

Member Spotlight



Robert T. Riordan

In 2009, Robert T. Riordan, Past Post Commander and Past County Commander, was nominated as Legionnaire of the Year for Nassau County. The following article, which was written by Vincent J. Gabriele, Past Post Commander, lists the numerous accomplishments of Mr. Riordan.

Tom Riordan served in the United States Marines Corps from 1951 to 1953. He joined the American Legion through the DMS program in 1988. The following year he transferred into the North Bellmore Post #1749 and soon after became President of the Post Building Corp. and then became Post Commander for three years. During his tenure as Post Commander, the Post Building was renovated with a cost of about one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Through his efforts he was able to secure a grant for sixty thousand dollars for the renovation.

With the Post in his hometown dwindling down to less than fifteen members and not wanting them to lose their charter, he transferred into the Merrick Post #1282 in 1997. Since joining the Post, through his efforts, our membership has increased to over one hundred and sixty members, which has resulted in our Post reaching its membership goals for nine years. Our Post has been awarded Membership Plaques by the Nassau County Committee on numerous occasions and has been recognized by the Department for his membership activities. In 2002, through his efforts, he signed up new members for a new Post in Farmingdale, NY, which resulted in him being awarded by the Department, a Silver Brigade Pin. Our Post has received other awards from National, Department and County, including the Department's First Place Public Relations Award in 1999 - 2000.

Due to his dedication and efforts, we now have a Veterans Monument in Merrick and at our Post a new-handicapped ramp, new restrooms, a new parking lot built next to our Post, our building sided and new storm windows installed due to grants he obtained for us.

Mr. Riordan has had various assignments with the Nassau County Committee, which includes being elected as Membership Chairman 2002 - 2003 and visited over 45 of the County Posts. In 2003 – 2004 he served as County Adjutant, 2004 – 2005 County Treasurer and in 2005 – 2006 served as County Commander.

In 2001, he was selected as Merrick's Man of the Year. In 2002, he was awarded a Town of Hempstead Veterans Medal. In 2007, he was honored with the Nassau County Distinguished Service to Veterans Award.

Tom Riordan was the driving force to combine the two Memorial Day Parades in the Merricks to one in 2005 so that the Memorial Day Ceremony would be held at our Veterans Monument. He assisted the two Merrick Fire Departments in planning and running the day's event. Our Post took over control of Memorial Day events in 2007, which he chaired that year and also in 2008.

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Post 1282 is now well known in our community through his efforts and programs like Americanism where our School Children are given awards; the Girl Scouts having sleepovers at our Post; and collecting unserviceable U.S. Flags, used eyeglasses, used stamps, playing cards, hearing aids are among the diversity of achievements Mr. Riordan has orchestrated. In 2008, he launched the solicitation of manufacturers coupons at his Post, Community and later through the Department Newsletter advising that our Military Families can use them overseas six months beyond their expiration date.

In November of 2008, he received e-mail from Lieutenant Steven Dere, a Post Member stationed in Iraq asking if items can be sent to him for his soldiers for the holidays. By the middle of December a total of twenty-two packages were sent to this Post Member.

Our local Middle School Social Club had a drive that netted them a thousand dollars for items to be sent to our troops in Iraq. They called on Mr. Riordan since they did not have the funds to ship the packages. Arrangements were made with the School Club Advisor to have the Post pickup the packages and have them sent at the Post expense. This was done after a request for Mr. Riordan to speak at the Social Club, in which he explained about what our branches of service are, and the American Legion. He concluded the speech with a thank you to the students for the project they did for our service people.

In January 2009, a Merrick NY gas station owner contacted Mr. Riordan with a plan for our Post to assist Service People in Iraq, Afghanistan and our Veterans in the VA Nursing Home. In April 2009, the gas station owner along with his wholesaler will donate one and a half pennies on every gallon of gas pumped that month to a fund whereby items will be sent and given to our service people and veterans. The anticipated amount to be collected will be around fifteen hundred dollars.

Vincent J. Gabriele, Past Post Commander