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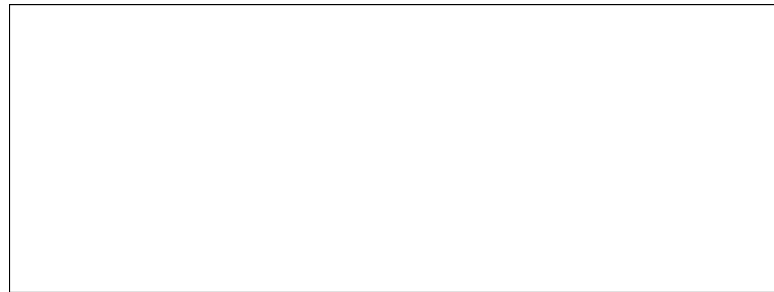
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*The Scoop*



American Legion Post 372, 1532 Martin Ave., Cherry Hill, NJ 08002 856-665-3889



*Welcome to*  
**The American Legion**

April—June 2012

WWW.ALCH372.COM

**COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**



One of the countries I visited while in the Air Force was Japan. We were given an instruction manual to familiarize ourselves with customs, currency and language. I learned how to say hello, goodbye, good morning, how are you, etc. I was particularly proud of a phrase taught me by our Japanese house boy, a prisoner of war, assigned to serve remainder of his sentence at our quarters. Who better to ask how to say "You're nice, I like you very much?" Many years later I was embarrassed to learn from a somewhat flustered Japanese waitress that I was saying "I like you, how much?" However, there is no mistaking the word Sayonara or Goodbye. This will be my final Commander's Message. I have been active for eight years, worked hard, accomplished much but nowhere near what I set out to do. I hope with more free time I can finish what remains to be done at our Post. I cannot do it alone and as Past Commander will look for your continued support. I wish to ex-

press my appreciation for all who have helped me from opening up the canteen wall to present day. The Sons of the American Legion, our Ladies Auxiliary and now our Riders have been and are outstanding. Most of you reading this message have no clue as to the amount of volunteer hours and work by relatively few volunteers that goes into our programs. The Ladies Auxiliary has made a huge difference in meeting the goals of the American Legion. They have stood by their men since 1919. They take care of our active duty personnel and veterans as if they were their very own flesh and blood. The Sons of the American Legion, proud of their heritage, join us to participate in patriotic observances and programs of the community, state and nation. They march and carry our colors and help in any and every way possible for the good of our Legion. Our Post will be very busy the next few months. Some of the scheduled events are as follows. In April we have Flagging of Chapel Avenue Cherry Trees, Post Grounds Spring Cleanup, Boys State Interviews, Girls State Interviews, and Election of Officers. In May we have Boys

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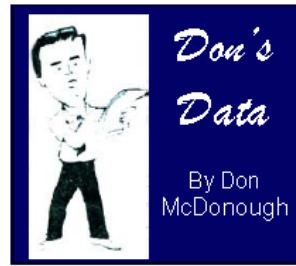
State and Girls State Orientation, Installation of Officers, Flagging of Locustwood Cemetery, Memorial Day Services at Post 372, Locustwood Cemetery, Filipino Monument and the Township of Cherry Hill, with Jewish War Veterans, the Mayor, public officials and honored guests. In June we host the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Parade at Locustwood, Boys State week at Rider University, Girls State week at Georgian Court University and the Statewide Convention will be held in Wildwood, New Jersey followed by the Erlton Civic Association 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.. There may be changes so check our calendar, website, bulletin board or call one of our officers. Once again thank you and remember to pray for the safe return of all our military family.

For God & Country,  
Ernest G. Brosh  
Commander

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Don's Data

By Don McDonough

**“Don’s Data”** post column on a regular basis.....Welcome to this space, where we hope to keep you updated on achievements, current rumors, interesting speculation, spice and salacious gossip about members that we hope won’t offend you....With April and May creating the Spring to Summer delightful transition the season will be highlighted with fresh vinyl siding and a flashy new Post #372 display sign on the Marlboro side of our building. Sign courtesy of **Adjutant Russ Smith’s** family connections... Another house surprise: Two brilliant new 52- inch Samsung TV’s adorning the already upgraded, clubby, Canteen walls. Thanks to **SALS Gary Gottron, Rob and Jim Arcinese and Tim Viguers** for the heavy lifting...Legion Post officials have already met and traded ideas with new Cherry Hill Township **Mayor Chuck Cahn** and early reports indicate strong support for future Post programs from the Mayor and his staff. Our hat’s off also to the Mayor’s Press secretary, **Jason Springer** and with their help we’re off to a good start...**Jim Gallagher**, longtime Post officer and director and a strong helping hand with various Legion duties, received his 50-year-pin to great applause at the Post General Meeting last month...They’re still talking up new Post Chef, **Donna Lis** fabulous Chili. Try some, it’ll energize you...SAL pal, **Fran Keashen**,

We return to these pages after a three year sabbatical to recreate **“Don’s Data”** post column on a regular basis.....Welcome to this space, where we hope to keep you updated on achievements, current rumors, interesting speculation, spice and salacious gossip about members that we hope won’t offend you....With April and May creating the Spring to Summer delightful transition the season will be highlighted with fresh vinyl siding and a flashy new Post #372 display sign on the Marlboro side of our building. Sign courtesy of **Adjutant Russ Smith’s** family connections... Another house surprise: Two brilliant new 52- inch Samsung TV’s adorning the already upgraded, clubby, Canteen walls. Thanks to **SALS Gary Gottron, Rob and Jim Arcinese and Tim Viguers** for the heavy lifting...Legion Post officials have already met and traded ideas with new Cherry Hill Township **Mayor Chuck Cahn** and early reports indicate strong support for future Post programs from the Mayor and his staff. Our hat’s off also to the Mayor’s Press secretary, **Jason Springer** and with their help we’re off to a good start...**Jim Gallagher**, longtime Post officer and director and a strong helping hand with various Legion duties, received his 50-year-pin to great applause at the Post General Meeting last month...They’re still talking up new Post Chef, **Donna Lis** fabulous Chili. Try some, it’ll energize you...SAL pal, **Fran Keashen**,

spending some delightful time in Florida visiting Post Public Relations Director, **Wes Barnett**. Both reported watching **Phillies** Spring Training action, bass fishing and hitting the Legion and VFW posts in the region... Another Post Treasure is entertainer **Brian Napier** who continues to fascinate us with his delightful voice, his stories and his warm feelings for our Post and its members. Try and catch his regular Legion visit and singing performance on the first Friday in April ...Know a fellow Veteran that’s down and out? The **Camden Archdiocese** is lending a helping hand with a new program called **“Ready, Vet, Go...”** It assists in obtaining low-rent housing transition for area Vets. For information, Contact: **Brandon Gery** at 856-701-7633 or Sharon Miller at 856-701-5777...Need a ride to Philly’s **VA Hospital** for any health disorder or treatment? If so, contact Post Service Officer **Bill Coneby** or contact the **Camden County Veterans Service Offices** in Magnolia at 856-566-7297 for details ... Post Commander **Ernie Brosh** still has a lengthy bucket list of unfinished improvements he wants to make within the Post. With his tenacity and steady hand look for: New lighting along the **Wall of Honor**; Scale-models of the **U-2, B-17 and B-29 planes** to hang over the center bar area and new ideas sure to surprise Post members ...**SCOOP** key-grip and E-Board Member, **Charlie Alberti**, returned looking well-rested and healthy after a hospital spell last month...On the hori-




**Post Flag to Fly In Honor of...**

April—COOPER, ROBERT D  
 May—HUSNI, EDWARD A  
 June—FERRARO, NICOLA B

Scoop readers...Hats off to **Carol and Ron Colucci** for their noble efforts in returning a lost dog tag to a Florida Vietnam veteran. Assisting in the efforts were **Sue Quinn Morris** who worked with **NJ State Sen. James Beach** in locating the Florida vet tag owner and Post PR whiz **Wes Barnett** who coordinated the dog tag’s return in Florida ceremonies—attended by Carol, Ron and Wes at the VFW Post 3349 in Palatka, Florida

**MESSAGE FROM THE SAL COMMANDER**



At the March 21 SAL meeting we had our first round of nominations for SAL Officers. April 18 meeting, there we will conduct a final round of nominations followed by the election for the 2012-2013 Officers. I invite all Sons to come out and vote. Even better, run for an office, we can use some new blood and new ideas.

For God and Country  
 Gary Gottron

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MANY EVENTS COME UP AT THE LAST MINUTE, or before the next publication of the SCOOP comes out. We encourage everyone to join up on the American Legion Post 372 Email List so that you receive late breaking news and reminders of events. To sign up on the Email List, go to [www.alch372.com](http://www.alch372.com)

[www.alch372.com](http://www.alch372.com)



# Welcome Home for 119th CBS at the Cherry Hill Armory

Our Legion was contacted by the Cherry Hill Armory to assist in welcoming home 25 soldiers from the 119th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion that were coming home from Afghanistan in January.

Members of our Legion rallied together to flag the grounds of the Cherry Hill Armory and donated food for the awaiting family and friends.

Our friends of the Nam Knights provided

a motorcycle escort for the busload of soldiers from Rt 70 to the Cherry Hill Armory where they were welcomed in rock star fashion.

Cherry Hill Mayor Cahn and Camden County Freeholder Lou Cappelli, both presented the 119th Battalion with Proclamations. Other guests included Senator Jim Beach and Lt Col Al Bancroft.



# Long Time Member, Jim Gallagher, Passes Away...

It is with deep regret that we inform you of the passing of long time Legion member, Jim Gallagher...

**James Edward Gallagher**  
**Died March 22, 2012**



James Edward Gallagher of Cherry Hill, NJ died Thursday March 22, 2012 at Virtua Hospital, Marlton division. He was 86.

Jim was a Marine Corps veteran of WWII and a member of American Legion Post 372 in Cherry Hill for 50 years. Residing in Cherry Hill for the past 56 years, he joined Philadelphia National Bank (Wells Fargo where he worked for 35 years retiring as Vice President of International Finance.

Beloved husband for 64 years to Edna (nee Worthington). Loving father of James Gallagher (Linda) of Chatsworth, NJ; Robert Gallagher (Susan) of Wyomissing, PA; Katherine Steel (Thomas) of Harleysville, PA; William Gallagher (Rosalie) of Cinnaminson, NJ; Stephen Gallagher (Sharon) of Lum-



berton, NJ; 12 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Dear brother of Eva Becky, Joan O'Donnell and Elizabeth Fitzgerald.

Members of the American Legion paid respect, stood guard and presented a Bible to Edna. Some members and also the Warriors Watch provided a flag line and motorcycle escort to the cemetery.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Jim's family during this difficult time.

Jim will be missed.



# "Gathering of Heroes—One Team, One Fight"

On Feb 29th, 2012, the MCLEF hosted the "GATHERING OF HEROES - ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT" at the Irish Pubs in Philadelphia—a Celebrity BarTender Event. The Celebrities included 4 Medal of Honor Recipients—Brian Thacker, Jon Cavaiani, Barney Barnum and Tom Norris. Additional Celebrity bartenders included local celebrities and some Marine General Officers.

There were Medal of Honor Books available for purchase, which the

Medal of Honor recipients were available to autograph, along with a lot of fine auction items.

One such auction item was a leather USMC jacket, which Legion member Carol Colucci bid on and won!

Our American Legion organized a bus trip to the Irish Pub to attend this great event.

A great time was had by all and we all look forward to the event next year!

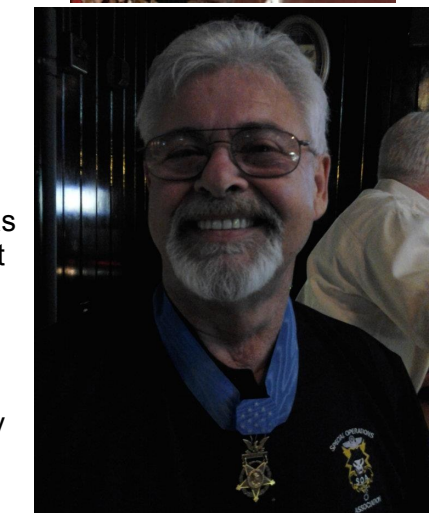
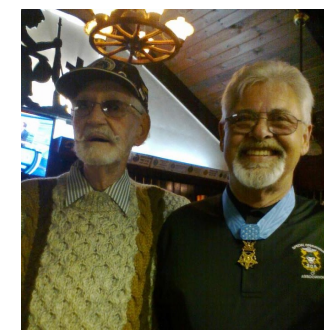


# Medal of Honor Recipient, Jon Cavaiani, Visits the Legion!

On Sunday, February 26th, our Legion had a surprise special guest! Medal of Honor Recipient, and former POW, Jon Cavaiani, visited our Legion as a show of appreciation for the support our Legion gave in promoting and arranging a bus trip for the MCLEF

"Gathering of Heroes" Event which was held on Wednesday, February 29th, at the Irish Pubs in Philadelphia.

MCLEF President, Jack Cummings brought Jon over, joined by MCLEF member Brit Henderson, who also serves our town as a Sgt in the Cherry Hill Police Dept.





## Jon R. Cavaiani

Born in England, Cavaiani emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1947 at age four. Though initially classified 4F, due in part to a severe allergy to bee stings, Cavaiani joined the Army from Fresno, California, shortly before becoming a naturalized citizen in 1968.

He was sent to Vietnam in 1970 with the Special Forces and by June 4, 1971 was serving as a Staff Sergeant in the Vietnam Training Advisory Group. On that day, in the Republic of Vietnam, his platoon came under intense enemy attack. Cavaiani organized the unit's defense and, when evacuation by helicopter became necessary, he voluntarily stayed on the ground and directed the aircraft, which successfully evacuated most of the platoon. Cavaiani and a small group were left behind. During a major enemy attack the next morning, he ordered the remaining men to escape while he stayed and provided suppressive fire to cover their retreat. He was captured and spent the next two years as a prisoner of war.<sup>[1]</sup>

Jon R. Cavaiani was released by the Provisional Government of Vietnam on March 27, 1973. Staff Sergeant Cavaiani's official Medal of Honor citation reads:

S/Sgt. Cavaiani distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 4 and 5 June 1971 while serving as a platoon leader to a security platoon providing security for an isolated radio relay site located within enemy-held territory. On the morning of 4 June 1971, the entire camp came under an intense barrage of enemy small arms, automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenade and mortar fire from a superior size enemy force. S/Sgt. Cavaiani acted with complete disregard for his personal safety as he repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire in order to move about the camp's perimeter directing the platoon's fire and rallying the platoon in a desperate fight for survival. S/Sgt. Cavaiani also returned heavy suppressive fire upon the assaulting enemy force during this period with a variety of weapons. When the entire platoon was to be evacuated, S/Sgt. Cavaiani unhesitatingly volunteered to remain on the ground and direct the helicopters into the landing zone. S/Sgt. Cavaiani was able to direct the first 3 helicopters in evacuating a major portion of the platoon. Due to intense increase in enemy fire, S/Sgt. Cavaiani was forced to remain at the camp overnight where he calmly directed the remaining platoon members in strengthening their defenses. On the morning of 5 June, a heavy ground fog restricted visibility. The superior size enemy force launched a major ground attack in an attempt to completely annihilate the remaining small force. The enemy force advanced in 2 ranks, first firing a heavy volume of small arms automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenade fire while the second rank continuously threw a steady barrage of hand grenades at the beleaguered force. S/Sgt. Cavaiani returned a heavy barrage of small arms and hand grenade fire on the assaulting enemy force but was unable to slow them down. He ordered the remaining platoon members to attempt to escape while he provided them with cover fire. With 1 last courageous exertion, S/Sgt. Cavaiani recovered a machine gun, stood up, completely exposing himself to the heavy enemy fire directed at him, and began firing the machine gun in a sweeping motion along the 2 ranks of advancing enemy soldiers. Through S/Sgt. Cavaiani's valiant efforts with complete disregard for his safety, the majority of the remaining platoon members were able to escape. While inflicting severe losses on the advancing enemy force, S/Sgt. Cavaiani was wounded numerous times. S/Sgt. Cavaiani's conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.

President Gerald Ford presented Cavaiani with the medal during a ceremony on December 12, 1974. Cavaiani later reached the rank of sergeant major before retiring from the Army in 1996.



## Legion Calendar of Events

April 7, 2012—Flagging of Chapel Ave. Assemble at JFK Hospital at 10am

April 9, 2012—Welcome Home—VFW Maple Shade. Meet at Legion at 11:45am

April 17, 2012—Boys State Interviews at Legion

April 28, 2012—Annual Yard, Bake and Hoagie Sale 8am-2pm. Reserve your table/space - call Doris at 856-429-8974. Rain or Shine.

May 20, 2012—Flagging of Locustwood - Meet at Locustwood Cemetery 12 Noon, look for vehicle and Post Officer distributing flags.

May 20, 2012—Jeremy Kane Memorial Run/Walk.

May 22, 2012—Installation of Ladies, SAL and General Member Officers - 4th Tuesday, 1930 hours, May 22nd, all members and guests welcome.

May 23, 2012—Boys State County orientation will be held at Brooklawn Post 72 at 7pm

May 28, 2012—Memorial Day Services--Services begin 0930 prompt at Post flagpole, 1000 hours at Locustwood Cemetery flagpole and 1030 hours at Bataan/Corregidor Monument, Cooper River Park and 1100 hours at Cherry Hill Township on Mercer Street.

June 3, 2012—American Legion Statewide Services -Locustwood Cemetery, 1300 to 1400 hours Assembly, followed by buffet at Legion.

June 7—10, 2012—American Legion Convention—Wildwood

June 17—22, 2012—Boys State 2012 will be held at Rider College

June 23, 2012—Samaritan's Veterans Car, Truck & Bike Show—Cherry Hill West High School Parking Lot 9am—2pm. More information on website

### MEETING SCHEDULE

E- Board - 2nd Tuesday of the month  
General - 4th Tuesday of the month  
SALs - 3rd Wednesday of the month  
Riders - 4th Monday of month  
Ladies - 1st Monday of month

All meetings are at 7:30pm.  
All meeting dates are subject to change ,  
please check with officer to be sure of date.  
See Officer for County Meeting Schedule.

For other local events in our area, visit  
[www.patriotconnections.org](http://www.patriotconnections.org)

# Patriot Connections



Veteran, Military, Law Enforcement and Patriot Related Events and News in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and surrounding areas

Legion Auxiliary VP, Sue Quinn-Morris, has launched a new website which provides veteran, military, law enforcement and patriot related events and news in New Jersey and the Philadelphia PA area. All related organizations are encouraged to SUBMIT their events on the Community CALENDAR.

[www.PATRIOTCONNECTIONS.org](http://www.PATRIOTCONNECTIONS.org)



## 3rd Annual Jeremy Kane 5K Run/Walk

Lance Cpl. Jeremy Kane was a student at Rutgers-Camden studying Criminal Justice and Political Science. He had joined the Marine Reservists on September 11, 2006 because "he felt that every American had the duty to give back to his country."

When his Reserve Unit was activated for deployment, Jeremy was hesitant leaving his mother behind, as Jeremy's Father recently passed away from stomach cancer. Shedding his reluctance, Jeremy Kane deployed with enthusi-



asm because he knew it was the right thing to do. For this, Jeremy Kane made the ultimate sacrifice for his family, and country. Marine Lance Cpl. Jeremy M. Kane died January 23, 2010 serving Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, based out of Camp Pendleton, California.

Every year the South Jersey community gathers for a 5K run/walk (whatever you prefer) to honor Jeremy's sacrifice.

Each participant gets sponsors, and the money is used to create a veteran's scholarship at Rutgers

University which will honor Jeremy's memory.

This year's 5K Run/Walk will be held on May 20, 2012. Once again, the American Legion will flag the 5K Route. If you are interested in helping to flag the route, please contact Sue at 856-495-7270.

Flagging will be done the day before the run, on Saturday, May 19th. If interested in being a sponsor or participating in the Run/Walk, visit the following website; <http://jeremykanebenefitrun.webs.com/>



## Welcome Home for the Lamanna Brothers of Cherry Hill



It was a special holiday for the Lamanna family of Cherry Hill. On Xmas Eve, members of our

American Legion, in conjunction with other local veterans organizations welcomed home 3 brothers in Cherry Hill.

The Lamanna brothers, hadn't all been home together for the holidays in years.

John, is a medical sergeant in the Army. He is currently stationed in South Korea.

Jesse, is enlisted in the Navy, and is stationed in California.

Joe, is enlisted in the Air Force, he is a hospital corpsman 3rd class, and is stationed in Spain.

"The boys" hadn't been together for a few years, and their parents were elated to have their sons home.

As usual, the town of Cherry Hill arose to the occasion and welcomed these men home in rock star fashion.



### REMINDER

If you know of any Veteran, or a family member of a Veteran who is hospitalized, or is in need of Assistance, please call the Post Chaplain, Chester Malik at 856-427-4223

## MESSAGE FROM LADIES PRESIDENT



As we approach Spring and the upcoming festivities associated with the month of May it is time to reflect on some very important issues facing our post. First let me say I couldn't be prouder of our post and our accomplishments in the past few months. To the people who have supported our activities I thank you whole heartedly. We have welcomed many important people, soldiers first and foremost are aware we care here in Cherry Hill as we have been there to say job well done and thank them for their service. We also had the privilege to host a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who stopped by to thank us for helping with the fundraiser for their cause. The fact he stayed for a few hours is testimony to our people and the comfort level we showed to a distinguished guest. We had a wonderful Super Bowl party put together by some of our members just for fun, it was a blast. It shows what a little extra effort can do. We brought food, we had prizes which were donated and the canteen rocked with camaraderie, football and music. If only more people would get involved in these activities. When I first joined the post there were parties by the members, Auxiliary and

the SAL all were supported by our members and their families. Now for some the attitude is, I paid my dues, I don't have to do anything but enjoy myself. This kind of apathy will eventually let the organization die. If you joined for cheap drinks, pool, free parking for the fireworks and school activities, fine, but understand that is not what we are about. We are here to support the Veterans. They have the option to change our privileges and we have to remember that as we are guests here. Respect the veterans as well as their post. If you are at the post but spend most of your time outside give up the seat for someone who is staying inside. Many of our veterans can't stand for long periods of time.

Many of our members do things throughout the year. They are the first to volunteer for our bake sale or to make something for Family Day, they may not make a meeting but they support our efforts and the post. All this while juggling home, work and family. If you have time to spend 10 hours in the canteen a week you could probably find something to do to support the organization once in a while. Many have been volunteering for years. Jim Gallagher and Dot Wahl just hit the 50 years in service mark to the American Legion, what

an accomplishment when you consider most of that time was spent before computers and the many time saving tools and appliances we take for granted now.

The Auxiliary will be amending our bylaws in the coming months. If you have any input please speak up. The last time changes were made was 1999. The dynamics of our world have changed and we need to catch some things up to meet new issues. Also our yearly dues will also increase next year as National has raised what we need to send in for every member. Our unit voted not to add anything to their increase at this time but we must pass their increase along unfortunately, so please don't shoot the messenger.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Mother's Day, Memorial Day and start to the summer, we hope to see you at one of our many events.

For God and Country,  
Carol (Doyle) Colucci

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR



The Surprise Party for Ron Colucci/Pub Crawl was a great time. The bus trip took us to AmVets, the Woodbury American Legion, the Oaklyn American Legion, the Marlton VFW, and the Alden. All were gracious hosts. We had a good time at every stop, met a lot

of nice people, and did those things you do on Pub Crawls. Putting those marshmallows on my seat was a dirty (I should say sticky), yet funny trick. With winter behind us, we need to start planning some events. We talked about a run that included Corbin City. In September we support the Run for the Fallen. While this is a long way off, I mention this event because there are fundraisers between now and September

we should support.

Officer nominations were held at the March 26th meeting. On April 22, there will be a second opportunity to nominate officers followed by the election.

Pray for our troops.

For God and Country  
Gary Gottron  
Director, Post 372 Riders



## Dog Tag Return To Fellow Tanker

Many are not aware of the 2 Vietnam Dog Tag Committees in NJ. There is one batch of found Vietnam dog tags in the holding of the POW/MIA Awareness Committee of NJ and the other batch is held by the Senator James Beach Dog Tag Committee. Both Committees are in the process of identifying and locating the veterans and/or families of these dog tags to return them. For more information on the projects, go to [www.powmiaawareness.org](http://www.powmiaawareness.org).

Just prior to our recent reunion in San Diego one of the dog tags was connected to a member of our organization by Sue Quinn-Morris who is on this committee as well as a member of my home American Legion #372 Cherry Hill, NJ. While talking to my wife Carol about our plans for the reunion Sue took a



chance at matching her roster of tags to our member roster and was shocked to find a match. That started the ball rolling which took my wife and me to Palatka FL to personally deliver John (Jack) S Hahn (Alpha 3rd 67) his tag.

Sue contacted Jack to confirm they were in fact his which he was able to do, this of course after she convinced him it would not cost him anything. In this day and age you have to expect a scam especially for something so special. She sent him a picture of the tag which was in fact his. Carol and I then started to plan how to get it back to him. It took longer than expected due to

the fact we are still recovering from our motorcycle accident in July. Then we were up to the holidays.



We decided to make the tag return our "Christmas present" to each other and made reservations to go to FL in mid January.

Another member of our American Legion Post 372, Wes Barnett who is in the process of moving to Jacksonville invited us to stay with him and also arranged his local VFW #7909 Jacksonville to accompany us to Jack's VFW #3349 Palatka for the return. Jack chose to have it done at his home post where he is an active member. We arrived at Post #3349 to a warm welcoming crowd with members of the Jacksonville

VFW including quite a few Marines.

Wes took the microphone to explain the Dog Tag Project, I then gave a brief summary of my Marine/Navy service as some background as to the "special" bond Jack and I had as a Marine Tanker. Though we had never met we are brothers and understand each other. A letter was read which Senator Beach (D-NJ) had sent with us thanking him for his service to our country.

Prior to our trip Carol had contacted John Wear to arrange to

pay for Jack's membership. We wanted to present Jack with his new card, John had it mailed out immediately. Carol read the back of the card and then presented it to Jack.

This was a special day for all of us. For Jack his dog tag is home, for me, I was able to return it to a fellow Marine. My wife understands more about what it means to be a Marine tanker and the special bond that it entails. We were also able to spread the word about this wonderful organizations mission.

Both Wes and I have lost our dog tags when wounded in Viet Nam. Maybe someday they will find ours. Here's hoping.

Semper Fi  
Ronald Colucci  
Bravo 1st 69



John Crazy Bear, a three-war veteran and retired Marine gunnery sergeant, shakes hands with Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Gorry, commanding general, Marine Corps Installations East, prior to receiving his lost dog tag at a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, March 17. Gorry thanked those in attendance for sharing the opportunity to return Crazy Bear's long lost dog tag

## Recovered dog tags returned to three war veteran

It is a story of distant travels, perseverance and time, but one more name



has made it home from Vietnam; John Crazy Bear. The three-war veteran and retired gunnery sergeant, was reunited with the dog tag he lost during the Vietnam War in a ceremony held aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, March 17.

Crazy Bear, a Lakota Sioux Native American who was orphaned as a child, enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 14. He hitchhiked more than 400 miles to join a service he admits he knew almost nothing about. "One of the biggest mistakes I made really paid off," said Crazy Bear, remembering the circumstances that began his 22-year career as a Marine. "That was the proudest moment of my life when I was called a Marine. I was called a lot of things before that, but Marine meant more than anything."

Crazy Bear enlisted in 1945 after lying about his age. He began his career in World War II, went on to endure the biting cold of the "Frozen Chosin" in Korea, where he received a Purple Heart, and served in Vietnam. On his 81st birthday, he watched the sun rise above MCB Camp Lejeune, unaware that only minutes later he would be reunited with a piece of his past.

It was a moment made possible by a humanitarian mission to Vietnam in the 1990s. Ray Milligan, a former Force Recon Marine, collected several hundred dog tags while working with a medical mission designed to help children in third-world countries. Milligan, bothered by the fact that American dog tags were being

sold as souvenirs in the streets of Vietnam, purchased the tags in the hopes of returning them to the U.S. Over the years, Milligan and others worked to return as many of the dog tags as they could. They eventually handed the project over to the POW/MIA Awareness Committee of New Jersey. Researcher of the Committee, Sue Quinn-Morris teamed up with members of the Nam Knights of America motorcycle club, who brought Crazy Bear's dog tag to MCB Camp Lejeune.

On March 15, members of the Nam Knights embarked on one last mission with Crazy Bear's tag and traveled 500 miles to return it to Crazy Bear's chest, once more within reach of the heartbeat that kissed it during his many years of service.

Sixty-seven years after joining the Marine Corps, Crazy Bear's eyes welled with tears and his knees shook as he embraced his long lost dog tag, home at last from a land thousands of miles away.

"I want to thank you for your service," said Brit Henderson, a member of the Delaware Chapter of the Nam Knights, as he extended his arms towards Crazy Bear, his voice heavy with emotion. "Welcome home and god bless you."

Crazy Bear stood at the front of the room, surrounded by his family, members of the Nam Knights, and



his fellow Marines. It was a small homecoming ceremony to be sure, but a symbol for something far greater.

"I want to thank you all again," said Crazy Bear. "This has been a real honor and I never expected it. I don't know if you saw the tears in my eyes. I'm just overjoyed and still proud that my fellow Marines would respect me and invite me out



to something like this."

Crazy Bear put the dog tag around his neck and ran his fingers over its worn surface. He could not remember how he lost the tag, but said it was unlike the dog tags made during the Vietnam War. His was older. It had a small notch on the tip and its lettering was severely weathered.

But Crazy Bear could still make out the tag's information: His service number, his blood type, even his religious preference. The small strands of information designed to identify each service member and possibly even save their lives.

"It looks like it's been through heck and high water," exclaimed Crazy Bear. "But I think I'd rather have it than a Navy Cross."