



Issue 2025-1

December 28, 2024

THE PHOENIX

For the American Legion Family of Post 712

American Legion Post 712

VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

> MEETING NOTES <

Elected Officers

Commander—**Lloyd Ray**

1st Vice Commander
John Dillon

2nd Vice Commander
Don Smoley

Finance
Thad Weidmann

Appointed Officers

Adjutant
Ann Guttendorf

Judge Advocate
Nick Krawec

Svc Ofcr
Don Rottman

Chaplain
Susan Coville-Cook

Executives-at-Large

1. **Nick Krawec**
2. **Don Rottman**
3. **John Caligiure**
4. **Susan Coville-Cook**

Webpage
Thad Weidmann

Editor— **John Dillon**
412-606-8812
USA@ALPost712PA.org

MEETING SCHEDULE: American Legion Post 712 holds Monthly Meetings on the third Tuesday of the Month at 7 PM, at 3801 Saw Mill Run Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15227.

Like & Follow on Facebook at *American Legion Post 712*
<https://www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionPost712PA>

Post 712 held our regularly scheduled Meeting on Tuesday, December 17th at 7 PM. The Meeting was Chaired by **Commander Lloyd Ray**. *The meeting was followed by our new tradition of **712 Social Hour** during which after the meeting we socialize with one another in the Main Hall of the VFW about the "good ol' days" and the not so good ol days in uniform, and anything we want to yammer on about. It is a time for members of the Legion Family to be with one-another and ultimately, that is among the greatest purposes of the American Legion—Camaraderie.*

Happy New Year!

2025

> MEETING NOTES <

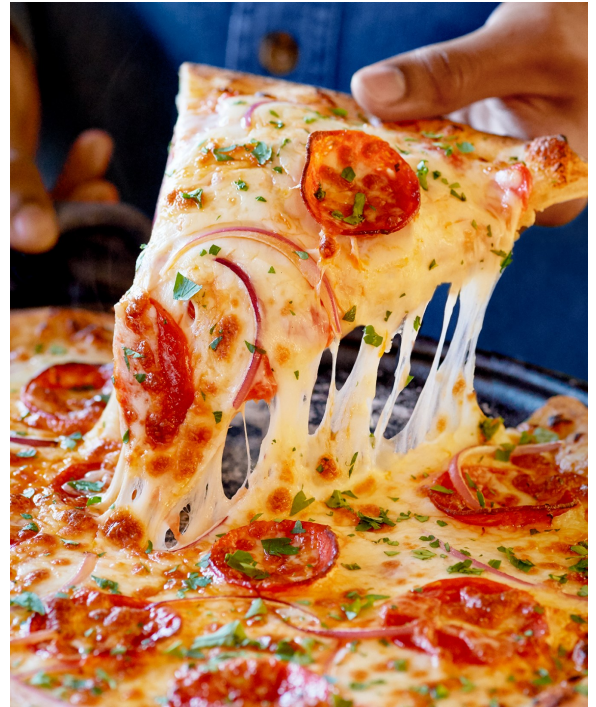
THANK YOU FOR GIVING BACK

- ◆ **OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION DONATION:** Post 712 voted to continue a donation of \$100 a month to OTA during calendar year 2025, for a total donation of **\$1,200**. As you know several Legionnaires and family members also **Volunteer at OTA**; though there is always room for more Volunteers if you have some time to help out. There are jobs big and small for everyone.
- ◆ **Commander Lloyd Ray** noted Post 712, consistent with our mandate to support members of the American Legion Family made a donation of \$250 to a member of the Post 712 family who was down on his/her luck due to a family tragedy and needed a helping hand. Though the identity of this person will remain private as all such donations will, for accountability and audit purposes the identity of the member is known to the Officers of the Post.
- ◆ Our discussion about members in need led to an open discussion during which Post leadership noted there are likely members who are in need and who Post 712 would be willing to help, though we as Veterans tend to be a proud bunch and do not like to ask for help. Therefore it is up to every member of Post 712 to check on their Buddies to make sure our Brothers and Sisters are ok. If you know someone who needs help contact a Post Officer and let's see what Post 712 can do to support Veterans in Need in our own Family. And here's an very important point, "***We don't just help Legionnaires during the holidays, but all year long.***"
- ◆ **Riders Director John Dillon** gave a report and advised the Riders are strong and eagerly awaiting spring weather. Three Riders purchased new motorcycles and are even more eager than normal to hit the road. The Riders recently held their **Christmas Party** at Castle Shannon Legion Post 490, which was a great success and the Riders also have plans to attend the upcoming **George Thorogood Concert** as a group (which has nothing to do with riding motorcycles or the American Legion, though they were pretty excited over it—lol). John reminded the membership that to be a Rider you must be a member of the Legion, the SAL, or the ALA, own a motorcycle and have a valid license and insurance. John also noted that several of the **712 Riders are actually Legionnaires & SALs from Castle Shannon Post 490**. If a Legion Post does not have their own Riders group, they may join the Riders of another Post and still remain with their home Post for Legion (SAL) membership. The relationship between Post 712 and Post 490 is very strong and beneficial to both organizations.
- ◆ **OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION DONATION:** Post 712 voted to continue a donation of \$100 a month to OTA during calendar year 2025, for a total donation of \$1,200. As you know several Legionnaires and family members also Volunteer at OTA; though there is always room for more Volunteers if you have some time to help out. There are jobs big and small for everyone.
- ◆ **712 Social Hour** — After the meeting most members hung around for an hour or so in the Main Hall to talk to fellow 712 Members, eat snacks and enjoy their favorite beverage, whether pop or beer. Camaraderie is the best part of the American Legion. A good time was had by all and no one went home hungry.

> MEETING NOTES <

THANK YOU LEGIONNAIRES!

- ◆ To encourage camaraderie among the 712 Family the Executive Board decided to sponsor **712 Social Hour after every Post Meeting, during which the Post will pay for food and soft drinks.** This will give all members of the Legion Family the opportunity to fill up on some good chow and to interact with one-another to discuss our days in uniform, politics, the weather, or whatever is on your mind. Social Hour is not a structured meeting, the bar will be open in the Main Hall of the VFW and as noted, food and soft drinks will be provided compliments of Post 712. It is a time to relax with your fellow Vets. Post Meetings typically last from 7—8 PM and 712 Social Hour is expected to last about 8:00—9:00ish PM. **Our next Post meeting is Tuesday, January 21st, 2025 at 7 PM. 712 Social Hour will follow the Post meeting!**



- ◆ Do you have some photo's of your days in Service? Or perhaps you have photos of a family member of whom you would like to share their Service. Do you have a story you would like to share with your fellow Legionnaires? If so, you can do so right here in the pages of the newsletter. Don't worry, we'll help with the write-up, all you have to do is tell us your story and the newsletter staff will handle the rest.
- ◆ Thank You **Finance Officer Thad Weidmann** who purchased four (4) Post 712 T-shirts (with his own money) for the Veterans at **Southwest Veterans Center (SWVC)**. Your generosity is exemplary!
- ◆ Along the same lines, thanks to **1st Vice Commander John Dillon** who was inspired by Thad's gesture and who matched Thad's kindness and also purchased four (4) Post 712 T-shirts for the Vets at SWVC. Though we noted just last month John's better half, **Mrs. Susan Dillon of the ALA**, purchased six (6) Post 712 T-Shirts for the Veterans at the SWVC. Just saying ...
- ◆ The Vets at SWVC need and appreciate simple items and a cool-looking T-shirt is right up their alley. If you want to sponsor a T-shirt donation for a Vet at SWVC or any other location, Post 712 will ensure the shirts are delivered appropriately. Call 412-606-8812—it's a simple yet effective way to give back to these Vets who need a helping hand from time to time.

Fort Pickett Rechristened - Fort Barfoot -

DoD Mandate to Cease Honors to the Confederacy Ongoing Series in *The Phoenix*, Article 7 of 9

Background — The Department of Defense mandated all honors rendered to the Confederacy to cease, including Army Posts named after Confederate Officers. During 2023, the Secretary of Defense directed all military installations named in honor of Confederate Officers to be redesignated with names more in keeping with the social norms of society today.

The Post formerly known as Fort Pickett, VA, was redesignated as Fort Barfoot, VA on March 24, 2023, in honor of **Colonel (Col) Van T. Barfoot, a World War II Medal of Honor Recipient**. Fort Barfoot houses **Virginia Army National Guard** units on approximately 41,000 acres of open and wooded terrain. The Fort has 5,000 barracks, which is not a lot of sleeping space, when you consider a Division may have as many as 10,000 soldiers, but remember, this is a National Guard Post utilized primarily for training and maneuver and not to house soldiers on a permanent basis. In this regard Fort Barfoot is similar to **Fort Indian Town Gap, PA**.

During 1941 Camp Pickett, VA was established in the area of **Blackstone, VA** in preparation of U.S. involvement in World War II. The Camp was named in honor of Confederate **General George Pickett**, a Virginian, who led the famous charge during which **General Lee** ordered him to assault Union lines during the **Battle of Gettysburg** on July 3, 1863. Gen Pickett argued against the charge, though did as ordered leading 3 Brigades of Virginia Infantry across an open field nearly a mile long only to be cut down by Union artillery and rifle fire suffering 60% casualties. The Virginians in Pickett's Charge *suffered 6,555 casualties in less than an hour of fighting*. Some consider the failure of Pickett's charge a last gasp effort ordered by Lee and the beginning of the end for the Confederate Army.

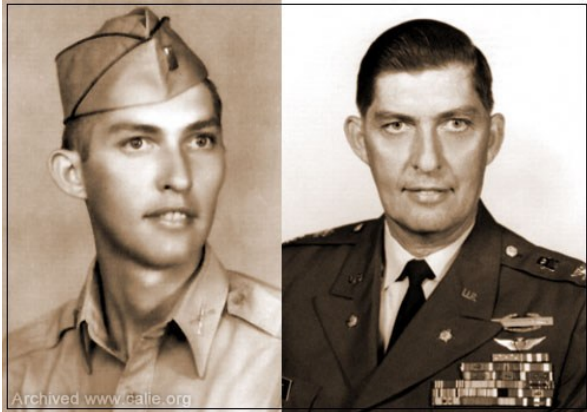
So that's Pickett, but who is Col Barfoot? Col Barfoot was of Choctaw Indian heritage and a

Tech Sergeant originally in the **1st Infantry Division "Big Red One"** and then with the **45th Infantry Division "Thunderbirds."** On May 23, 1944 during the breakout from Anzio to Rome, Barfoot knocked out 2 machine gun nests and captured 17 German soldiers. Later that day he stopped a German tank assault, destroyed a Nazi artillery piece and carried 2 wounded soldiers to safety. Tech SGT Barfoot received a field grade promotion to 2Lt.



The Citation for 2nd Lt Barfoot's Medal of Honor Reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 23 May 1944, near Carano, Italy. With his platoon heavily engaged during an assault against forces well entrenched on commanding ground, 2d Lt. Barfoot (then Tech. Sgt.) moved off alone upon the enemy left flank. He crawled to the proximity of 1 machinegun nest and made a direct hit on it with a hand grenade, killing 2 and wounding 3 Germans. He continued along the German defense line to another machinegun emplacement, and with his tommygun killed 2 and captured 3 soldiers. Members of another enemy machinegun crew then abandoned their position and gave themselves up to Sgt. Barfoot. Leaving the prisoners for his support squad to pick up, he proceeded to mop up positions in the immediate area, capturing more prisoners and bringing his total count to 17.



Later that day, after he had reorganized his men and consolidated the newly captured ground, the enemy launched a fierce armored counterattack directly at his platoon positions. Securing a bazooka, Sgt. Barfoot took up an exposed position directly in front of 3 advancing Mark VI tanks. From a distance of 75 yards his first shot destroyed the track of the leading tank, effectively disabling it, while the other 2 changed direction toward the flank. As the crew of the disabled tank dismounted, Sgt. Barfoot killed 3 of them with his tommygun. He continued onward into enemy terrain and

destroyed a recently abandoned German fieldpiece with a demolition charge placed in the breach. While returning to his platoon position, Sgt. Barfoot, though greatly fatigued by his Herculean efforts, assisted 2 of his seriously wounded men 1,700 yards to a position of safety. Sgt. Barfoot's extraordinary heroism, demonstration of magnificent valor, and aggressive determination in the face of pointblank fire are a perpetual inspiration to his fellow soldiers.

Col Barfoot served during 1940—1974 in **WWII and the Korean and Vietnam Wars, retiring as a Colonel** and having been the recipient of numerous medals in addition to the Medal of Honor, including the Purple Heart Medal (3). Col Barfoot died during 2012 at the age of 92.

The American Swastika: The **45th Infantry Division** formed during Aug. 1923 with the swastika as their symbol. The swastika has been used throughout history to represent ideas, such as harmony, one with nature, and unity, and in 1923 the crooked swastika of the Nazi Party had yet to be invented so no one had a second thought about the choice. However, once the Nazi Party grew to prominence the Army directed the 45th to find a new symbol. Chosen



was the Thunderbird, a symbol of strength. Though for a short time during the early years of WWII, American soldiers did wear a swastika patch on their uniform.

45th Infantry Division Shoulder Sleeve Insignia pre WWII (Swastika) and during/post WWII (Thunderbird).

Motto: Semper Anticus (Always Forward)

Unit: Oklahoma National Guard

Active 1923 / Disbanded 1968

"The Six Triple Eight"

Did anyone see the new movie that just came out on Netflix titled, "**The Six Triple Eight**?" The movie is about, in-part, Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Charity **Adams**, the Battalion Commander of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-Black, all-female Women's Army Corps unit deployed during WWII, whom we reviewed in the pages of the November 2024 Post Newsletter reference the DOD Mandate for all U.S. Army Posts and Forts named in honor of Confederate Officers be redesignated under a new, socially appropriate, name. The Post formerly known as Fort Lee, VA has been redesignated as Fort Gregg **Adams**, VA.



- ♦ As reported last month Post 712 donated Honor Guard ammunition and paraphernalia to the **American Legions in Dravosburg, Post 380 and White Oak, Post 701**. However, we still had two empty ammo cans; one of them a vintage style can from many years ago. We know a lot of you appreciate military paraphernalia so we wanted to give the 712 Family first chance to buy these used ammo cans. One of our **Son's of the American Legion (SAL)** bought both ammo cans for \$25.



> 712 Donations During 2024/25 <

During 2024, **Post 712 donated a minimum of \$12,000** to local organizations in support of Veterans and Youth and we have **volunteered 519** hours of work to local non-profit organizations and community projects.

We are American Legion Post 712!

Thomas Jefferson Junior Football League, \$300

Thomas Jefferson High School Baseball, \$170

Thomas Jefferson High School 5K For a Cure Race, \$200

Thomas Jefferson High School Theater, \$100

Thomas Jefferson High School Band, \$500

American Legion Post 490 Castle Shannon, \$400

American Legion Post 940 West Brownsville, \$100

American Legion Post 380 Dravosburg, Honor Guard equipment

American Legion Post 701 White Oak, Honor Guard equipment

South Park High School Football, \$100

South Park High School Soccer, \$95

South Park High School Basketball, \$95

Brentwood VFW Post 1810, \$4,400

Operation Troop Appreciation, \$3,500

Veterans Place of Washington Blvd, \$2,400

Pleasant Hills Volunteer Fire Company, \$100

Pennsylvania American Legion Hurricane Relief Fund, \$500

Volunteer as Veteran of the Game (5) with the Pittsburgh, Pirates

Volunteer at Operation Troop Appreciation

Volunteer at National Cemetery of the Alleghenies

Volunteer at cemeteries to prep graves for Memorial Day

Volunteer at Pleasant Hills Community Day

Volunteer at the Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall

What's going on in your neighborhood? How can we help?

The American Legion – Still Serving

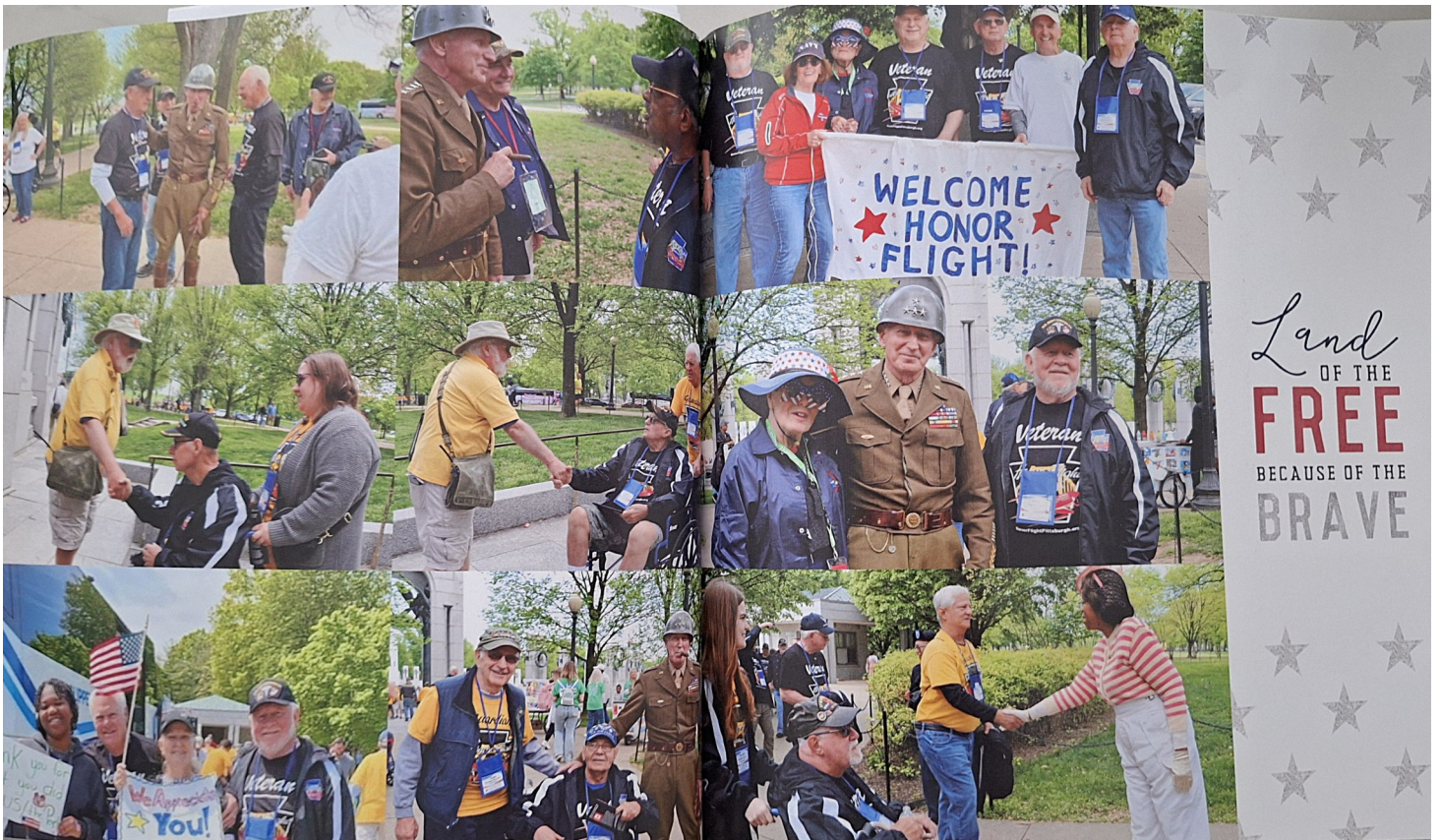
> Someone You Should Know <

Many of you know **Legionnaire Ron Stachevich** or as he is more commonly known, "**Stach.**" Ron is an Air Force Veteran who is retired and lives in the area. He is a long-time member of Post 712 and an all-round great guy. After the December Post Meeting we were sitting around talking during the 712 Social Hour and Ron mentioned he was afforded the opportunity to participate in **Honor Flight 13** during April 2024. If you're not familiar with the Honor Flight Program it is a wonderful program that honors Veterans for their service. As noted in their Mission Statement:

"Honor Flight Pittsburgh recognizes our American Veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by transporting them to ... Washington D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifice."

It's a long day for the Vet's leaving about 4:00 AM and returning about 11:00 PM, but all needs are provided for and each Vet is assigned a **Volunteer Guardian** whose job is to stay with the Vet throughout the day to assist with movement and such. Stach's Guardian was a doctor at the Butler County Hospital and volunteering was the doctor's way of giving back. If you want to know more talk to Stach or check it out on the web at www.honorflightpittsburgh.org. In the mean time, enjoy the photographs!



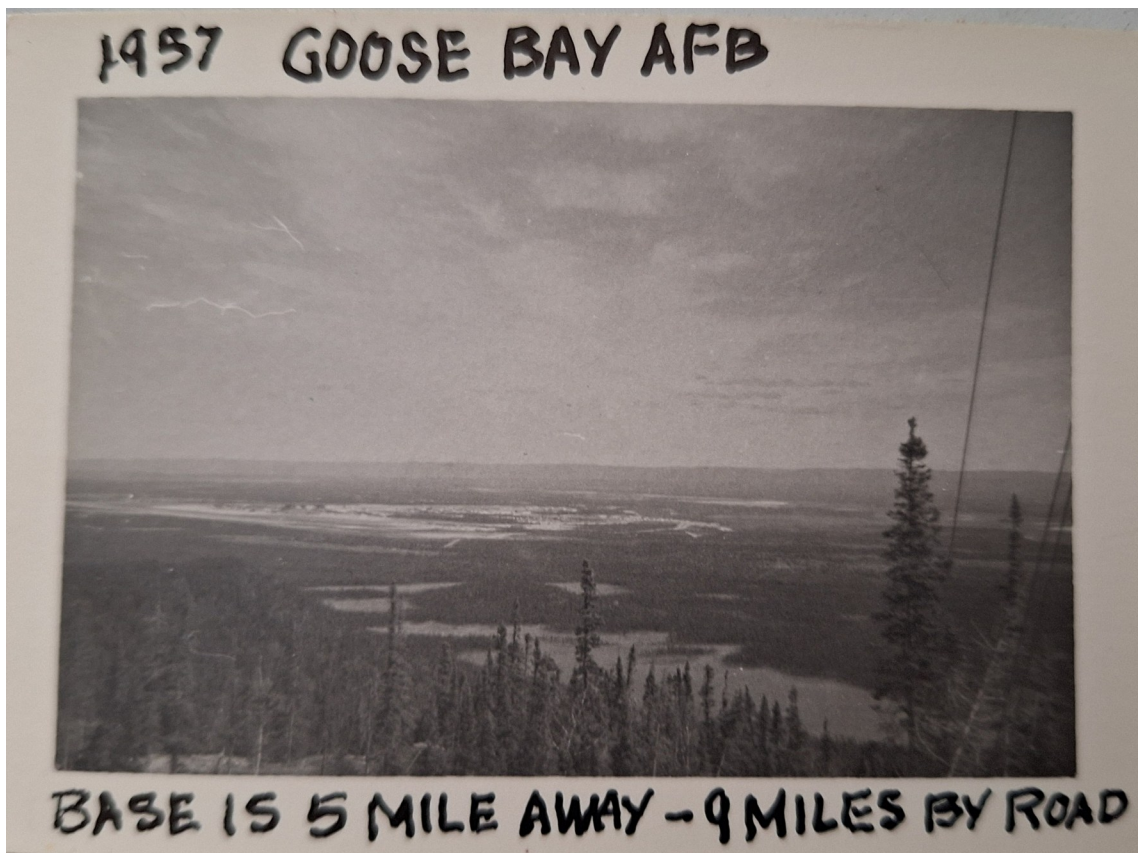


Honor Flight Pittsburgh

Mission 13
April 2024

Stach also shared some of his experiences in the Air Force, particularly his assignment to **Goose Bay Air Force Base in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada**. Stach was there during the 1950's. Being an Army Vet, I had never heard of Goose Bay AFB, so I did a little research, Goose Bay Air Force Base was built during 1942 and has remained active all this time. Today it houses the Royal Canadian Air Force 5 Wing, which supports the **North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)** and allied air forces. Goose Bay is also home to a

Military Museum that is reportedly one of the best, especially in regards to U.S. and Canadian Air Force exhibits ... And as you can see from the photo's of Stach, it's cold and snowy!





The snow at Goose Bay AFB would reach the 2nd floor windows and even the roof line.

Stach at Goose Bay AFB, 1950's.



All Honorably Discharged Veterans have **PX on-line shopping privileges**. Meaning any Veteran with an Honorable Discharge may shop on-line and receive the tremendous benefits of PX/BX shopping –

- ♦ **Military-exclusive pricing** **Tax-free shopping**
- ♦ **Members-only credit options** **Access to specialty stores**
- ♦ **Free shipping on orders over \$49**
- ♦ **Free shipping on all orders when you use your Military Star Card**

You will discover name brands are **significantly reduced from retail prices and all PX sales are tax-free**. The PX is especially great for large purchases such as TV's, washers and dryers, furniture, and high-end items including jewelry, perfume, gifts, and name brand clothing for men, women, and children. *The PX sells just about everything from socks to furniture.* **Check it out at www.ShopMyExchange.com.**

First things first, to get verified apply on-line. The application process is very easy – www.shopmyexchange.com/account/register.

If you need help registering give us a call at Post 712 and we will help you register.

This is a benefit every Veteran earned—Use it!

How Do I Request Military Awards and Decorations?

For the Veteran: in general, the military will work replacement medal requests for the veteran at no cost. This includes family members with the [signed authorization](#) of the veteran.

For the Next-of-Kin: the process (and cost) for replacement medals requests differs among the service branches and is dependent upon who is requesting the medal, particularly if the request involves an archival record.

For the General Public: if the service member separated from military service more than **62 years ago**, the public may [purchase a copy of the veteran's Official Military Personnel File \(OMPF\)](#) to determine the awards due and obtain the medals from a commercial source. If the service member separated **less than 62 years ago**, the public may request such information from the OMPF via the Freedom of Information Act.

For additional information check out the [National Personnel Records Center](http://www.archives.gov) at www.archives.gov.



Robert F. Reitmeyer
August 29th, 2024
American Legion Post 712

Age 86, of the Borough of Whitehall (Pittsburgh), passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 29, 2024. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, Bob graduated from South Hills High School and Duquesne University. He is survived by his wife Regina, son Richard, daughter Rebecca, sisters Suzanne (Paul) Schrenk and Annys Laufer, brothers Timothy (Sheryl) Reitmeyer and Thomas (Kelly) Reitmeyer, and sister-in-law Barbara Reitmeyer, plus countless cousins, nieces, and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers Harry and David.



Bob's career as a helicopter pilot began in the Navy, where he earned his wings, toured the Mediterranean Sea on the USS Taconic, then served on two cruises aboard the USS Edisto, an icebreaker that took him to both the Arctic Circle and Antarctica. Following active duty, he joined the Navy Reserves in Lakehurst, NJ, for a few years before joining the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in Washington, PA, for over 20 years, where he formed many cherished and lifelong friendships. He parlayed his military experience to work as a fixed-wing plane and helicopter pilot for Consol Coal, where he regularly frustrated coworkers with his early morning cheerfulness and occasionally took his children with him on day trips to Washington, DC.

Bob made friends wherever he went, and stayed busy in his retirement by joining groups such as the Streets Run Watershed Association and Baldwin Historical Society. He was a longtime member of a succession of local gyms, where he spent far more time talking with the other regulars than working out.

His quick smile, happy laugh, easygoing manner, continual support of his family, unwavering pride in his children, ongoing struggle with the squirrel and the birdfeeder, and endless supply of sawdust will be missed.

> American Legion Post 712 <

> AMERICAN LEGION POST 712 <

Contact the Legion

USA@ALPost712PA.org

412-901-0327

Mail—American Legion Post
712, 610 Old Clairton Rd,
Pgh, PA 15236

Facebook page:

American Legion Post 712

Website: *ALPost712PA.org*

712 MEETINGS

The 3rd Tuesday of the
month at 7 PM, at 3801 Saw
Mill Run Blvd, Pgh, PA
15227 (VFW bldg).

*Build your legacy and join
us for a meeting*

We Are The Legion

We are the *New Post 712* building a legacy of camaraderie, service and honor. Supporting Veterans and Youth through donations, sponsorships & volunteering, improving our community and aiding non-profit organizations. Join us—Attend a meeting.

American Legion

Membership Requirements

- ◆ Having served at least one day on active duty during World War I or since December 7, 1941
- ◆ Having served honorably
- ◆ Copy of DD214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
- ◆ Call or email for more information
- ◆ Annual Dues = \$37

Sons of the American Legion Program Membership Requirements

- ◆ Male of any age
- ◆ Parent or Grandparent served in the U.S. Military and were eligible for American Legion Membership (Served at least one (1) day on active duty during World War I or any time from December 7, 1941 to date (Includes adopted sons and stepsons)
- ◆ Provide DD214 of Veteran
- ◆ Yes, Post 712 does have a SAL Squadron. Annual dues are \$9. Give us a call

American Legion Riders Membership Requirements

- ◆ Be a member in good standing with the American Legion, the SAL or the ALA
- ◆ Be the legally registered owner or spouse of a motorcycle
- ◆ Be properly licensed and insured as required by law
- ◆ Riders Chapter 712 meet the 1st Wednesday of the month at 7 PM.
- ◆ Yes, Post 712 does have a Riders Chapter. Annual dues are \$5. Give us a call