

I would like to thank all of the honorable guests, members of our post and all patriotic community supporters who attended our 100th Anniversary celebration of the founding of American Legion Portsmouth Post 18. Our hosts at Thriving Tree Coffee House will forever be in our prayers and thoughts for their love of veterans and their generosity.

Post 18 was granted its American Legion charter just over 100 years ago. The original charter has been conserved by our own Chaplain Dave Duggan. The charter was signed August 22, 1919. We are currently looking for a place that we can permanently display this piece of Portsmouth history, as well as appropriate historical documents and regalia associated with our post. I encourage anyone who has an idea regarding this matter to contact me at your convenience.

I am frequently asked where our post is located. The question elicits the basic response; we don't actually have a building, but we are active around town. What is a Post? The dictionary has one definition as; "a local unit of a veterans' organization".

Post 18 owns no building commonly associated with the American Legion. The modern American Legion operates like a mobile expeditionary force, unburdened by an infrequently used facility. Our members can be found "in the field" performing many of our several missions each year.

Now, when I am asked where American Legion Portsmouth Post 18 is located, I can say, "Our post is in the hearts of its members". No clubhouse or lounge can truly represent our modern picture of today's American Legion. Serving veterans and our community is inculcated into everything we do. The luxury of a physical post is difficult to justify as a priority over our primary mission. Ever increasing costs associated with maintaining a building interfere with today's Legionnaires priorities. We can be effective as a mobile Post utilizing our friends in the community as visionaries that share our dedication and love of country.

As we move forward into the next century, the survival of our post will depend on what we do today. The traditions of Post 18 are focused on active participation in several activities throughout the year. Post 18 hosts bingo at the veterans home in Bristol at least twice a year. These games are eagerly anticipated by the residents. Observing the look on the faces of our retired heroes, and the joy each winner exhibits make the experience very rewarding. Our members work to stuff ditty bags for the residents and volunteer to call the numbers and hand out prizes.

We must never forget our friends at the veterans home. If you have the opportunity, please come out and join us. Any members wishing to participate and wanting to ride along or in need of transportation, please let one of our officers know. Our post wants all of our members to increase their involvement in our veterans programs.

My first few months as Commander has been rewarded with an increased awareness of the many people our post touch each year. Past Commanders Dave Duggan and Christine Hayward were able to maintain and create post programs that satisfy the core mission of the American Legion four pillars. In addition to their primary duties, these two represented the Post with professionalism, joy and dedication. These two Legionnaires exemplify the spirit of the principles of the order.

In recognition of their accomplishments, I am honored to present "Life Member" patches to Dave Duggan and Christine Hayward. These patches are awarded to members who have had significant impact on the successful operation of our post. Life Membership is a peer nominated honor and one of the highest compliments a Legionnaire can receive.

As a mobile **boots on the ground** operation, Post 18 can be proud of the impact we have on our community. From flagging graves in April and May, to hosting the Veterans Day remembrance at Town Hall in November, the months in between provide ample opportunity to help others.

If you feel like something in your life is missing, and you can be thankful for our veteran community, please contact any of our officers to learn how you can be a part of saying thank you for your service.

My life was changed when I enlisted in the Marine Corps. The benefits I received far outweigh any thanks I can repay. Join me in the revitalization of our beloved American Legion. The spiritual rewards I receive volunteering exceed any worldly tokens.