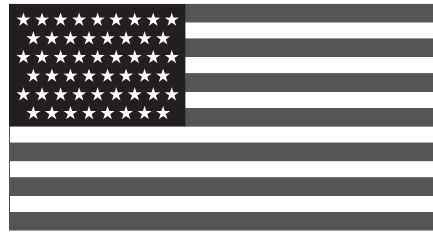


# Veterans of Mount Prospect Illinois



VOL22 June 2022

*In Remembrance Editor Emeritus Bob Fey*



## Medal of Honor Recipient Visits Mount Prospect by Jim Parker

Host Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 with American Legion Post 525, present, proudly welcomed Medal of Honor recipient Allen J. Lynch as the Keynote Speaker at its annual Memorial Day ceremony. Mr. Lynch also served as the Grand Marshall of the Memorial Day parade. The ceremony began at the Lions Park Veterans Memorial Band Shell after the conclusion of the parade, which kicked off from the Village Hall at 0930 am on 30 May 2022.

Born in Chicago in 1945 and raised in nearby Porter County, Indiana, Mr. Lynch joined the U.S. Army just after finishing high school in 1964. He developed his skills as a soldier while assigned to a unit in Germany, rising to the rank of Specialist Fourth Class before volunteering for service in Vietnam. Upon his arrival in the fall of 1966, Lynch was assigned to the 12th Cavalry where he served initially as a rifleman before being appointed his platoon's radiotelephone operator. His Medal of Honor citation describes an event that occurred on December 15th, 1967. Lynch and the rest of his platoon were on their way back for a well-deserved rest when they were called in to support another company that had been outnumbered by a strong enemy force. Under intense fire, Lynch carried three wounded soldiers to safety, and single-handedly defended them against the advancing enemy force for several hours.

After leaving active duty, Lynch settled in Gurnee, IL and worked for several years in the Veterans Administration, advocating for increased benefits for disabled veterans, and served most recently as chief of the Veterans Rights Bureau for the Illinois Attorney General's Office. He also

served with the U.S. Army Reserve and the Illinois National Guard until a mandatory retirement in 1994. He continues that commitment to service through his veterans foundation and through volunteer work with the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Lake County Jail.

This year's Memorial Day ceremony attendees had the opportunity to purchase a copy of Mr. Lynch's book, "From Zero to Hero" in which he speaks of his life and military service. All book sale proceeds were donated to the Allen Lynch Foundation, a 501c(3) non-profit that provides donations to other organizations that help veterans and grants to individual veterans and their families who are in need of medical, financial or educational assistance. Additionally, the Humana organization provided fundraising assistance to the Foundation in the form of a raffle drawing. The prize were to a 11" x14" framed patriotic print. Only 208 of the \$10 tickets will be sold. The ticket number honors the 208 Illinois natives who have been awarded the Medal of Honor throughout its history. Each ticket had a biography, including the MOH citation, attached. The drawing was held after Memorial Day lunch and Dutch DeGroot's family won. The ceremony also featured groups of Revolutionary and Civil War reenactors. The parade included Military vehicles, HS bands and many other local participants. This events was a rare opportunity to see and hear from a Medal of Honor recipient and a true American hero. Also on short notice Governor Pritzker attended.

All in all, this year's Memorial Day was especially memorable. See some photos in this edition.



## Mount Prospect VFW Post 1337 Completes a “Day of Service” Project for Local Veteran Family

This year the national headquarters of Veterans of Foreign Wars announced a new program in which every VFW Post was asked to perform a *Day of Service* in their community during the month of May.

For its part, Post 1337 elected to assist a Mount Prospect Viet Nam era veteran and his family with a Spring yard clean up. Several of its members and some friends signed up to help and completed the project last Tuesday. They did the usual leaf raking, lawn mowing, weed whacking, edging, trimming and –a big something else. In the back yard two large trees died and had fallen over. A third tree was almost dead and posed a falling hazard to overhead electrical wiring and the home. The yard was also littered with hundreds of large and small tree branches. A couple of the volunteers cranked up their chain saws, chopped up the fallen trees and safely and expertly felled the standing tree. Others engaged in the massive task of pickup up, raking up and hauling the deadfall out to the parkway. The Mount Prospect Department of Public Works made a very timely (and much appreciated) appearance with a wood chipper team and, much sooner than anyone anticipated, the parkway was cleared of the debris. Needless to say, the family was quite pleased with the results and expressed their appreciation for a job well done.

The Day of Service is the newest component of the VFW’s **#Still Serving** initiative intended to bring recognition to how much U.S. military veterans continue to serve their communities after they take off their uniform.



## American Legion Junior High

### Achievement Awards

Again this year as in countless years past, post 525 attended 6 separate junior high graduations to award the coveted American Legion awards. At each school 3 unique medals were presented to the deserving boy AND girl students as chosen by their faculty. They are; The Citizenship medal, the Academic Achievement medal and the Overall All School Medallion. In all, 36 awards were presented. Schools attended were: Lincoln Middle School, St Emily School, Holmes Jr High, St. Raymonds School, St Paul School, and St Alphonsus. Annually the post is welcomed and appreciated by the faculty, the parents and the graduates’ themselves. Each school always offers a warm reception to our visit. I believe that their graduation experience is enriched by the presence of American veterans there to sincerely honor deserving students. Excellent community involvement!



## American Legion 2021/2022 Fiscal Ending

by Ron Vlcek Post 525 Adjutant



The National American Legion operates on a fiscal year basis which runs from July 1st through June 30th. However the membership runs on a calendar year from January 1st through December 31st; and this creates a lot of confusion. With the fiscal year coming to a close, all entries must be made by June 17, 2021, which is

listed as the “Close of Books” date. The membership goal is to have one more member this year than we did last year. In 2021 we had 143 members, so that was our target for 2022. This year we ended up with 130 members, which was 90.9 % of our goal. We had 10 members that failed to renew their membership, as well as some members that had passed away. To aid in achieving our goals, the National membership opens up the 2023 membership with the start of the 2023 fiscal year on July 1st. Any new members joining now will be enrolled in the 2023 year. Our goal will now be to have 130 members before December 31st 2023.

While our membership may have dropped a little bit, we have been seeing a higher attendance at our meetings. When the meetings started back up after the Covid restrictions we would have only 12-15 people attending the meetings. Recently, we have been averaging 25-30 members in attendance. Remember, if you know a veteran, check and see if they might be interested in joining our Post. They may attend our meetings as a guest to see if we meet their expectations, as we do a lot for veterans and the local community. We recently voted to provide new members with the Legion hat (cover), thereby saving \$65 in uniform costs. The Post also provides a bite to eat and drinks after each meeting, so come join us.

## 2022 Law Enforcement Award by Post 1337



### Comander Les Durov and Post members Ron Willer, Jim Parker, Tony Cuellar, Chuck Ohrn & Bill Starr present certificate from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 to Officer Kalinowski at the Village board meeting.

At the March 21, 2022 Gurnee Village Board Meeting Commander Les Durov of the Mount Prospect Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337, presented a First Responder Americanism Certificate of Appreciation to Gurnee Police Sgt. Jason Kalinowski. The award was presented to Sgt. Kalinowski by Post 1337 as part of a program developed and sponsored by the national organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to honor and recognize first responders. Attending the presentation from the Village were Mayor Tom Hood, the Village Trustees, Police Chief Brian Smith, Police Commander Jon Ward and many officers of the Gurnee Police Department. Also in attendance was Sgt. Kalinowski's wife, Danielle. Joining Commander Durov were several officers of Post 1337 and American Legion Post 525.

Sgt. Kalinowski began his career as policeman in 2006 when he joined the Kenilworth Police Department after graduating from the Police Training Institute in Champaign. In 2008

he moved to the Village of Gurnee where he has served for almost 14 years. During his tenure Sgt Kalinowski has served the Village in many police positions including as the New Hire Liaison, the Field Training Officer Coordinator, and the Field Sobriety Test Trainer. He is also the current President of the Fraternal Order of Police Social Lodge. Sgt Kalinowski and Danielle reside in Antioch with their 10 year-old son and 8 year-old daughter.

In accepting the award Sgt. Kalinowski expressed his thanks and appreciation to Post 1337 for honoring him with the certificate. He told the audience that he was extremely proud to serve the citizens of Gurnee and to wear the badge and uniform of the Gurnee Police Department.

VFW Post 1337 is honored to salute this talented, dedicated and brave police officer who helps make the Village of Gurnee be a better place to work and live by keeping its residents and employees safe.

## Annual Grave Decoration Day 2022

### by Dana Betzner Decoration Day Chair

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! What might be perceived by some as an insurmountable task was tackled head on and achieved handily again this year.

In accordance with a tradition as old as our country, Mount Prospect's American Legion Post 525 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 gathered May 26, 2022 to place flags of honor and remembrance on the graves of many local veterans. 22 members from both posts, along with their family members, assembled early in the morning and by early afternoon they had placed over 300 American flags at locations in 20 area cemeteries. At St. John Cemetery and St. Paul Cemetery flags were placed on the graves of all veterans that could be identified from cemetery records. At others, including All Saints, Memory Gardens, and Wheeling Township cemeteries, the final resting places of deceased members of both VFW Post 1337 and American Legion Post 525 were honored.

### Press Release by Jim Parker

In accordance with a tradition as old as our country, Mount Prospect's American Legion Post 525 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337 gathered last Thursday to place flags of honor and remembrance on the graves of many local veterans. A rainy forecast did not discourage about 18 members of both Posts who, along with some family members, assembled early in the morning and received their assignments. By late afternoon they had placed almost 300 American flags at locations in 20 area cemeteries. At St. John Cemetery and St. Paul Cemetery flags were placed on the graves of all veterans that could

be identified from cemetery records. At others, including All Saints, Memory Gardens, and Wheeling Township cemeteries, the final resting places of deceased members of both Posts were honored.

The practice of decorating veteran's graves began in America soon after the Revolutionary War. In many communities in several States, local residents made decorations and picked fresh Spring flowers to honor the gravesites of heroes who helped win their independence. Over the next several years many more towns and villages did the same and it became an annual event. After the Civil War in 1868 General (later, president) James Garfield delivered a speech about veterans to about 5,000 people gathered at Arlington National Cemetery. After the speech those in attendance decorated graves of about 20,000 soldiers from both sides. The event became know as Decoration Day. Following WWI observers began to honor the dead of all of America's wars and both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars made it an annual ceremony. In 1971 the U.S. Congress made "Memorial Day" a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Monday of May.

Long before that, however, the Village of Mt Prospect, proudly the home of a great many American veterans, began to honor its fallen heroes in a similar fashion. This has been part of the traditions of both posts since their inception. VFW Post 1337 was chartered in April 1925. American Legion Post 525 was formed in November of 1930.

Every year on the "official" Memorial Day, cities and town across America plan parades and festivities. Families have reunions and bar-b-ques. American Legionnaires and VFW comrades also enjoy these activities. Grave Decoration Day, however, is not held on the "official" day. Rather, Post 525 and Post 1337 decorates graves on a quiet weekday, like last Thursday, when they can place their flags with somber respect and remember their departed comrades. As veterans, they understand, perhaps better than most, the true meaning of Memorial Day.

## Memorial Day 2022

30 May 2022 was certainly a special day in the history of Mount Prospect. After more than 6 months of detailed planning for what we all knew was going to be the largest ceremony ever in the village. It started with Post 525 Commander Starr requesting Medal of Honor recipient Allen J. Lynch if he would be our keynote speaker. After that the committee of almost 20 people met once a month. The Village at all levels and park district represented. Our amazing fellow organizations the Mount Prospect Lions Club & Moose Lodge 660, we couldn't do without their support. Humana our trusted partner was invaluable and naturally our two post seem to always raise to the occasion. Estimated that *over 4,000 attended*, at the last moment Governor Pritzker asked to attend and gave a nice appropriate speech. Then Mr. Lynch gave a presentation that was incredible. He graciously joined us for a wonderful luncheon chaired by Carol Ohrn and our many volunteers. We're working on doing another like ceremony for 2023.....stay tuned.

We were lucky to have Mike Zarnek & Fred Pfeifer professional photographers on hand to take some amazing images that you see on these pages, thanks to both.



Service  
&  
Sacrifice  
**MEMORIAL DAY**  
**MOUNT PROSPECT ILLINOIS**







**Our special thanks to our Active duty military as well as Taylor's Battery & Hamiltons Artillery**



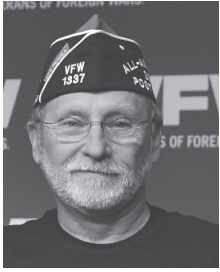
*Prospect  
Marching Knights*

Mount Prospect, IL





## From the Commander of VFW Post 1337



This is the start of the new year 2022 – 2023. Our Post VFW Post 1337 has been on a high. All State and All American four years in a row. Great job to all of you. Without the help from all of you this could not have been successful. We at VFW Post 1337 have a great and talented crew. I say let's make it five in a row.

Our VFW Post 1337 delivered a complete X-Sheet. Teacher of the year Stephanie Kezios. First responder Jason Kalinowski for our entry for Policeman. Our 4TH District had an entry for the VOD award Natalie Siseck.

Last year's highlights are amazing to say the least. I believe that Memorial Day parade and ceremony was the icing on top. To have a great speaker the Medal of Honor Recipient Allan Lynch as our keynote speaker was above reapproach. With the help from everyone we achieved the best Memorial Day ever in Mount Prospect. We can not leave behind the talents of the film and sound crew, Howard and Steve. Public works gave an extra step and made everything run smooth. The Police and Fire Departments as well as Jim Millers CERT team made it look easy. Humana, Lions and Moose Clubs with their generous donations. Helped to make all this happen.

Thanks to all of you that contributed to our Memorial Day Holiday. The Veterans at VFW Post 1337 say we could not have done this without your help. Thank you from all of us.

*Les Durov, All State All American Commander*

## From the Commander of the American Legion



Through the efforts of many veterans from the VFW and assisted by American Legionnaires, the Memorial Day commemoration (both parade and ceremony) were a resounding success. Beginning with the commitment of Medal of Honor recipient Allen Lynch in January to attend and be the keynote speaker, the wheels began to turn purposely to make

this year's ceremony the best in Mt Prospect Village History. Dutch DeGroot worked his magic and designed a "Service and Sacrifice" brand that carried through the entire event. The good and patriot people of Mt Prospect did not let us down resulting in an attendance figure estimated to be over 4000. Following the ceremony the VFW hosted a luncheon at the Moose lodge for an excess of 250 people. Allen Lynch graciously posed and signed autographs until all requests were satisfied. This year's Memorial Day will be a tough act to follow for next year. Thanks to all involved. Next up are the 4th of July Parade, the "Wine Tent" at the Lion's Festival and the Annual Veterans Family picnic. Watch for the emails.

*Yours in Service, Bill Starr*

## Our Newsletter

Once again your newsletter has taken State and National awards. Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Illinois First place in its class. Veterans of Foreign Wars National second place (*they must of made a mistake*). American Legion Department of Illinois First Place. We find out as we design this one. We'll see how we place nationally later. Thank you to all that contribute and our proof reader Jan DeGroot.



## From the Service Officer



Comrades, It's been an amazing time for both posts and veterans in general. Legislation wise, we have had some great bills passed on the Federal as well as the State level. These bills have helped both our veterans community and their families. In Illinois, the tax exemption for surviving spouses passed. This allows for their real estate taxes to be discounted.

If the veteran passed from a service connected cause, the surviving spouse will be exempt from real estate tax altogether.

On the Federal side "The Pack Act" allows for the expansion of VA care with an emphasis on toxins. This means our newer veterans can apply for benefits for disease caused by burn pits and oil well contamination, to name some.

It also expands the areas where agent orange was used during the Vietnam war. This is truly a massive veteran friendly bill.

It was accomplished through support from all of us when we contacted our legislators and swayed them to do what's right.



## Annual Family Picnic

**14 August 12hr00**

**Moose Lodge 660**

**Please respond with head count**

**Adults & Children**

**Contact Jan DeGroot**

**[jandegroot@comcast.net](mailto:jandegroot@comcast.net)**



## Save the Date

**The 7th Annual Legion Fall Classic Golf Tournament is scheduled for 6 October 2022 at Mt Prospect Golf Course. Games, Prizes and Fun all to benefit homeless veterans.**