



AMVETS POST 917 ALWAYS THERE

By Frank A. Russo – Post 917 Communications Officer
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2016 is coming to an end, opening the door of a new year. Post 917 in Staten Island, New York boasts to be the most active AMVETS Post in the New York City area. This statement will undoubtedly be challenged but the claim is based on facts related to our Post's activities. Following are some activities that Post 917 is proud to boast about:

Walter Reed Visitations – For the past eight years members of our Post have visited, and continue to visit, the injured at Walter Reed National Medical Center at Bethesda, MD (Previously Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C.) every six to eight weeks. At the end of 2016 seven trips were made to the Medical Center with the following data reported to the AMVETS Post Programs Reporting System: 33 volunteers, 735 Man-Hours valued at \$16,956, 3,259 travelled miles, and an activity cost of \$2,805. With the support of the U.S. Coast Guard Station New York in Staten Island, these periodic trips brought, and continue to bring, smiles, comfort, and community support to the brave young men and women injured while in the service of our country. At each of these trips our members and U.S. Coast Guard members distribute T-Shirts, gift cards, comfort items, blankets, and items for the family members and children of the injured. Our post is proud of the special custom T-shirts that have been distributed at the Medical Center over the years. The T-Shirts, having the AMVETS logo, have customized slogans such as "Wounded Warrior – Some Assembly Required", "Wounded Warrior – Healing from Within", and "I stood by Her" with Old Glory next to the slogan. This year, 121 of these T-Shirts were distributed. Since 2013, 820 have been handed out with a value of \$4,096. The injured and their families exhibit smiles and offer sincere thank yous when handed a Wendy's, Subway, Dunkin Donuts, or a McDonald's gift card. Post 917's has distributed 436 gift cards since 2013 with a value of \$4,150 and the activities don't stop here...

Staten Island Welcomes Our Heroes (SIWOH) – For the past eight years Post 917 has organized and sponsored the largest welcome home event in New York City for injured U.S. Servicemen and Women. Each May, usually on Armed Forces weekend, members of Post 917 and members of the U.S. Coast Guard escort a group of injured warriors from Walter Reed Medical Center to Staten Island for a VIP weekend. The honorees are escorted in a motorcade of approximately 250 bikers from various biker organizations, Maryland State Police, Delaware State Police, New Jersey State Police, Port Authority Police, the New York

Police, and the Fire Department of New York. It's clear sailing from the Medical Center to Staten Island with flag wavers all along the way. When the motorcade arrives in Staten Island the honorees are greeted by flag waving crowds as the motorcade slowly makes its way down one of the busiest streets in Staten Island. The honorees enjoy a number of events including a Welcome Home lunch at the Café Commons, Welcome Home dinner hosted by VFW Post 7172, a tour of the New York Harbor aboard U.S. Coast Guard cutters getting up and close to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. This entire event is supported by many volunteers dedicating many hours as is evident in the data reported to the AMVETS Post Programs Reporting System for the 2016 SIWOH event: 310 volunteers, 2200 Man-Hours, 56,500 travelled miles, and an activity cost of \$8,442.83. Meetings are already underway for the SIWOH 2017 event.

Veteran Job Placement – Post 917 is an AMVETS Career Center with member Peter Romano the Staten Island Team Leader. In 2016 Peter was instrumental in placing 7 veterans into employment and 26 in the past two years. Post 917 looks forward to exceeding these numbers in 2017.

Not all activities are organized and on a timetable. In August 2016 our post was notified that an indigent U.S. Marine had passed on and was laying in the morgue with no one to receive the body for funeral arrangements. The few family members that were left behind could not afford the expense to have the body transported to Calverton Cemetery for burial. The body was slated to go to Potter's Field. Post 917 would not allow a U.S. soldier to be buried at Potter's field. Members stepped up to the plate and made calls through the night. In the end Rolling Thunder NY Chapter 1 and Rolling Thunder NY Chapter 2 came forward with donations with Post 917 donating the balance of \$3,325. It was the quick response to step into that batter's box that resulted in having the Marine buried with the honors that were so deserved. On another occasion Post 917 was made aware of a needy veteran in need of air conditioning. The Post immediately contacted the veteran to confirm his needs. Members of the Post went to Home Depot and purchased an air conditioner and extension cord. Two Post members went to the veteran's home and installed the air conditioner. Once again, Post 917 steps up to the plate.

Yes! Post 917 does boast to be the most active AMVETS Post in the New York City area.

You can visit our website at www.post917.com



Post 917 members Frank Russo (left) and George Cusick install an air conditioner for a needy veteran.



An appreciative veteran (left) thanking Post 917 member George Cusick.



Staten Island Welcomes Our Heroes 2016 honorees awed by the New York City Harbor aboard USCG cutters.



Crowds await the motorcade with the Staten Island Welcomes Our Heroes 2016 honorees.

WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS