



CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

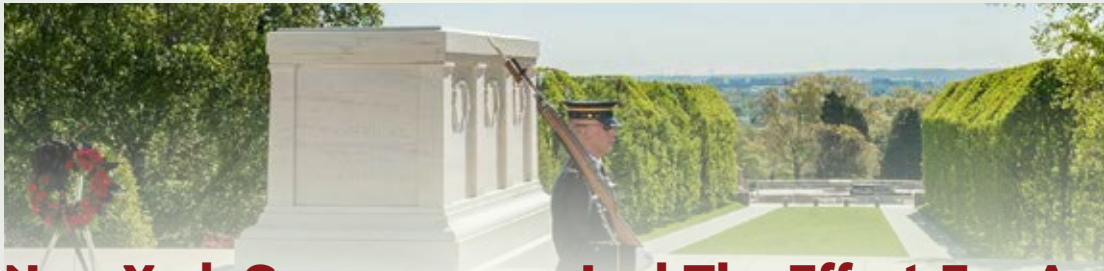
FALL 2021



20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
THE DAY THE WORLD CHANGED



LAUREL
DEFCON



New York Congressman Led The Effort For A U.S. Tomb Of The Unknown Soldier

The United States has a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier today because a New York National Guard Major and freshman Congressman thought it was necessary 100 years ago. Hamilton Fish III was a 32-year old lawyer with a Harvard degree when he ran for Congress in 1920. He was a progressive member of the New York State Assembly before World War I and signed on to serve as a company commander in the 15th New York Infantry (Colored) of the New York National Guard. When war came, he led Company K of what became known as the 369th Infantry Regiment, which went down in history as the Harlem Hellfighters. He earned a Silver Star and the French War Cross.



Congressman Hamilton Fish III

The British and French had interred unknown soldiers with great ceremony on November 11th, 1920 to commemorate their lost comrades. Fish thought that the United States should do the same. He became the lead advocate for a memorial to an Unknown American Soldier. The purpose, according to Fish, was “to bring home the body of an unknown American warrior who in himself represents no section, creed or race in the late war and who typifies the soul of America and the supreme sacrifice of her heroic dead. There should be no distinction whatever either in the matter of rank, color or wealth. This man is the unknown American Soldier killed on the battlefields of France.”

He introduced Public Resolution 67 of the 66th Congress on December 21, 1920 to return the remains of an unknown American Soldier to be interred in Arlington National Cemetery. A Congressional Committee met and discussed proposals to return the first three casualties of the war, to pick one unknown member from each military service, or identify unknown remains from every state in the union.

Fish rejected any idea of having more than one unknown. “He should be chosen so that nobody would know his identification or the battlefield he comes from. He should represent in himself the North, the South, the East and the West.” There were 1,717 “absolutely unknown dead” for consideration. General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Force, endorsed Fish’s legislation. “This one man would represent the American participation in the war, both on land and sea,” he said. The National Legislative Committee of the brand new American Legion also endorsed the idea. Congress approved the resolution on February 4, 1921. In the last hours of his Presidency, Woodrow Wilson signed Public Resolution 67 into law.

In October 1921, four unknown service personnel were exhumed from four WWI American cemeteries in France. U.S. Army Sgt. Edward Younger, a wounded and decorated WWI Army veteran still on active duty selected the unknown on October 24, 1921. He assumed he was just to be on a pallbearer detail, but inside the makeshift chapel, the officer in charge of grave registrations announced: “One of you is to be given the honor of selecting the body of the Unknown Soldier,” Younger said. He was handed a bouquet of roses and left alone in the chapel with the four unmarked coffins. “I walked around the coffins three times, then suddenly I stopped. It was as though something had pulled me. The one I placed the roses on was the one brought home.”

The casket was inscribed “An Unknown American who gave his life in the World War.” The casket was laid in state in the Capitol Rotunda on November 9, 1921. Some 90,000 mourners paid their respects on November 10. The next day, November 11, 1921 the remains were carried on a horse-drawn caisson through Washington and across the Potomac River to Arlington National Cemetery. The day was declared Armistice Day, a national holiday, by President Warren Harding and Congress. Harding placed the Medal of Honor on the casket. The Soldier was buried atop a two-inch layer of soil brought over from France so that he might rest forever atop the ground on which he fought and died. Congressman Fish would be the first to lay a wreath at the Tomb. He would serve in Congress from 1921-1991.

By COL Richard Goldenberg, New York National Guard

SCHOLARSHIPS

Mia Findlan	Franklin, PA	Slippery Rock University, PA
Rachel Glinsky	Strongsville, OH	Ohio State University, OH
Emma Greenwood	Goshen, CT	Salve Regina University RI
Morgan Peura	Lakewood, OH	Indiana University, IN
Autumn Whipple	Wexford, PA	Kent State University, OH



GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES!



WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

Due primarily to COVID-19, the Catholic War Veterans & Auxiliary is currently operating with a deficit. Our mission in helping homeless Veterans and their families, while at the same time supporting our Departments and Posts are greatly compromised. Please consider purchasing or selling the enclosed raffle tickets so we can continue with our mission. One ticket is not expensive at all, heck its almost the same cost as a cup of coffee and a donut! Plus, you will be helping us support our Veterans who have given so much; wouldn't you agree?

Please pray for our homeless Veterans who have no one; and may God continue to bless you and your family.

With grateful appreciation for your help,

David J. Crum
National Commander
The Catholic War Veterans & Auxiliary

FOR GOD, FOR COUNTRY AND FOR HOME



CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS & AUXILIARY
2021 FUNDRAISING DRIVE
SUPPORTING HOMELESS VETERANS AND THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

★ 50/50 SPLIT POT ★

Pot will be paid out in prizes of 30% to the 1st place, 15% to the 2nd place, and 5% to the 3rd place winners. Help the National Headquarters in supporting our homeless Veterans and their families in these difficult and austere times. Drawing at our National Convention on August 7, 2021.

\$5.00 PER TICKET OR \$20.00 FOR 5 TICKETS

Please make payments to the Catholic War Veterans of the USA. All prior payments made after expenses.

CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS & AUXILIARY
2021 FUNDRAISING DRIVE
SUPPORTING HOMELESS VETERANS AND THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
State _____
Phone _____

Return this portion with your check made payable to
Catholic War Veterans of the USA
237-20 92nd Rd, Bellerose, NY 11426

National Commander Dave Crum (left), is joined by National Treasurer Andy Veigas in announcing winners at closing dinner of the National Convention.

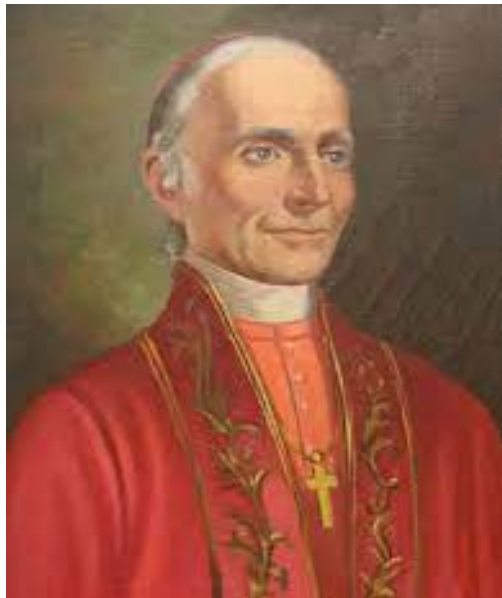
AND THE LUCKY WINNERS WERE:

1st Prize
(\$6,754.00)
ALVIN ISAAK
New Baden, IL

2nd Prize
(\$3,377.00)
ALICE LEHNHOFF
Saint Jacob, IL

3rd Prize
(\$1,126.00)
BRIAN P. WILLIAMS
Susanville, CA

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!



INDIANA CWV MEMBER HONORED

Congratulations to Commander George "Bud" Eler of Bishop Simon Brute, Servant of God Post 1976 in Loogootee, Indiana on his induction into the Brute Society.

The induction took place at a Mass celebrated at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville by Bishop Joseph Siegel. The Brute Society was established in 1990 to honor lay persons for their outstanding stewardship. Bishop Simon Brute was born in France in 1779 and later declined two positions offered by Napoleon to enter the priesthood and come to America where he founded Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Bishop Simon Brute



U.S. SPACE FORCE FLAG RAISED Over Home of Archdiocese for Military Services

The official flag of the U.S. military's new service branch, the U.S. Space Force (USSF), now flies proudly over the entrance to the Edwin Cardinal O'Brien Pastoral Center in Washington, D.C., the home base for the Military Archdiocese. The colors of the new service branch were added to the cluster of U.S. and Catholic Flags posted outside the AMS building, including one for each service branch in order of creation from left to right: the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Department of Veterans Affairs, and now, the Space Force, all of which stand behind the U.S. Flag and those of the Vatican, the AMS, and the District of Columbia.

The flag was raised for the first time at the Archdiocese headquarters on June 16th, 2021. In keeping with the Space Force motto SEMPER SUPRA ("Always Above"), the flag will fly in perpetuity along with those of the other service branches, the Nation and the Catholic Church in a standing symbolic and spiritual salute to those who serve God and Country.

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL APPROVED FOR WORLD WAR I'S HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS!

Congress has voted to award a posthumous Congressional Gold Medal to the Harlem Hellfighters, a black New York National Guard unit that fought in World War I. The medal is the highest U.S. civilian award alongside the Presidential Medal of Freedom and has been awarded fewer than 200 times. Although the men of the 369th Infantry Regiment are gone, the medal was sought by their descendants and pushed by New Yorkers who said the unit wasn't sufficiently celebrated at the time.

The Hellfighters spent 191 days in the trenches of France before the war ended. About 1,400 of its men were killed or wounded, more than any other regiment, according to congressional offices. Although the war is remembered as a struggle between European imperial powers, these New Yorkers "fought to defend our freedoms," said New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, "the Harlem Hellfighters Congressional Gold Medal Act honors these brave men, who, even as they faced segregation and prejudice, risked their lives to defend our freedoms."



GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN!

Members of the 369th Infantry Regiment—better known as the Harlem Hellfighters. It is said that during a homecoming parade, they marched to patriotic music until they crossed 125th Street into Harlem where the band then played jazz, rag-time, swing and gospel music to make the troops finally feel at home!

DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE IS “TWICE BLEST” AS HUSBAND AND WIFE MEMBERS RECEIVE AWARDS

The Department of New Hampshire scored a rare “double-header” when a married couple were selected to receive the highest awards presented by the Catholic War Veterans. Although recent illnesses prevented them from accepting the awards in person at this year’s National Convention in New York, State Commander Denise DeBlois and other CWV officials ensured that the awards were presented with proper pomp and circumstance in a visit to their home..

A native of Somersworth, New Hampshire, Ed LeClerc enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1950 at the age of 19. He was ordered to active duty in Vietnam from 1968-1969, manning 105, 155 and 8 inch howitzers. His 6th child would be born while he was deployed. Retiring in 1989 at the rank of E-7, after 39 years of service, he joined the CWV.

He and his wife Irene married in 1953, raising 3 girls and 3 boys. They now have 13 grand- and 12 great-grandchildren. He spent most of his career in the shoe business as a buyer, with a brief time in life insurance prior to his retirement.

His service with the Catholic War Veterans includes 20 years as Post 1755 Treasurer, and Department Trustee for 8 years. In 2013, he received the Department of New Hampshire Hall of Fame Award, its highest award. In 2017, at the state convention, he received the Department Commander’s Award for Outstanding Service. He is active in his parish of St. Ignatius, volunteering at parish breakfasts and fundraisers. He places wreaths on the graves of Veterans on Memorial Day. He also supports post youth programs - Keep Christ in Christmas and Little League. He greets deploying troops at the former Pease Air Force Base.

As a member of Donald A. Roberge Unit 1755 for just three years, Irene Marie Marguerite LeClerc was asked at the time to take over the Unit President position. She immediately stepped up without hesitation. She has been serving as Unit President since 2014. In 2019, at the annual State Convention in Manchester, she received the Department Commander’s Auxiliary Award for Outstanding Service.

As a parishioner at St. Ignatius Church, she has also distinguished herself in many ways, with her dedication to her family, career, parish, community and service to Veterans. Ed and Irene are the embodiment of the Catholic War Veterans motto: For God, Family and Country. Congratulations to you both!



A “veteran” Veteran member of Donald A. Roberge Post 1755, Edouard Leclerc, and Spouse and Auxiliary Member Irene LeClerc display the CWV’s highest awards, the Order of St Sebastian and the Order of St. Agnes.



A presentation ceremony was arranged at their home by State Commander Denise DeBlois (center), assisted by Post Commander Bill Weners (left) and National Director Scott Demers.



Catholic War Veterans Recruitment Efforts Move Into High Gear!

The National Office recently was transformed into a television studio as National Commander Dave Crum was sought out by the Brooklyn Diocese "Currents" Show on NET TV to comment on Veterans matters. He used the opportunity to promote the programs of the Catholic War Veterans to assist wounded, disabled and indigent Veterans and their families. His comments were reinforced by NY State Commander John O'Shea who "co-starred" in the show.



Commander Crum explains the role of our network of Veterans Service Officers.



Teleprompter assists in spreading our recruitment message

Producer Adriana Rodriguez used the occasion to record a 45-second promotional announcement for CWV recruitment.

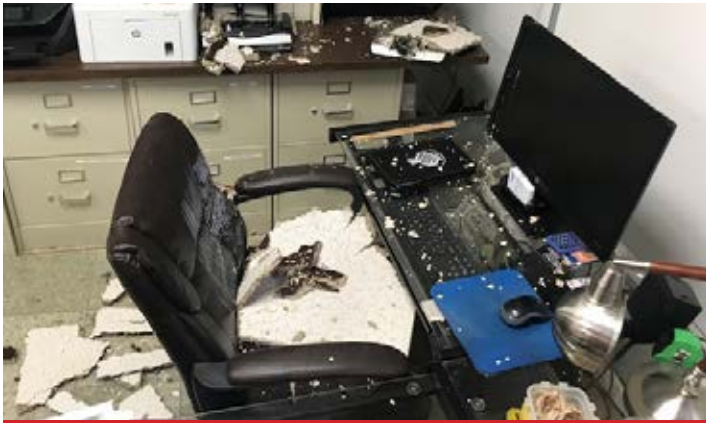


Reporter Emily Druby listens intently as CMDR Crum explains the various community services, scholarships and youth programs supported by our members at posts around the country.



New York Department Commander John O'Shea put the problems experienced by returning Veterans, and the need for services, in context.





File Under Stuff Happens!

Heavy, sustained wind-swept June rains caused a damaged roof at the national headquarters and a ceiling collapse in the main office area. There was some damage to office equipment, but operations continued uninterrupted. Our cleaning lady, Maria Zavala, saved the day, coming in that same afternoon to contain the wet mess! After repairs, the roof remained watertight during Hurricane Ida's assault on New York City with torrential rains.



Post Joins In Local 9/11 Memorial

The CWV Joseph R. Farina Memorial Post #386 in Newburgh, New York joined the Town of New Windsor in paying tribute to those who perished in the attacks on 9/11/01. Post Commander Robert Murphy (3rd from right), speaking for his members, commented how pleased and honored they were to participate in the memorial and expressed his hopes for the United States to be at peace and that a spirit of unity and patriotism return.



Post 1 New York Memorial Day Poppy Sale

Guillermo Morero and Auxiliary President Mario Massa manned a table over Memorial Day Weekend at Immaculate Conception Church selling Memorial Poppies after all the parish Masses.



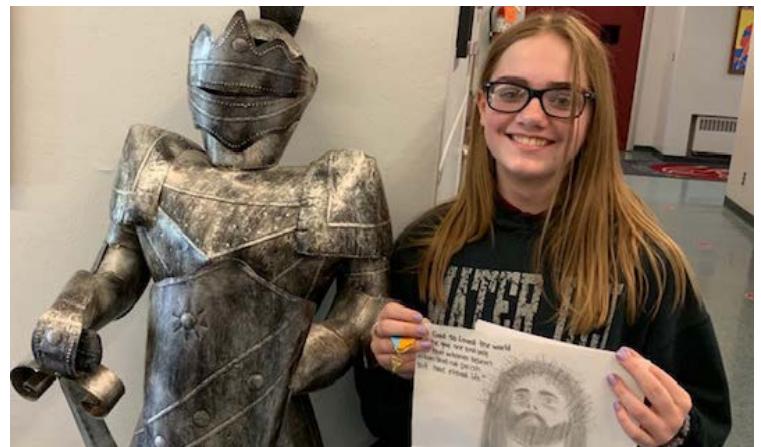
Indiana Post Celebrates Anniversary

In Martin County, Indiana, Commander Bud Erler led Bishop Simon Brute Post 1976 as it celebrated its 5th Anniversary during a Memorial Day Parade.



Illinois Easter Poster Contest Winner

Cailey Dorris of St. Anthony Grade School in Effingham, Illinois, was sponsored by Bishop McNicholas Post 1916 in Springfield, Illinois. Presenting her award check are Department 3rd V/C Dale Smith, assisted by Rosemary Connolly of Post 1916.



And In Ohio, The Easter Winner Is

Sponsored by Pope John Paul II Post 1959 in Willoughby, Ohio, student Isabella Baldwin displays the award-winning artwork that won her recognition on both the Department and National levels.



CONNECTICUT POST HONORS 98-YEAR-OLD RETIRING COMMANDER!

WWII Vet is Former National Commander

The LT Raymond Bowers Post hosted a “Thank You” Luncheon in June to honor retiring Post Commander Walter W. Stachacz, who has served in every capacity at the Local, State and National level of the Catholic War Veterans organization, including as National Commander from 1980-1981.

Walter was born in Dickson City, Pennsylvania and graduated high school in 1942. He was drafted into the U.S. ARMY and served until 1946, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He was a member of the 112th Cavalry Cannon Combat Team in New Guinea, the Philippines and Japan. He landed in the first wave ahead of MacArthur’s return. His awards included several Bronze Stars for combat action, the Philippines Liberation Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal.

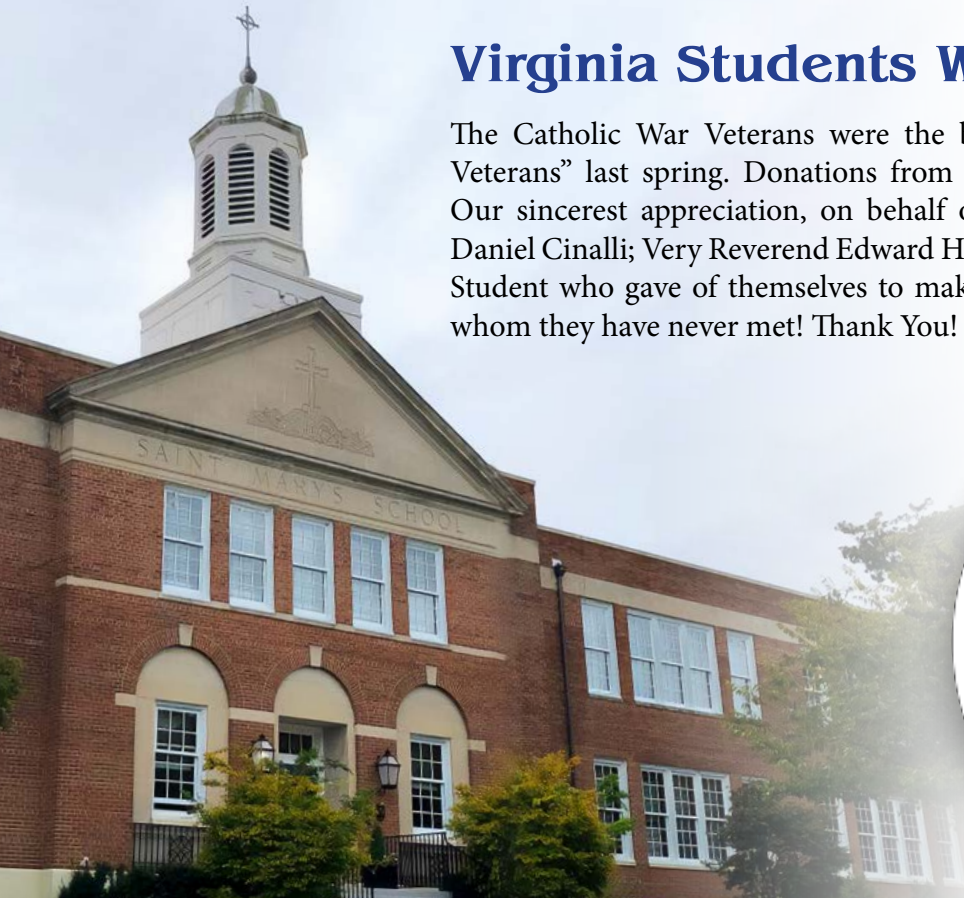
After his discharge, he returned to Dickson City and married Sally Konkol. In 1947 they moved to Bridgeport, where he went to work for Jenkins Valves until his retirement in 1986.



In 1954, he joined the Bower Post 1466. During his 67 years of membership, he served as Post Commander for over 50 years. During that time he also served as Connecticut State Commander two times and National Commander. He has been awarded the Honor Legion of the Order of St. Sebastian for dedicating a life of exemplary service to the Catholic War Veterans, especially to Bower Post 1466.

Virginia Students Walk For Veterans!

The Catholic War Veterans were the beneficiaries of a “Student Walk For Veterans” last spring. Donations from the student efforts totaled \$1,048.45. Our sincerest appreciation, on behalf of all Veterans, goes out to Principal Daniel Cinalli; Very Reverend Edward Hathaway, Rector; and to each and every Student who gave of themselves to make a difference in the life of a Veteran whom they have never met! Thank You!



NAVY'S MOTHBALLED SHIPS CARRY HISTORY, HINTS OF THE FUTURE!



BY CHRISTINE CLARRIDGE
SEATTLE TIMES TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

As the mothballed ships sit there ghostlike in their gray and rusty coats, the silent fleet is dwindling. Where once the ships were packed in along the edge of Sinclair Inlet at Naval Base Kitsap, the fleet now consists of a half-dozen surface ships, 11 nuclear-powered submarines and one cruiser, according to the Naval Sea Systems Command.

The USS KITTY HAWK, the last of the great aircraft carriers once moored at the Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Bremerton, was moved into dry dock where it will be scraped of barnacles and sent out for scrap. The fast-attack, Los Angeles-class submarine USS BREMERTON is in the process of being deactivated and defueled at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the only location in the country where a nuclear sub can be put to rest. If it's lucky, it will get to be a monument in its namesake city, arguably one of the most noble fates that can befall a decommissioned vessel. "It's like coming home," said retired Navy Captain Alan Beam, a former Commanding Officer of the boat.

Reserve fleets around the country have ebbed and flowed, expanding as wars ended and ships were no longer needed and contracting when ships were scrapped or reactivated to fight, such as during the Korean War. One of those was the USS MISSOURI (BB-63), which means it was the 63rd battleship built by the Navy and where the Japanese signed the surrender that ended World War II. It was deactivated again in 1955, reactivated during President Reagan's 600-ship Navy plan, and returned to Bremerton in 1990's until it was transferred to Pearl Harbor to be a museum ship.

Recently, the most visible ships of Bremerton's reserve fleet have been the last prenuclear era aircraft carriers: USS KITTY HAWK, USS CONSTELLATION, USS INDEPENDENCE and USS RANGER. One by one they have been towed away for scrapping. According to the Navy, a decommissioned vessel can be either: donated as a museum or memorial, sunk to create an artificial reef for fish, towed to the middle of the ocean for target practice, sold to a foreign government or cut into scrap and recycled.

Most Vets feel intensely about the ships on which they served, and when one of them is hauled off it's an emotional time. Often, there is a rush of interest to raise money and persuade the Navy to donate it as a museum ship, but it's rarely enough money and the efforts fizzle out. Most aircraft carriers will be towed around the tip of South America (because they're too big to fit through the Panama Canal) and up to Brownsville, Texas to be cut into scrap.

The Navy appears to be moving fast toward the newer technology of unmanned systems. Think of it as "who wants an old TV with smart television all around?" The U.S. Pacific Fleet will soon host its most complex exercise to date involving unmanned systems, including a Zumwalt-class destroyer. USS MICHAEL MONSOOR (DDG-1001) commanding and controlling the missions of unmanned aircraft on the water's surface and in the air. The Navy is currently studying what will happen with the USS ENTERPRISE (the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier), and whether it will come to Bremerton for dismantling. If so, the rest of the nuclear carriers would likely follow. USS NIMITZ is due for decommissioning in 2025.

REPRESENTING THE FUTURE UNMANNED WARFARE!



MQ-1C GRAY EAGLE Unmanned Aircraft



USS MICHAEL MONSOOR (DDG-1001)

86th Annual National Convention NEW YORK CITY CONVENTION REVIEW



Members inspect a gun tub of the USS INTREPID



New York City Commissioner of Veterans Affairs was the keynote speaker at the Commander and President's Luncheon



The American Bombshells lead the National Anthem at the closing dinner!



Roger Thibeault renders honors at the Memorial Service



All hands on deck for the New York harbor cruise



Bishop Protector Joseph Coffey and Bishop Neal Buckon of the Military Archdiocese celebrated the closing Mass



2021 Convention New York City - Tuesday
A TOUR OF THE USS INTREPID SEA-AIR-SPACE MUSEUM



2021 Convention New York City - Wednesday
A DINNER CRUISE AROUND NEW YORK HARBOR



2021 Convention New York City - Thursday COMMANDER & PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON



Your Host and Hostess are joined by Clergy, Fr. Bill, Bishop Buckon and Fr. John Sheehan



Members from several states around the country break bread together



Luncheon speaker Commissioner James Hendon of the NY City Department of Veterans Affairs

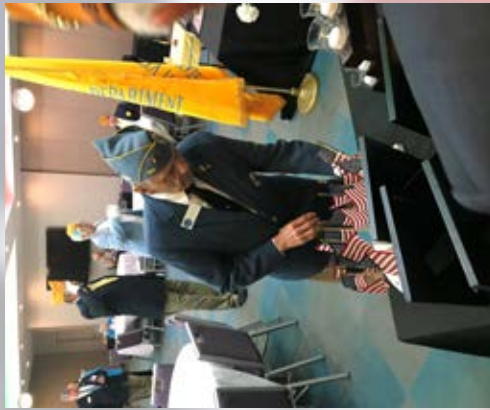


CMDR Dave Crum thanks CMSR Hendon, assisted by Former CMSR and CWV Member Terry Holliday



The Auxiliary was well represented at this year's convention

2021 Convention New York City - Friday MEMORIAL SERVICE



A Flag is placed at the Memorial Table



CMDR Crum and President McMaster Light a candle and place flowers



Names of many deceased members due to Covid-19 were prominently displayed



Our Clergy led the solemn remembrance service



National Officers of the Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary assembled around the memorial table in tribute to those we lost due to the pandemic in the past year

2021 Convention New York City - Saturday CONVENTION CLOSING MASS



Incoming Auxiliary President Marylyn Crum served as Lector at the Mass



Bishop Coffey Celebrates the Mass against the impressive backdrop of Immaculate Conception Church where the CWV was founded



Bishop Coffey bestows the St. Agnes Medal on Colette Sampson of New Hampshire at the conclusion of the Mass



A Mass concelebrated by two Bishops and several Priests added to the dignity of the occasion



New Hampshire State Commander Denise DeBlois (left) joins Regina Bilodeau in accepting the St. Sebastian and St. Agnes Awards on behalf of Edouard and Irene LeClerc, who could not attend



Commander Crum and Bishop Coffey presented charters to Commanders of new posts 1979 in Glen Oaks, NY (Bob Gluszak, left) and 1980 in Rapid City, South Dakota, Kenneth Orrock

2021 Convention New York City - Saturday CONVENTION CLOSING BANQUET



POW's/MIA's Remembered



Sharing an evening of good cheer!



Good friends meet from all over the country!



Patriotic entertainment, of course!



The American Bombshells bring back memories of WWII



Change of command! Marylyn Crum relieves Anna McMaster as Auxiliary President



Awards night! Mike Blau accepts on behalf of State of Ohio



Dan McSweeney, NYC Veterans Parade Organizer, was the keynote speaker



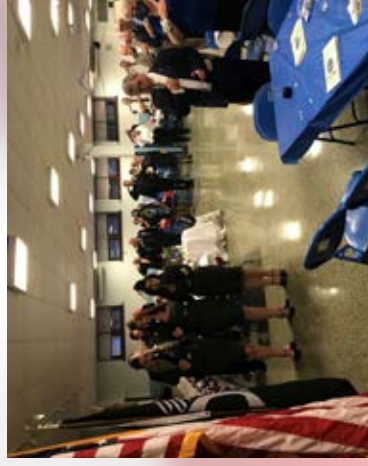
The Department of Texas presented boots and a hat to CMDR Crum



Scott Demers of New Hampshire was elected CWV Veteran of the Year



Bishop Coffey and Denise Deblais lead dancers on the floor at evening's end



The Bombshells lead attendees in singing our National Anthem

CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS NATIONAL OFFICERS 2021-2022

Elected at the 86th National Convention

BISHOP PROTECTOR Most Reverend Joseph L. Coffey (DC)	HISTORIAN Denise Deblois (NH)	DIRECTOR 1-YEAR (1) Scott Demers (NH)
CHAPLAIN Rev. John R. Sheehan, S.J. (NY)	SERVICE OFFICER Jose M. Garcia, PNC (TX)	DIRECTOR 1-Year (2) Michael S. Ranno (CT)
COMMANDER David J. Crum (NY)	VAVS OFFICER Terrance Holliday (NY)	DIRECTOR 2-YEAR (1) Marvin Jeffcoat (NY)
ADJUTANT Nicholas M. Taylor (PA)	1ST VICE COMMANDER Benjamin Nunez (TX)	DIRECTOR 2-YEAR (2) Dennis C. Burke (VA)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Michael J. Kasinkas (CT)	2ND VICE COMMANDER William T. Wright, Sr. (PA)	DIRECTOR 3-YEAR (1) Thomas M. Voytek (CT)
JUDGE ADVOCATE James Kiernan, ESQ. (NY)	3RD VICE COMMANDER Roberto Garza (TX)	DIRECTOR 3-YEAR (2) Robert P. Gluszak (NY)
WELFARE OFFICER Ann M. Puck (MO)	TREASURER Andres Veiga (NY)	OFFICER OF THE DAY David Silva (TX)

CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL OFFICERS 2021-2022

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN Rev. William McLaughlin (NY)	2ND VICE PRESIDENT Regina Bilodeau (NH)	DIRECTOR 3-YEAR Darby Swope (PA)
NATIONAL PRESIDENT Marylyn Crum (NY)	3RD VICE PRESIDENT Geraldine Schwartz (PA)	HISTORIAN Darlene Finkel (NY)
SECRETARY Susan Ranno (CT)	WELFARE OFFICER Maria Perez (TX)	RITUAL OFFICER Antoinette Auremma (PA)
TREASURER Elaine Diaczun (NY)	DIRECTOR 1-YEAR Eva Carlin, PDP (TX)	VAVS REPRESENTATIVE Elaine Diaczun (NY)
1ST VICE PRESIDENT Loretta Budd (CT)	DIRECTOR 2-YEAR Rita Wulf (OH)	



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Judge Not ...

I was shocked, confused, bewildered as I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all, nor the lights or the décor.
But it was the folks in heaven who made me sputter and gasp -
The thieves, the liars, the sinners, the alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from the seventh grade who swiped my lunch money twice, looking
Next to him was my old neighbor who never said anything nice.
John, who I always thought was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine, looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal? I would love to hear your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here? God must have made a mistake.
And why's everyone so quiet, so somber—give me a clue"
"Hush, child," He said, "they're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you!"

Thanx and a tip of the halo to
1st Vice Commander RON PEURA
Post 1959, Lake County, Ohio