be part of any of the Post 124 numerous committee's and to contribute, please contact me. I sent this out in the last newsletter and I did not get any feedback. Please someone volunteer to help, we could use some help.

Receive YOUR Newsletter via email

In order to cut down on how many hard copies we send I would like the membership who can receive the newsletter by email to start receiving them this way. Once you decide to get the newsletter via email we will not send a hard copy.

Just email to: info@post124.org Use "Add me to the email list" in the 'Subject line and give us your name, email address, phone number and branch of service. We're trying to make YOUR Post the place you want to be!

Membership News

Presently, Post 124 has 584 members that have either joined or renewed their memberships for 2016. This is 104% of our goal to reach 100% membership of 563. If you have not renewed and paid your dues, please submit your 2016 membership renewal as soon as possible. Regular $35.00 Over 50 years membership $28.50 new or transfers $28.50 If you have not received your new card, leave a note for Membership Chairman Dana Bein. A very heartfelt congratulations goes out to our members, as we successfully completed a 100% membership drive of our Legion Members early in February. We are at 104% Members paid for 2016 for the Legion. Further congratulations to the Sons of the American Legion (168%) and the American Legion Auxiliary which both have reached their goal of 100% membership this year as well. We should receive an award from Department because our whole family has achieved their 100% membership. Congratulations to everyone in helping to make this happen. Let's make this a yearly tradition.

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE GOING UP TO $42.00 PER YEAR, OVER 50 YEARS MEMBERSHIP AND NEW OR TRANSFER TO $28.50 STARTING JULY 2016 TO OFFSET NATIONAL AND DEPARTMENT INCREASES

Update of Past Events

January15th - Captain Billy's fish fry was a success with over $900 raised for the Post Scholarship Fund
January 17th - District 3 meeting convened at Post 124's First Commander Stanley Kellogg Smith Hall
January 19th - Casino night at the Soldier's Home in Holyoke. Thanks to PC George Fahey and those who attended.
February 20th - American Legion training was held at the Post 124 124 First Commander Stanley Kellogg Smith Hall: 10:00 several officer's and members of Post 124 Family attended and it was a good training session
February 27th - the annual Chot Baginski Ice Fishing Outing. Due to unusual weather, we were not able to get out on the lake due to the ice conditions, but all had a good time and by the way raised $910 for the Holyoke Soldiers Home. Special thanks to Sal Squadron 124 for putting this event on a superior effort by SAL member Alex Baginski and Auxiliary member Michelle Rozanski for helping to make this a success
March 4th & 5th - h 69th annual March of Dimes Benefit, the Post 124 Family raised $1600 from this event
March 11th - Captain Billy's fish fry was a success over $900 was raised for the Post Scholarship Committee
March 19th - a night of entertainment with Boot Hill band 2nd floor was a success and $505 was raised for the foxhole a special thanks to Auxiliary member Michelle Rozanski
March 20th - Holyoke St Patrick's Day Parade Post 124 Family represented the City of Westfield and Sergeant-at-Arms Joe Delaney and the Honor guard are commended for their performance; PC Butch Rines also had corned beef sandwiches for all the marchers when they returned
March 19th & 20th - The Easter Bunny went on his annual tour. This tradition was started by PC Jack Ashe. Thanks to SVC Cindy Lacoste, Chaplain Paul Nimchick Legion member Don Weilgus & his wife Sharon. The Easter Bunny visited several of the local Senior Retirement communities along with going to the Soldiers Home in Holyoke.

Captain Bill's Fish Fry

2016 Squadron 124 Ice Fishing Outing

Chaplain, SVC, PC Harvey Buckland & Bunny

Post 124 receives a Plague from March of Dimes

Mike, Bob, Sandy, Bonnie, Paul and Ed preparing to serve desert

N.H.S. volunteers Casey Rutledge, Paige Neylon, Sarah Farnham, Eileen Fitzgerald & Daniel O'Conner

March of Dime Division Director Stephen Sycks receives a check from the proceeds of the 69th Annual March of Dimes Spaghetti Dinner

SVC Cindy Lacoste leads the Post 124 contingent at the Holyoke Saint Patrick's Day Parade

The Honorable Mike Knapik, Representative John Velis and Senator Humason all sponsored citizens to the 2016 Boys/Girls State Program

The 69th Annual March of Dimes Spaghetti Dinner was very successful this year. Guests included Mayor Brian Sullivan, Representative John Velis, Massachusetts Director Edward J. Doherty, Regional Director Stephen Sycks March of Dimes and a large member turnout both nights. SVC Lacoste sent out thank you letters to each of the donors noting that their contributions were greatly appreciated and helped to make this another successful fundraiser, raising $1,600. I would like to thank all the Post 124 family officers and members who made this a success. I would like to mention PC Mike Mysterka who did an outstanding job in the food preparation as it might be his last one. Next year, he will just oversee the preparation process. I had the honor to help him in the preparation and I will cherish that memory. SVC Cindy Lacoste, JVC Marty Christian, and Sergeant-at-Arms Joe Delaney, Chaplain Paul Nimchick and Al Szenda deserve special recognition for what they did. Also the SAL and Auxiliary members who helped out, thank you all.

Donors to the March of Dimes Fundraiser

YMCA	Michelle Rozanski	Shortstop Bar & Grill	Pepperidge Farms
Phipps Liquors	Firtion-Adams	Bobby V's	Cal's Wood Fired Grill
Westwood Restaurant	Chili's	Granby Package Store	Joan Hulse
Applebee's	Cutting Edge Salon	William Spradlin	Terry Voudren
Aura Nails & Spa	Totally You Hair	B'Sharas	Toni & Joe Hibert
Emma's	Michelle Rozanski		

A special thank you to our servers from the Westfield High School and St. Mary's High School National Honor Societies. The following students did a marvelous job providing commendable customer service:

Friday, March 4th:
WHS: Liz Poteat, Kellsey Johnstone, Sarah Farnham, Gabbi Lunardini, Libby Irwin, Daniel O'Connor, Kristin Heideman, Noah Kappel, Sara Chlastawa
St. Mary's: Johnathan Spear, Matt Wurster, Kyle Koloski, Bobby Gonet, Remmy Govermont

Saturday, March 5th:
WHS: Sarah Farnham, Daniel O'Connor, Eileen Fitzgerald, Bandana Acharya, Paige Neylon
St. Mary's: Danielle Bovat, Casey Rutledge, Caitlin Olearcek

Walter J. Zarichak Legislator of the Year Award

At the Hampden County Council District 3 2016 Banquet held at the Charles C. Kennedy Post 275 on March 12, 2016, State Representative John C. Velis of Westfield was honored with the Walter J. Zarichak Legislator of the Year Award. Rep Velis is currently our Judge Advocate at Post 124, a Captain in the U.S. Army Reserve and recipient of the Bronze Star, and serving as Westfield's State Representative. He was recognized for his work in the legislature on bills that are of interest to veterans. Among them is the Stolen Valor Act that the Governor signed into law in November 2015. This statute makes it a crime for a person to falsely claim that they are in the military or a veteran with the intent to obtain money, property or another tangible benefit. The misdemeanor is punishable by a $1,000 fine, a year in the house of corrections, or both. Other legislative bills he supported were proposals to provide tuition and fee waivers for children of vets killed in combat, as well as relief from tolls and free use of the PVTA by veterans. He is also a staunch support of the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and is opposed to further legislation limiting the rights of law-abiding citizens. Let us all send out a thank you and congratulations to State Representative John Velis on a job well done. Photo: John Velis receives the Walter J. Zarichak Representative of the year award from Massachusetts Department Commander Louie Brault and Massachusetts District 3 Commander Jodie Pajak. John is also Post 124 Judge Advocate General.

Upcoming Events –
April 16th – Westfield Little League Parade, South Middle School, 9:30 AM
April 16th – Amelia Park Sled Hockey Color Guard, 11:30 AM
April 16th – Patriots Day Celebration, Parker Memorial Park, 1:00 PM
April 19th – Casino Night, Holyoke Soldiers' Home, 6:30 PM
April 23rd – March for Babies, Stanley Park, 8:00 AM
May 2th – Monthly Post Meeting, 7:00 pm, 2nd Floor
May 7th - House Committee Post Spring Cleanup Sign up will be at Post, May 14th will be the rain date
May 21st – Memorial Day Flag Detail, 8:00 AM Saint Mary's Cemetery
May 22-29 – Memorial Day Poppy Drive, Sign-up at the Post
May 28th – Stanley Park Ceremony, 10:00 AM
May 28th – Dedication of John Hussey Memorial Park, 1:00 PM
May 29th – St. Joseph's Church, Rifle Detail, 10:00 AM
May 29th – Blessed Sacrament Church, Rifle Detail, 11:00 AM
May 30th – Memorial Day Parade, Stanley Park (step off 10:00 AM) 11:00 AM, Parker Memorial Park
June 2nd thru 5th – Department Convention, Plymouth, MA
June 6th – Monthly Post Meeting
June 12th – Annual Legion Golf Outing – Tekoa Country Club

The Mitchell Family, an American Legion Post 124 Family

It's been just three years since, the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124 and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 124 had their charters activated and the American Legion Post 124 became an American Legion Family.
In these last three years, a number of Legionnaire's family members have become members of the Auxiliary, the Sons, or in some instances, such as the Mitchell family, they have representation in all three organizations and we're fortunate to have them within the American Legion Post 124 family.

We thought we would begin highlighting some of our Legion families that do so much for our Post 124 family and in the community. Teresa and Joseph Mitchell family: Both Joe and Teresa are U.S. Air Force veterans and served during the first Iraq war. Teresa is a Pediatrician and was in the Medical Corps in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations and she was assigned to a field hospital in Northern Iraq just after the war ended. She was part of a team providing medical care to the Kurds who were slowly coming down from the mountains after Saddam attacked them in the north and drove them out of the cities. Joe was a USAF Instructor Weapons System Officer, he accumulated over 1,400 hours of fighter time in the F-111F and F-15E to include over 250 hours of combat in the Persian Gulf and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Joe earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for "***Heroism while engaged in aerial flight***" on February 2, 1991 over the heavily defended skies of Kuwait City, Kuwait.

Joe had been a Boy Scout as a youth and he believes very strongly in the program. He has been involved with the program for the past 13 years and is still active in Scouting today. He has served as Cubmaster of Pack 108 out of Munger Hill Elementary School for 8 years. He has also served Boy Scout Troop 821 out of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament as an Assistant Scoutmaster for 5 years and as Scoutmaster for 3 years.

Teresa and Joe Mitchell have three children, two sons, Brian and Sean: a daughter Natalie who is a member of the Class of 2016 at Westfield High School and she will be attending Clark University in the fall. Natalie is a junior member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 124. Brian is a sophomore at Worcester Polytechnic Institute where he is majoring in Electrical & Computer Engineering. Brian is a member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124. Sean is a member of WHS class of 2018, is very active in academics and sports and is a member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124.

Left to right: Sean (16), Teresa, Natalie (18), Brian (20) and Joe

We're indeed fortunate to have the Mitchell family residing in our community and active members of the American Legion Post 124 family.

2016 Post 124 Golf Tournament Scheduled

The 2016 Legion Golf Tournament has been scheduled for June 12, 2016 at Tekoa Country Club with an 8 A.M. shotgun start. We're working hard to make this the most enjoyable and fun tournament ever. The net proceeds from the golf tournament will help to fund some of our Americanism and Children & Youth programs. For example, in 2015, the first annual Coach Emmett F. Morrill Post 124 baseball scholarship was awarded from the proceeds of this tournament. For 2016, we're looking to have corporate and private sponsors of the tournament so that we may raise more to support the Post scholarships, the Boys and Girls Club of Westfield, the Western Massachusetts Wright Flight STEM program sponsored by the Barnes Airport Support Group, Boys & Girls State citizen tuition, support to our co-sponsored Boy Scout Troop 821, implementation of the American Legion School Medals Program amongst the public and private schools in the City of Westfield to name just a few. Additional information available on the 2016 Golf Outing is available on the Post 124 website: http://post124.org/index.php?id=98

Youth Alumni Night - Post 124 Baseball

The Post 124 Baseball Committee has begun preparing for the 2016 season. We're preparing to have 2016 be a memorable experience for both our players and our fans. We will be recognizing Youth Alumni of Post 124 Youth Programs such as Baseball, Boys State, Girls State and Student Trooper on June 29, 2016 at a home game at Bullens Field beginning at 6:30 P.M. Among those to be honored are Mayor Brian Sullivan and Dan Genovese who played Legion baseball; the Honorable Michael R. Knapik and Devon Kurtz for Boys State. Additional information on the Youth Alumni Night is available on the Post 124 website: http://post124.org/index.php?id=96 A special thanks to our players, parents, coaches, the many volunteers, fans, and sponsors who have helped to support the Westfield Post 124 baseball program.

The 2nd annual Coach Emmet F. Morrill Post 124 baseball scholarship will be awarded to a Post 124 player before the end of the 2016 baseball season.

The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124 Commander's Message

The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124 has been making significant strides forward in supporting the American Legion's Four Pillars of Service. If I were to take a moment to stop, to relax, and to access the achievements of the Sons over the last year – it would simply be astounding! Thanks to each member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron for your support and your continued membership. Your support by membership clearly demonstrates that you indeed "Honor Those Who Serve" and are appreciative of the military service of the parent, grandparent or guardian whose military service to our great country provided you eligibility to become a member of the Sons of the American Legion.

The following are some of the SAL Squadron recent contributions to help to support the Post 124's Four Pillars of Service. The SAL has become a co-sponsor of Boy Scout Troop 821 by donating $ 150 to replace one of their eight well used tents and will purchase the American Legion Citizenship Medals for their Scouts who earn the Eagle Scout merit badge. The American Legion membership has donated to purchase a second tent for the Troop and the troop has two of their eight replaced. The SAL has become a sponsor of the Western Mass Wright Flight Program which is an Aviation Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics educational program conducted by the Barnes Airport Support Group. Benjamin S. Jury, Westfield High School Class of 2016 who is a Wright Flight alumni and alumni of 2015 Boys State has been accepted to the United States Air Force Academy. Congratulations to Ben and for becoming a member of the Sons of the American Legion and we look forward to the day that he becomes a member of American Legion Post 124. Devon Kurtz who attended the 2015 Boys State and is the class of 2016 WHS President has been accepted to Dartmouth College and will begin school on September 12th. The Squadron will be sponsoring four citizens to attend the 2016 Boys State program. I'm happy to report that Post 124 will be sponsoring 18 citizens to attend the 2016 American Legion Department of Massachusetts Boys & Girls State program to be held June 11-17 at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts – the most ever from Westfield. We're especially proud of the alumni of Boys & Girls state for their achievements over these last 71 years, they have been instrumental in the interest and obtaining the financial support of close to $ 5,600 from the Post 124 and donations from the community to pay the tuition for our citizens to attend the 2016 Boys/Girls State program.

The SAL Squadron 124 will be awarding up to two Past Commander Robert W. Myco $ 500 scholarships on Memorial Day. The Squadron recently donated $ 295 to the Boys and Girls Club of Westfield to sponsor two youth to summer camp which includes an annual membership for each camper and one annual membership for a local youth in the community.
Most recently, the Squadron presented a check for $ 910 to the Friends of the Soldiers Home in Holyoke from the proceeds of the Annual Chot Baginski Ice Fishing Outing. This annual event honors the memory of Chot Baginski and his passion for Ice Fishing at Otis Reservoir, Past Commander Walter J. Zarichak and Post 124 member Paul F. Fouche Sr. Thanks to SAL Squadron 124 member Alex Baginski and the many others who helped to make this event an overwhelming success, in spite of no ice fishing. The SAL has contributed to the American Legion charities of Child Welfare Foundation for $ 100.00 and $ 50 to the National Emergency Fund. The Post has received a nice thank you letter from the Baystate Health Foundation for donating $ 250 the Baystate Children's Hospital, a member of the Children's' Miracle Network (the SAL contribution was one third). On Sunday, the 24th of April, the Post 124 Family of Officers will be traveling to the American Legion Department of Massachusetts Combined Banquet to witness and congratulate Westfield's Sam Wisam who was named the 2016 Foreign Born Citizen of the Year.

I'm very grateful to the support of Mayor Brian Sullivan for sponsoring tuition for a youth to attend the Massachusetts Student Trooper program. The Honorable Michael R. Knapik for his support of the Boys/Girls state program and to Senator Don Humason and Representative John Velis. All three provided donations to sponsor citizens for the 2016 program.

As we approach Memorial Day, let us not forget the one million men and women who have died in defense of our nation and to reflect on the true meaning of Memorial Day. Many others have suffered with permanent loss of limb(s) or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Let us remember, that we have military service personnel in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq and in many other parts of the world. The Post 124 places and removes the American flags for our veterans interned at Saint Mary's Cemetery, close to 1300 veterans who we visit twice a year (Memorial Day and Veterans Day). Post 124 graves officer Earl Tripp has scheduled Saturday, 21 May for the placement of flags at Saint Mary's Cemetery – meet at the maintenance garage for 8 A.M. We hope to see you there.

The city of Westfield will be hosting the 2016 Babe Ruth 14 Year Old World Series from 11 August thru 18 August 2018. This is a world class event that that the Westfield Babe Ruth is going to need many volunteers of all ages. Please visit the www.westfieldworldseries.com website and learn more of how you could help.

Many of the achievements of the American Legion Post 124 family or participation in the community are published on the American Legion Post 124 Facebook page. Please follow American Legion Post 124 on Facebook.

Post Everlasting

January 3: James F. O'Rourke, U.S. Navy (Korea)

February 9: Daniel J. "Spin" Mahoney, U.S. Army Air Corp (WWII)

March 28: Russell Lover, U.S. Army (Vietnam)

April 12: Richard Meyer, U.S. Navy (Korea)

April 17: James Markvart, U.S. Air Force (Vietnam)

Chaplains Corner

If anyone knows someone who needs a visit, please contact me or Al Szenda. Call me at 413-221-3292 or email at pnimchickjr@gmail.com. Call Al at 413-454-2727 or email al.szenda@yahoo.com

In order to give a proper farewell to our departed comrades, if you hear that someone has passed away please e-mail me at the e-mail address above. Also include the Sergeant-at-Arms Joe Delaney smsgtjoe@gmail.com. By the time it is in the obituaries sometimes it is the same day as the wake or the day before, if we hear of it at all. We don't want to miss any!

I or someone at the Post lowers the American Legion flag due to half-staff due to a Post 124 member's passing. If you learn of a member's passing, please write the deceased member's name on the Post board, thank you.

Prayer

Almighty GOD, we ask you to speak to the hearts of men, enlighten the mind, soften anger and drive out hatred and revenge. Say the word that can still the storms and grant us a just and lasting peace. AMEN!

Thank You Paul for your ministry and spiritual support to the Post 124 family.

Memorial Day Assemblies - School Visitation Schedule

Friday May, 20th	Franklin Ave	9:30AM
Friday May 20th	Saint Mary's Parish School	1:30PM
Monday May, 23rd	Russell Elementary	9:30AM
Monday May, 23rd	Munger Hill	1:30PM
Tuesday May, 24th	South Middle	9:30AM
Tuesday May, 24th	North Middle	12:30 & 1:30PM
Wednesday May, 25th	Paper Mill	9:30AM
Wednesday May, 25th	Abner Gibbs	1:30PM
Thursday May, 26th	Highland	9:30AM
Thursday May, 26th	Southampton Rd	1:30PM

Let's support our youth and to help shape and mentor America's most important resource to be good citizens. They put a lot of effort into these Memorial Day assemblies – let's show our appreciation by our attendance.

Report from the Americanism Committee Chairman

Foreign Born Citizen of the Year:
Wisam "Sam" Isam of Westfield has been named the 2016 American Legion Department of Massachusetts Foreign Born Citizen of the Year. Sam escaped Iraq in 2008 with his family after his father had been tortured and brutally murdered in Baghdad in 2008. These same terrorists were looking to bring the same outcome to Sam Wisam and the family went on the run to avoid capture. The plight of Sam's family to leave Iraq, were refugees in Turkey and their arrival in Westfield was well chronicled in the Westfield News in the spring of 2015. When Sam first came to Westfield in 2010, he was unable to speak or read one word of English. Sam is a success story that who has worked very hard to assimilate into the American society and to become a citizen of the United States.

Sam works in the city of Westfield public schools as a linguist and tutor and he will travel to one school to another to help students who do not speak English. Sam attends Holyoke Community College as a Criminal Justice Major and has been maintaining a 3.8 GPA. He attended ROTC classes for two years at Westfield State University through HCC's cross enrollment program with WSU. He's looking to transfer to either West Point or to any other university in Washington DC. In pursuit of his goal to obtain a bachelor's degree and to be commissioned with the US Army as a second lieutenant. Sam received his U.S. citizenship on December 2, 2015 in Springfield. He's become active in freemasonry and was recently awarded the Third Degree of Masonry or Master Mason, and he performs a lot of community service through his Masonic Lodge. Without a doubt, Sam is practicing the Masonic Virtues of tolerance, prudence, faith, hope, and charity are not simply spoken words, but these, too, are part of Sam's daily life. Perhaps, immigrants such as Sam Isam were those that during the first American Legion convention in Minneapolis back in 1919 had in mind when they established the American Legion's Americanism Commission. One of the basic ideals established in 1919 was "*Work for the education of immigrants, prospective American citizens and alien residents in the principles of Americanism".* "Without a doubt, Sam is a success story and we're quite proud of his achievements and he is indeed one to be proud to be an American. If you were to encounter Sam Isam in your travels, please stop for a moment and offer him a handshake and to congratulate him for this well-deserved award as well for his engagement to be married.

The American Legion Post 124 family of officers from the Legion, Post Commander Mo Spradlin, the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124 Commander Gene H. Theroux and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 124 President Dawn Monty will be attending the American Legion Department of Massachusetts Combined Banquet on Youth and Americanism on Sunday, April 24, 2016 for the presentation of this prestigious award from the American Legion Department of Massachusetts.

Boy Scouts of America:
The Post 124 and the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 124 have become "co-sponsors" of Boy Scout Troop 821. The Post has not actively sponsored or supported the Boy Scouts for far too many years. It's important to note that the Boy Scouts of America "BSA" was the first national youth activity officially recognized by the American Legion in 1919 at its first national convention. BSA's purpose is a complement to the American Legion's own stated commitment to support the wholesome development of American children. In addition to sponsoring Boy Scout troops across the country at the local level, the Legion annually recognizes an Eagle Scout of the Year with a college scholarship. First Commander Stanley Kellogg Smith was active in Scouting for ten years, first serving on theTekoa District Committee in 1941, Vice President of the Hampden Council, Executive Board and as a Council Member-at-Large in 1950. During the Great War (WW 1), radio transmitters were regulated, and Scouts were called to look for unauthorized units. Scouts were used as message runners, coast watchers, and were to be alert for men who had not reported for duty. Over $352 million of war bonds were sold by Scouts along with $101 million War Saving Stamps. They collected fruit pits to be processed into charcoal for gas masks and inventoried black walnut trees for use as propellers and gun stocks. An interesting bit of trivia – did you know that eleven of the twelve astronauts who stepped on the moon were scouts?

The Boy Scouts and the American Legion have partnered for a full 97 years and with the American Legion Centennial Celebration fast approaching, we wanted to support the Boy Scouts just as our founding fathers of Post 124 had in the first fifty years of our American Legion. Most importantly, we wanted to ensure that our scouts had every opportunity that the American Legion provides, such as being able to nominate for Eagle Scout of the year, for the Troop 821 to be able to attend the American Legion Department of Massachusetts's Boy Scout Camporee if they chose to participate. Both the Legion and the SAL have each donated money to purchase replacement tents. Post 124 Commander Mo Spradlin and SAL Commander Gene Theroux enjoyed their visit with Troop 821 for the tent presentation and look forward to working with Scoutmaster Joe Muto and the troop long into the future. From this date forward, the Post 124 will be presenting the American Legion Citizenship Medals to those Troop 821 scouts as they are awarded the Eagle Scout Merit Badge during the Court of Honor Ceremony. We had the distinct honor to present the first American Legion Citizenship medal to SAL Squadron 124 member and Westfield Post 124 baseball team member Jonathan Huntley. Jonathan will be one of four high school juniors from Westfield High School to attend the 2016 Massachusetts Legion Boys State Program that will be held June 11-17 at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts.

Boys/Girls State:
The Post 124 family was able to sponsor nine citizens for Boys & Girls State for the 2016 program. In addition, the Post

received donations from the Honorable Michael R. Knapik of the Westfield State Foundation (WSKB 89.5 FM), Senator Don Humason, and Representative John Velis for three citizens. There were five sponsors who donated directly to Massachusetts Girls State for Westfield Girls to attend Girls State. There will be ten girls and eight boys attending this year. This is an incredible number from Westfield and we're extremely happy about the number of opportunities that were funded this year. Boys & Girls State is well respected nationwide and it's worth noting some of the alumni from the last year and their achievements: Benjamin S. Jury accepted at the United States Air Force Academy; Devon Kurtz accepted at Dartmouth College and a Samsung Scholar; Amaya Diana who attended Girls State has been accepted at the University of Pennsylvania. Congratulations to Devon and Amaya for being accepted at Ivy League schools and to Ben Jury for being accepted at the United States Air Force Academy. I would be remorse not to mention that Ben Jury is also an alumni of the Western Mass Wright Flight program which Post 124 proudly sponsors. In addition, 2015 Girls States alumni Virginia Svec has been accepted to Smith College and 2015 Boys State alumni Dan Gosselin has been accepted to Bentley University.

School Awards & Medals Program: We're hoping to award our first School Medals to high school graduates this year. This is a volunteer program that the respective school can choose to participate. The school medal is the highest honor awarded to American youth by the American Legion. It is a medal that proclaims to the world that the recipient are the kind of American that we, the Comrades of men and women who gave their lives in battle, believe worthy of such honor. There are six principles upon which these awards are made: 1. Courage, 2. Honor, 3. Leadership, 4. Patriotism, 5. Scholarship and 6. Service.

GOTV:
Get Out the Vote is an important program and with the dismal turn-out at recent elections, we will be placing emphasis to our Post 124 family and in the community. Elections are important to our republic. As citizens of this great nation, it is our duty and responsibility to exercise this right of franchise by casting our ballots on Election Day and to encourage others to do so as well. It was on this premise that The American Legion's "Get Out the Vote" program was initiated shortly after the organization's inception. Today it is as important as it was in elections past. The Legion's "Get Out the Vote" program encourages all Americans to register and vote in all elections. In addition, Legionnaires, posts, districts and departments are encouraged to fully involve themselves in the electoral process by serving as poll volunteers, poll workers and by encouraging and assisting others to register and vote. All Legionnaires are encouraged to renew their commitment for continued service to this country by being politically active as individuals. By working together as an organization we can make a difference by promoting an informed populace, participation in our government, and involvement in its electoral process. We cannot forget that in this country, our government is "of the people, by the people and for the people." It cannot survive as a democratic republic unless the people participate. That is our task. Information on the American Legion GOTV Program can be obtained at: http://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/publications/Get-Out-The-Vote-Brochure.pdf

Community Service:
The Post 124 has a long history and tradition of community service in the Westfield metropolitan area. Our support to the March of Dimes for 69 consecutive years is a fine example of community service. The Post 124 family has expanded its participation and its support in the community over the last two years with its donations and sponsorships to the Boys & Girls Club of Westfield and donations to the Miracle Network member Baystate Children's Hospital. How the Post 124 family could help tremendously this summer is by members volunteering and assisting the Westfield Babe Ruth with the 2016 14 Year-Old Babe Ruth World Series. They're in need of volunteers of all ages are to help, such as Concession stands, souvenir tent, field prep, ticket sales, admission gate, press box, scoreboard operator, game announcers, bat boys & girls, foul ball shaggers, traffic/parking, medical tent, field runners and much, much more. You have the opportunity to help a little or to help a lot. For more info check out their website at www.westfieldworldseries.com

The Legion and the SAL each donate a tent to Boy Scout Troop 821

Congratulating Ben Jury for his acceptance to the U.S. Air Force Academy

THE AMERICAN LEGION
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James Edward Markvart
November 29, 1944 – April 17, 2016

Past Commander Jim Markvart had 48 years of continuous membership with the American Legion. PC Markvart served his country in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam Era; and received an honorable discharge on Oct. 7, 1966. He served the Post as an officer in the positions of Adjutant, Historian, and Commander and was a member of the Sons of the American Legion.

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Graveside services will be held on Sunday (April 24th) 2:00 PM in the Silver Street Cemetery, Silver St., Granville, MA. The Post Honor Guard will be rendering military honors.

Farewell Comrade – Rest in Peace!

For God, Country, State and Community