

Don Varnas Bugle

Department of Illinois



Winter Edition – 2025

Volume 3, Issue 11

The American Legion

Commander's Comments:

Glenn A. Cekus

Special Interest Articles

986 News

Pictures from Events

We are 1/3 of the way through winter and I hope everyone in our American Legion post family enjoyed a great Christmas season. We collected clothing Cash and toiletries for patients at the Jesse Brown VA Hospital and delivered them the week after Christmas. The gifts were much appreciated and I thank all of you who donated and /or helped deliver to them. Now we are starting to plan for spring events with the SAL Wolves Hockey Game the next big event. We are also considering a Spring Fling later in the season.

It occurred to me that I have served as Post Commander for just over 10 years. It has been a rewarding experience and I am thankful to all the other post, Auxiliary and squadron officers and members who have given of themselves to keep our American Legion Family active. During the above time, though, we have not held an election of officers for the Post. Post officers just head on to their positions and vacancies were filled by anyone willing to step up and accept the responsibility. It seems that other members should be given the opportunity to serve in an officer billet if so desired. So, we are looking those interested to talk to one of the post offices about the job. This includes Post Commander, Senior and Junior Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Service Officer, Sergeant at Arms, and Judge Advocate.

I did not list Chaplain or Historian because those positions have just recently been filled. I was thinking of proposing an assistant Sergeant at Arms position that would store and preserve the rifles we use for saluting and assist in the care and maintenance of them. Obviously, all the above is still In the planning stage. The current officers will discuss this at greater detail in their next meeting. In the meantime, I will try to answer any questions If needed and I will contact the appropriate office to get the most current info available.

For God and Country,

Glenn A. Cekus, Commander



Pictures from Christmas Party 2024



Veterans Day 2024

On November 10th the Don Varnas Post had their Veterans Day Mass at 11:00 am at Nativity BVM church in the Marquette Park neighborhood. Afterwards there was a ceremony and PowerPoint presentation of deceased members followed by a lunch and refreshments. It was a great time for everyone and a beautiful tribute to our veterans.





VA Jesse Brown VA Hospital Trip

On December 30, 2024 members from the Don Varnas Legion and SAL delivered clothing, toiletries, and checks for monetary donations to Jesse Brown VA hospital. **The total donation was \$3,050.00.** Thanks to all the members of the Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL that donated items. Please consider contributing next time we make a trip.

Picture: from Left to Right: Adjutant Mike Celeski, Jr. Vice Sergio Senese Sr., SAL CDR. Sergio Senese Jr., CDR Glenn Cekus, Sgt at arms Jon Platakis, Historian Robert Vitas and – In other pictures Alberto Lopez (Jesse Brown VA)





**Department
Commander**

Joe Lampert
2024-2025

Post #986 Don Varnas Donates Wreaths for Deceased Veterans

Don Varans Post #986 has sponsored wreaths for veterans who are buried at Abraham Lincoln Cemetery in Elwood, IL, one of the participating cemeteries. The wreaths are placed by volunteers on the special day. We as a Post have been participating in the program for over five years now and will continue to do so. The following veterans and family members had a wreath placed in their honor at their grave and a remembrance card sent to the family member.



Vitas Paskauskas, Major, Army
Cynthia Paskauskas
William Ahlgrim, LCPL, Marine Corps
Peter R. Doyle, SGT, Army
Leonard Nieman, SGT, Marine Corps
Joan T. Nieman
Roger Folkens, SP3, Army
James P. Duignan, SP4, Army
Anthony Cupp, SSGT, Air Force
Leonard Stubenfol, PFC, Army
Joan Stubenfol
Joseph Hartig, SGT, Marine Corps
Francis D. Mossman Sr., PFC, Army
Chris A. Philopoulos, S SGT, Army Air Corps
Rita Philopoulos
Edward G. Nagel, CPL, Marine Corps
LeRoy J. Scherp, CPL, Marine Corps

We also sponsored five additional wreaths for the program to be placed at veteran's graves.

If you know of a deceased Post member or veteran that would appreciate a wreath, please provide Don Varnas Post with the information. If you would like to donate to this program so Don Varnas Post can continue to provide wreaths, please send donations to the Post.

Looking to the future

If you would like to receive the newsletter and all other correspondence such as event flyers and Post information by Email, please submit your email to the Post and we will begin to send it to your email address. Also, we will be announcing our new website soon. The site will have all the information about our Post.



Don Varnas Chit Chat

Department of Illinois



American Legion Auxiliary

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Department President
Arlene Holtgrave
2024-2025

#986 Unit President Report:

Mrs. Mary Ellen Martis

President

Chit Chat Winter 2025

Happy New Year! Thank you to our members and guests who attended the Annual Christmas Party! We had the most attendees ever since I've been Auxiliary President. A big shout out to relatives of the Mangan and O'Donnell families who donated 2 TVs for the raffle. Thank you to Nancy and Karen Lentini for their generous donations. A big thank you to the board members and auxiliary members who work the raffle and behind the scenes to help make this event such a big success. I look forward to the next Christmas party hoping we can keep increase participation.

New members: Kristin Diesness, Erin Mahoney, and Beth O'Donnell. Welcome to the Don Varnas Family.

Membership:

Please pay your membership dues on time so we can achieve **100%** membership. Dues are \$30.00 for Senior members and \$4.00 for Junior members. Send dues to:

Shirley Mangan

6820 West Edgewood Road
Palos Heights, IL 60463

Deepest sympathies to the family of Cynthia Paskauskas who passed away September 18, 2024. Mass of Christian Burial was held at Nativity B.V.M. Church October 12, 2024. Internment Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. Cynthia was a member for 30 years. Cynthia was Auxiliary President for 5 years and Auxiliary Chaplain for 15 years. We will miss Cynthia. Condolences to her sister-in-law Auxiliary member Kathleen Stahl and nieces: Auxiliary members Alyssa Fajardo and Amanda McKay.

Sympathies to Auxiliary member Alice O'Donnell on the passing of her husband Bernard A. O'Donnell. May fond memories comfort you Alice.

Upcoming Events:

Fourth District Spring Luncheon will be held at the Crystal Sky 7941 47th Street McCook IL. On Saturday March 8, 2025 at 12:00

President MaryEllen Martis



"The world will never be a dwelling place of peace until peace has found a home in the heart of each and every person." (Pacem in Terris)

Don Varnas SAL Newsletter

Detachment of Illinois



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Sons of The American Legion

#986 SAL Commander's Report:

CDR Sergio V. Senese Jr.

I hope everyone had a great Holiday season and are enjoying the mild winter so far. We are at that time of the year where there is a slight lull in activity and a slow build to spring, but do not let that make you complacent. Memorial Day will be here before we know it and things will become very busy, very fast. We need all the help we can get as our Post is going through natural attrition and they need all the help they can get and our Squadron is it. So, it is "All hands-on deck" to help maintain the values, traditions, and patriotism that our father and grandfathers had created and that gives us the eligibility to belong and participate in an organization like the Sons of the American Legion. Please consider helping in any way possible from volunteering your time, attending meetings and events, or making a monetary donation. The Post really appreciates our help and so do the veterans and their families that our programs help. Hope to see everyone soon.

For God and Country, Sergio V. Senese Jr.

986 SAL News:

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2024 Veterans Day Ceremony and we had a great time at the Christmas Party. If anyone has not paid their dues, please try to get your dues paid in the next few weeks. The dues are **\$18.00** this year. Remember – if you are not currently paid you are not a valid member and cannot request SAL or Legion benefits from programs if the situation presents itself.

Chicago Wolves Hockey Game and White Sox Game

Sons of the American Legion will host a fundraiser at the Chicago Wolves game located at the Allstate Arena for the National Emergency Fund on April 13, 2025 at the Allstate Arena. Donation includes ticket, a hat, free parking, and free meal ticket. More giveaways like pennants, pucks, and glasses will be raffled off as free door prizes. The hockey flyer is included in this mailing. Sons of the American Legion will host a fundraiser at the Chicago White Sox game located at Guaranteed Rate Field for the American Legion Baseball Program. Date will be August 10, 2025. Also, free prizes will be raffled off. More information on the way.

Detachment News:

DEC: March 29, 2025 – 11:30 am Cullom Squadron #122 | Address 127 West Jackson
Cullom, IL 60929 815-689-2381

Call your officers for more information or go to the state website at www.il-sal.org

Table of Contents

Commanders Report

SAL News



Rick Allen

Detachment Commander
2024-2025

Paul Martis
Steve J. Duignan
Timothy Mitchell

Christopher Cekus

Joseph Romano

New Members

Michael J. Celeski
Michael P. Mangan
Audras Karalis
Berard T. O'Donnell
Luca Senese



Commander Sergio V. Senese Jr. presenting Sr. Vice Commander Christopher Cekus with his 10 Year Certificate and Pin

