



GREENBELT AMERICAN LEGION POST 136

CONTACT

6900 Greenbelt Rd, Greenbelt, MD 20770

(301) 345-0136

<http://www.greenbeltmdpost136.org>

VOLUME LXXXI

November/December 2024



ISSUE VI

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

So far, our fall weather has been unseasonably warm and that has helped to make our gatherings at the Post even more pleasant. Winter is coming in December, and long-term predictions are less severe than past winters, so I hope we will continue to see you in our dining room on weekends, in the Members Bar to watch major sporting events, and at our Post for weekly events like cornhole, pool league, Queen of Hearts, and Auxiliary Shotgun Bingo. We appreciate your support and enjoy your company.

I want to thank our Legion Family and the Greenbelt City Council for helping to put on our 36th Annual Public Safety Recognition Ceremony and Dinner on October 19th. We had five awardees and over 100 attendees from our local Police, Fire and Public Works Departments. Please read the detailed account elsewhere in the Contact.

November and December are packed with events that may be of interest to you. On Saturday, November 2nd, we will be sponsoring a Legion Bus Trip to northern Maryland. We will enjoy the autumn colors on our way to visit and socialize with fellow Legionnaires in Frederick, Rockville and Wheaton. Our Early Bird Dinner will be served on Sunday, November 3rd in Hofberg Hall. Over 65% of our Legionnaires have already renewed their membership for 2025 and they will be treated to our delicious spaghetti dinner from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time). Auxiliary and S.A.L. 2025 members are welcome to attend. Just show your 2025 card or pay your dues at the door. We will have a large TV in the hall to view the Commanders game.

On Monday, November 11th at 11:00 am, we will observe Veterans Day at the Greenbelt War Memorial in Old Greenbelt. We will be joined by Mayor Jordan and City Council, state Senator Alonzo Washington and 4th District County Councilwoman Ingrid Watson. Attendees are invited back to the Post for a light lunch. The Greenbelt Legion Family, in cooperation with the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, has sent 140 gift bags to troops of the 2nd Battalion/8th Cavalry who are deployed overseas. We plan to send another batch in December under a program that we call "Gifts of Gratitude to the Troops." Special thanks to Sandi Dutton for her leadership on this program.

On Saturday, November 23rd, we will again be supporting "Turkeys for the Troops" which provides full Thanksgiving dinners to over 100 enlisted families who are stationed in the Washington area. Working with Rolling Thunder Maryland Chapter One and the USO, the Legion Family distributes bags with a frozen turkey and all the fixings. Recipients are approved by the USO and pick up their dinners in our parking lot at 10:00 am. This is a satisfying community effort that makes a real difference to local families.

To allow members and staff to enjoy Thanksgiving with their families, the Post will not have Thanksgiving dinner. The Members Lounge will be open. Don't miss the Auxiliary Craft Fair on Saturday, November 30th in Hofberg Hall. You should find wonderful gifts for Christmas at the Craft Fair.

(Commander's message continued on page 2)

2024/2025

Commander:
Greg Gigliotti

1st Vice Commander:
James Hawkins

2nd Vice Commander:
Butch Hicks

Judge Advocate:
Tom Davis

Sgt. at Arms:
Bill Muffley

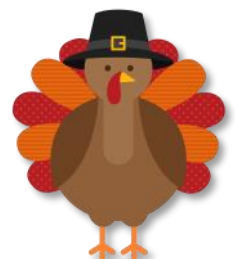
Chaplain:
Shawn Fenstermacher

Historian:
Bernie Zempolich

Finance Officer:
Harold Schlemmer

Members at Large:
Richard Brown
John Hardwick
Timothy Meade
Larry Williams

Adjutant:
Mike Moore



On Friday, December 6th the Greenbelt American Legion will be hosting the Department National Security/Pearl Harbor Dinner. Breakfast with Santa on Sunday, the 8th of December. On Monday, December 9th, we will hold our Employee Appreciation Party.

On Saturday, December 14th at 3:00 pm, we will all be watching the classic Army/Navy Football Game in the Members Lounge. Thanks to Richard Brown for overseeing the upgrade of our Comcast Wi-Fi and TV viewing experience. Thanks to Past Commander Mike Moore who donated an Orioles jersey worn and signed by Baseball Hall-of-Famer Cal Ripken. Maybe it will bring the O's luck in the upcoming season. Our annual Customer Appreciation Day will take place in the Members Lounge at 3:00 pm on the 24th-Christmas Eve. I look forward to seeing you there.

With the membership growing it's increasingly important that the new members and veteran patrons understand that at the Post we have a zero tolerance with verbal abuse, racial slurs and disrespectful behavior. The house rules state our policy on misconduct and rude behavior. You can find the house rules in the front lobby and mounted on the wall in the pool room.

As always, the restaurant managers and the staff continue to make improvements to the menu. Try some new appetizers and dinner specials. Remember the Members Lounge opens for lunch at noon on Fridays and Saturdays.

As we complete an eventful and productive year, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year. I appreciate your support and enthusiasm for our programs and our Post.

God Bless America and Our Legion Families,

Greg Gigliotti,
Commander

Greenbelt American Legion, Post 136

CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE

Dear Legionnaires,

Greetings to each of you, my fellow members of the American Legion. As we gather in fellowship this season, let's pause to reflect on November and December—two months marked by gratitude, remembrance, and, often, the hope of new beginnings. These months carry rich historical events that remind us of sacrifices, resilience, and the steadfast faith that sustained those who came before us.

In November, we commemorate Veterans Day, originally Armistice Day, honoring the end of World War I in 1918. As we remember the soldiers who fought and sacrificed, we also recall how so many of them found strength in their faith. When facing unimaginable challenges, many turned to prayer, finding comfort in the assurance that God walked with them through dark and uncertain times. Just as He guided and strengthened those soldiers, we, too, can find peace in knowing that God's presence is constant, even amidst the battles we face today—whether they be physical, mental, or emotional.

December brings us Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on the 7th. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 launched us into a global conflict that required resolve and unity. Our soldiers fought valiantly, driven by a love for freedom and an unyielding sense of duty. Many of those servicemen and women leaned on God, drawing strength from His promises. We honor their legacy by remembering that no matter the adversity, God is our steadfast protector and guide.

As we enter the Advent season in December, we prepare our hearts for Christmas—a time that signifies hope. This message of hope encourages us to trust that God's plan prevails, even when we can't see the full picture.

As American Legion members, we are called not only to honor those who served but to carry forward a legacy of faith, courage, and gratitude. Let us remember that God has been—and always will be—critical in sustaining us through every chapter. May we continue to seek His guidance in the coming year, knowing that He remains with us, just as He has with all those who came before us.

Blessings to Each of You and Your Families This Season,
Shawn Fenstermacher,
Chaplain



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION SQUADRON 136



S.A.L. COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Legion Family,

I hope this newsletter finds you all in good health and high spirits. As we approach 2025, your Squadron is diligently working to keep our missions on track, and we truly appreciate your continued support. This fall has been bustling at the Post. Our Sons of the American Legion (S.A.L.) wrapped up our second-longest Queen of Hearts game and kicked off a new twist on the game. Join us on Wednesday nights to try your luck and enjoy our delicious food offerings.

Looking ahead, we have numerous opportunities to give back to our community. In October, we began with two donations to support hurricane relief efforts. One donation went to the Legion National Emergency Fund to assist Legion Family members in need, and another was made in the form of food, clothes, and essential items for families in affected regions.

Mark your calendars! The Post Early Bird dinner is on November 3. Veterans Day is just around the corner on November 11, so stay tuned for event details. On November 23 and 24, we will partner with Rolling Thunder Maryland Chapter One's Turkey for Troops project to distribute Thanksgiving meals to active-duty service members in the DMV area. We encourage everyone to stop by the Post to show appreciation for these heroes and their families.

Additionally, we will be collecting unwrapped toys for the annual Toys for Tots campaign - please look for the collection boxes. Keep an eye on the bulletin boards for information on items needed by residents of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home; we will have a container set up at the Post for donations to help fill stockings for these veterans.

Membership is vital to our Legion Family. Renewing your S.A.L. membership honors the service of the veteran connected to your membership. If you haven't received your 2025 membership card yet, please stop by the Post one evening to renew or mail in your payment. S.A.L. 136 2024 dues are \$25 for regular members and \$15 for dual and members under 18. You can also renew online at www.mylegion.org using your membership number from your 2024 card. Membership cards will be mailed out or left at the back bar shortly after payment.

Remember, S.A.L. monthly meetings are held every third Tuesday at 7:00 PM. It's a great time to get involved with our committees - like the SAL cook crew, membership, service, and fundraising. Your ideas and participation are crucial in enhancing our S.A.L. programs and creating activities for children and youth.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at the Post!

Sons Having Fun Getting Things Done,
Lenny Wertz
S.A.L. Commander

Happy
Holidays!

2024/2025

Commander:
Lenny Wertz

1st Vice Commander:
Vacant

2nd Vice Commander:
Dave Fendlay

Chaplain:
Kenny Hall

Finance Officer:
Kevin Foster

Historian:
Ray (Cory) Micallef

Sgt-At-Arms:
Marty Rousseau

Adjutant:
Ray (Cory) Micallef

Advisor:
Richard Dutton

S.A.L. MEETINGS

Every 3rd Tuesday
7:00 PM

DON'T FORGET TO
JOIN OR RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP
FOR 2025

Dues: \$25
\$15 Junior & Dual

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD EARLY BIRD SPAGHETTI DINNER

Thank you to all of you who paid your 2025 dues early!



Dinner served from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM in Hofberg Hall

Please bring your 2025 Membership Card, or you can pay your dues at the door.



Queen of Hearts Wednesday Evenings



A New Drawing Will Be Held Every Wednesday Until the
Queen of Hearts is Drawn

All Tickets Must Be Purchased by 7:45 PM the Night of the Drawing

Drawing Held: 8:00 PM - Tickets: \$5.00 each/3 for \$10.00 - Pot Starts at: \$1000.00

This is a progressive raffle open to the public.

One (1) ticket drawn every Wednesday.

Your full name must be on your ticket(s) to be valid.

If your ticket is drawn, you may pick a card from the Queen of Hearts Board.

The amount of money won depends on the card drawn.

ATTENTION ALL QUEEN OF HEARTS PLAYERS

Hold 'em cards are available for additional prizes.

****This offer good until further notice****

Sponsored by The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 136





AUXILIARY UNIT 136



2024/2025

Unit Officers

President:

Kathy Gigliotti

1st Vice President:

Elizabeth Darnell

2nd Vice President:

Elizabeth Rice

Secretary:

Mary Fava

Treasurer:

Sandi Dutton

Chaplain:

Susan Wiener

Historian:

Rusty Beeg

Sgt.at Arms:

Dana Coleman

Executive

Committee:

Laura Fendlay

Dora Hamm

Patty Rousseau

AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello All,

Happy Fall, summer is over now and it's time for pumpkins, turkeys and Santa. I would like to begin by telling you how excited I was to get a picture from the soldiers that we sent the Gifts of Gratitude. It lifted their spirits and really warmed my heart to see the smiles on their faces. There were so many people that pitched in to get the project done and I would like to mention a few: Kevin Foster and Patty Rousseau for doing the shopping, Sandi Dutton for getting the bags printed up with the Legion Families logos and the GVFD logo that we stuffed, also I would like to thank Greg Gigliotti for helping me get the packages to the post office to be mailed. I also want to thank all the students that made cards for the troops and all the helpers that helped stuff the bags with the goodies.

On November 23rd we will be helping the Rolling Thunder MD Chapter 1 give out over 100 Thanksgiving dinners, turkeys and all the trimmings to our enlisted Soldiers and their families, this is a great program that we help support.

We are having our annual Craft Bazaar on November 30th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the Hofberg Hall at the Post, for information contact Rusty Beeg at (301) 602-7214.

We are holding Breakfast with Santa along with the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary on December 8th, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the Hofberg Hall at the Post. Adults \$10.00 Children \$8.00 and under 2 years of age is free. There will be food, fun, crafts and pictures with Santa. You can get the tickets online up to December 1st. Please contact me at (240) 565-2226 for information on how to purchase your tickets online.

We have been busy supporting the following:

- Donation to the USO for Hurricane Helene relief and they will match our donation
- Education week with gift cards for the teachers
- We are also supporting the Greenbelt Police Department Program Shop with a Cop with a donation to help put smiles on the faces of the children. A few of us will be attending the Fall Conference in Ocean City
- **PLEASE REMEMBER:** Shotgun Bingo will not be held for the month of December

Everyone who has paid 2025 dues will be enjoying the Legion's **THANK YOU** in the form of a delicious and **Free** Spaghetti Dinner (known as the Early Bird Dinner) on Sunday, November 3rd from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. If you haven't already done so you can pay your dues at the door prior to the dinner.

The Auxiliary welcomes our newest members: Jacquelyn Wilson, Quanisha Kemper, Joyce Fulda, Velma Curtis and rejoin member Amy D'Esposito. Hope to see you all there!

Our paid membership numbers for 2025 are 151 out of 381. Please remember that your scholarship donations (known as the Money Bunny Raffle) can be added to your dues on the same check.

With holidays upon us, please be safe, have fun and take care of yourselves. Don't forget to VOTE!

Best Regards,
Kathy Gigliotti,
President

AUXILIARY MEETINGS

1st & 3rd Thursdays
7:00 PM



Like our Juniors
on Facebook @
136juniorsala



2025 Dues For Auxiliary Members

\$30.00 Regular (Sr. with 50 years or more \$26.00)

Dual Members \$26.00, Juniors (under 18) \$6.00

PLEASE MAIL YOUR DUES TO:

ALA 136

PO Box 1063

Greenbelt, MD 20768

Please make checks payable to ALA 136 and include your phone number on your payment.



**GREENBELT AMERICAN
LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT
#136 PRESENTS:**

OUR ANNUAL CRAFT BAZAAR

Handmade Items, Raffles,
Refreshments & Bake Sale

Saturday, November 30, 2024
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

6900 Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770

For Info: Rusty Beeg at (301) 602-7214



SHOTGUN BINGO

**Tuesday
Evenings**

7:00 PM

*Bring a friend,
enjoy some food,
friends and, maybe
even be a **BIG** winner.*

Sponsored by the Auxiliary Unit #136

(NO SHOTGUN BINGO IN JULY OR DECEMBER)



MONEY BUNNY!!

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$300.00

Please support our Merit
Scholarship Program

TICKETS ARE \$1.00 EACH

Drawing Date:

November 11th, 2024 - Veterans Day

Please send your address labels and
checks made payable to
Greenbelt Unit #136 to:

Greenbelt Unit #136

ATTN: Sandi Dutton

P.O. Box 1063

Greenbelt, MD 20768



POST - 136 FAMILY MEMBER RECEIVES CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Jason Hicks named Employee of the Year by Navy Warfare Development Center
By Butch Hicks

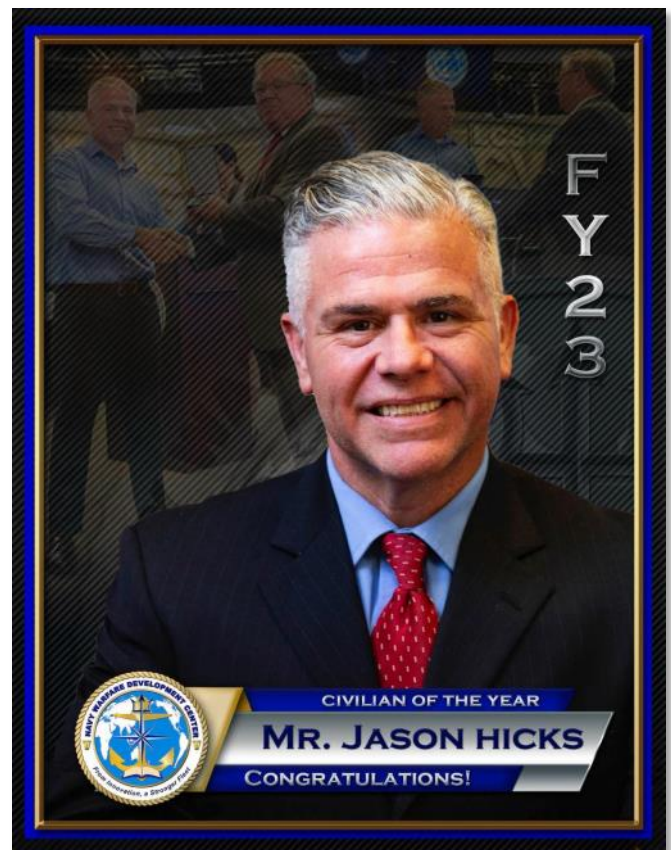
Greenbelt American Legion is identified as Greenbelt American Legion Post 136 Family. With that close family association in mind, the Post occasionally uses information outlets to publicize family member successes, and information about those who have passed away. I am proud to continue that family-member acknowledgment tradition by sharing recognition my son, Jason Hicks, a proud father of a son and daughter, a University of Maryland grad and career federal employee, received from his organization - Navy Warfare Development Center - *From Innovation, A Stronger Fleet*, Employee of the year award. [Navy Warfare Development Center](#)

Hicks' award in part shows:

“...As a recognized expert, Mr. Hicks is frequently called upon for assistance by external commands across the Navy and Marine Corps, providing consistently judicious, timely and relevant support that is hallmarked by his exceptional attention to detail. Displaying uncommon self-discipline and initiative, his performance has been nothing short of exemplary. Mr. Hicks' distinctive accomplishments and impressive devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself and the Department of the Navy.”

Hicks said, “The mission of the Navy Warfare Development Center is to develop and integrate innovative solutions to complex naval warfare challenges to enhance current and future warfighting capabilities. My work with the various Navy and Marine Corps command organizations is challenging and interesting. Our department, among other tasks, is engaged in the development of doctrine for tactical proficiency across all the Navy's warfighting communities.”

As I am happy to share my son's success, I would like to remind the Post 136 Family that family-member recognition is available to you. Help keep Post 136 family-member recognition current. Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion, Auxiliary Unit members and Post 136 staff may acknowledge those you would like to see recognized for achievement: community service, first responders, academics, family assistance, etc. Contact Bernie Zempolich or Butch Hicks (publikafhairs@verizon.net) to discuss your family recognition opportunity.



GREENBELT RALLIES TO IMPROVE MORALE FOR DEPLOYED SOLDIERS

By Butch Hicks

A touching local initiative is underway, spurred by a heartfelt request from a soldier seeking to lift the spirits of his fellow troops. Platoon leader Second Lieutenant (2LT) Tyler White, in the Army's First Cavalry Division deployed to Lithuania, reached out to his father, Greenbelt Police Deputy Chief Tim White and asked if his father knew of organizations that send military care packages to soldiers. 2LT White's platoon of about 20 soldiers received infrequent morale booster mail with cakes, cookies and personal care items.

Deputy Chief White was familiar with folk at Greenbelt's American Legion Post 136. He shared his son's request with Post 136 Commander Greg Gigliotti and Post 136 Adjutant Mike Moore, who introduced White to Auxiliary Unit 136 staff who knew how to complete the deputy chief's request.

White met with Auxiliary Unit 136 Treasurer Sandi Dutton. As the deputy chief related his request, Dutton not only responded positively – she was beyond excited. “Our Auxiliary Unit had been seeking connection with deployed units that we could provide with grateful packages. Deputy Chief White's request was timely supporting his son and helping solve our military contact dilemma. This is phenomenal,” she said.

During his meeting with Post 136 reps, White's expectations were for something small such as packages for the 20 people in his son's platoon. But after Dutton and Unit 136 President Kathy Gigliotti completed their response plan for what became project “Gifts of Gratitude for the Troops,” it was decided to send enough packages not only for 2LT White's platoon, but also for the entire company comprising about 400 soldiers.

A shipping assessment showed the care packages would be periodically dispatched in waves of 100. On Thursday evening, September 26, more than 60 representatives from Post 136's family and the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department assembled at the Post's Hofberg Hall for a sack-stuffing party. The volunteers moved along tables arrayed with hundreds of bags and boxes with contents ranging from sunflower seeds, cookies, gum, Starburst and Skittles to varieties of nuts, dental care items, and comfort items such as socks and bandanas.

Also included in each package was a one-page appreciation from the Greenbelt American Legion Family and the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department. It reads in part: “As you serve far from home, please know that you are being lifted up on prayer and thought by so many ... Stay strong and remember that you are making a difference.”

Local elementary school students from Springhill Lake Elementary, St. Jerome's Academy in Hyattsville, Cherokee Lane Elementary in Adelphi and Indian Queen Recreation Center in Fort Washington also contributed by creating thank-you cards. They all had appreciation comments for 2LT White and his troops, but one student's sentiment solidified their messages. It read “Thank you for your service, helping my country and keeping me safe.”

After a few hours, when the rows of tables were cleared, more than 140 bags were filled and loaded into shipping boxes. Next stop – 2LT White's Army unit in Lithuania.

“It was an outstanding Greenbelt community volunteer effort responding to Deputy Chief White's request for assistance,” said Unit 136 President Kathy Gigliotti. “American Legion Post 136 Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 136 and Auxiliary Unit 136 and the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department planned and collaborated in response to a father's request to assist his Army officer son deployed overseas. Deputy Chief White helps protect our city; his son helps protect our country.”

Deputy Chief White said he appreciated the community's effort supporting his son's request. “I was overwhelmed at the thoroughness of the response,” he said. “I can't thank them enough for what they're doing. As a parent, we worry about our kids' welfare and wellbeing. So, to see the organizations like the American Legion and the fire department come together to support my son, it just brings a time of tears in my heart.”

(See photos on the following page)



More than 60 volunteers from the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department, American Legion Post 136 Legionnaires, Sons of the American Legion, Auxiliary Unit 136 and the community stuffed more than 150 Gratitude Bags in response to Greenbelt Police Deputy Chief Tim White's request to assist his son, Army 2LT Tyler White, in improving his platoon's morale.

(Photo courtesy of Butch Hicks)



Army 2LT Tyler White, left, and his father, Greenbelt Police Deputy Chief Tim White

(Photo courtesy of Tim White)



Children from Springhill Lake Elementary, St. Jerome's Academy, Cherokee Lane Elementary and Indian Queen Recreation Center made Thank You cards to be included in the gratitude bags.

(Photo courtesy of Butch Hicks)



VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

Greenbelt War Memorial

11:00 AM

Attendees will be invited back to the Post after the event for a light luncheon.



Tuesday, December 24, 2024

In the Members Lounge at 3:00 PM

THE CONTACT

The Contact is a bi-monthly newsletter published by the American Legion, Greenbelt Post 136.

Publisher: Mike Moore - Editor: Bernie Zempolich - Composing: East-West Web Solutions

36TH ANNUAL PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS

By Butch Hicks

The 36th Annual Public Safety Awards Program was held Saturday at Greenbelt American Legion Post 136. Greg Gigliotti, Post 136 commander, welcomed attendees to the banquet and awards ceremony held in Samuel M. Hofberg Hall. The Legion family joined Greenbelt City councilmembers and family, friends and colleagues acknowledging award recipients' community safety contributions.

Mayor Emmett Jordan offered his appreciation for the post family's support for the public safety awards program and support for the City of Greenbelt. "Tonight, we are here to honor the first responders, those who put themselves in harm's way to assist others," he said. "They are first on the scene when things happen in the city. Our first responders are trained very well to do what they do ... Tonight, we are taking the occasion to recognize those who have gone beyond their training and do extraordinary things."

Gigliotti said it was an honor for the post to host the program acknowledging the police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and public works employees. "These brave men and women respond day in and day out to emergencies and the needs of our citizens. Their dedication to the safety and welfare of our citizens is inspirational," he said.

Former GVFD President Gigliotti named Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad retired firefighter and Secretary of the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department Wayne Lewis as the Firefighter of the Year, posthumously. Chief Richard Bowers of the Greenbelt Police Department named officer Abbey Kipke Officer of the Year and Neshia Cabrera-Pearson Civilian Employee of the Year. Luisa Robles, Greenbelt Department of Public Works sustainability coordinator, named Michael Barnes, Department of Public Works Refuse and Recycling supervisor, Employee of the Year; Chief Ben Ross, Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, Inc. named Jackson Cole Firefighter of the Year. Organizational leaders and Jordan presented each award.

Wayne Lewis' daughters, Lisa Paulo and Kendra Mariner, received Lewis' posthumous award. It showed he performed the duties of the secretary flawlessly from 1997 to 2024. "He was the glue that kept the GVFD administration together," said Jordan. Paulo recalled some fond memories of her father's dedication to the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department. On a trip to Ocean City, while walking along the boardwalk, he mentioned he would like to have a brick in the firefighters memorial monument in Ocean City. His daughters had a paving brick created in his name and presented it as a surprise 70th birthday gift. Paulo said, "I remember at the time we had the inscription made it was in honor of instead of in memory of." Paulo and Mariner said how happy they were for him receiving the Firefighter of the Year award: "We're receiving this award on what would have been his 82nd birthday. I know he's beyond grateful. I'm sure he's smiling down and appreciating the recognition for all his time and energy and effort that he's put in and dedication and loyalty."

Officer Abbey Kipke, a five - year member of the Greenbelt Police Department (GPD), has served in several roles and is currently assigned to the traffic unit where she focuses on traffic safety. Her award states that, "During the last year, Officer Kipke made numerous traffic stops resulting in 22 driving under the influence (DUI) arrests and 288 traffic violations." Kipke's other roles with the department have included providing DUI training and mentoring other officers.

Greenbelt police officers' community involvement has become a hallmark, emphasizing their role beyond being authority figures. Kipke's role with the Community Action Team involved her in numerous projects and events. Examples include planning walk - to-school days at Springhill Lake and Greenbelt Elementary schools. "We meet the kids in the neighborhood and walk with them to school," she said. "It was an opportunity to see police officers other than as authority figures." Another activity was at Donuts with a Cop at Roosevelt Center. "We could talk to the community and see a different side of things, like seeing their concerns, especially from my traffic involvement end. It's nice to talk to people and kind of come up with different ways to address issues."

Bowers spoke of the extensive involvement of Officer Kipke's variety of GPD support. "Just to give you an idea," he said, "in addition to her regular assignment as traffic safety officer, during some staff shortages, she volunteered to go to the midnight shift, and did two duties, which is managing the traffic safety unit and all of our DUI radar and lidar equipment. You also handled the responsibilities of midnight shift officer and for a time were an action corporal on the midnight shift. Officer Kipke's excellent work throughout 2024 has demonstrated her worthiness in being recognized as Officer of the Year."

Neshia Cabrera-Pearson earned her Police Department Civilian Employee of the Year, according to her award, through her unwavering dedication, professionalism and commitment to excellence in service. She works directly for Bowers as his administrative coordinator. "The list of tasks is long and it keeps me very busy," she said. Cabrera-Pearson came to Greenbelt after five years with the New York City Police Department, and noted the difference: "It's not as fast paced here as in New York and I brought skills writing, processing time sheets, expressing myself and talking to the public; using all the administrative skills to enhance police department support. I didn't realize how important my job was until I became a police worker. One hand can't clap without the other. You need the officers as well as the civilians."

(Article continued on the following page)

Bowers provided extensive appreciation for Cabrera-Person's selection as Civilian Employee of the Year. His award commentary summarized her dedication, integrity and teamwork. "She serves as a shining example of the positive difference civilian employees make in law enforcement ... Her work has enhanced the effectiveness of our operations and strengthened the bond between the department and the citizens of Greenbelt."

Berwyn Heights firefighter Jackson Cole, while responding to an active fire, showed quick thinking and calm decision-making that contributed to saving the life of another firefighter.

He said the event that brought about the award "was pretty life altering for me. It's something I never thought I'd have to do." His award shows that on December 17, 2023, Cole responded to a house fire with smoke showing from a single-family dwelling. Another firefighter, Reilly Gilligan, had forced entry into the structure and just inside the entry fell through the floor up to his armpits as fire vented from the hole around him. Cole, without hesitation, entered the house and pulled the firefighter from the hole in the floor and both men exited the building. "The fire was all around him," Cole said. "I guess it was adrenaline that caused me to finally pull him out." Cole's timely response to the rescued firefighter saved his life; he experienced minor burns and returned to duty the next day. Berwyn Heights Fire Department Chief Ben Ross said, "Firefighter Cole exhibited unusual courage, demonstrated superior decision making and zeal when he went to the assistance of firefighter Reilly Gilligan, putting his crew member's well-being ahead of his own personal safety. Because of firefighter Cole's actions, firefighter Gilligan received minor injuries. This evening, it is my distinct honor to join Gilligan as he presents the Firefighter of the Year award to his friend firefighter Jackson Cole."

Michael Barnes supervises a Greenbelt support activity vital to having a safe and pleasant place to live. Department of Public Works leaders commented that, "He excelled at managing operations, leading his team with integrity and implementing efficient practices that benefit both our staff and the residents we serve."

His section manages trash and bulk pickup. "The recycling is picking up a lot because now we have a community that's trying to save the earth," said Barnes. "We're trying to educate them about not dumping plastics and other refuse that doesn't break down. You can see the difference, the shift in household disposal."

Robles, Michael's sponsor for Public Works Department Employee of the Year, said in her presentation, "What truly sets Michael apart is his positive attitude. He approaches every challenge with a solution-oriented mindset, always ready to lend a hand to his colleagues and share his expertise. His passion for his work and for our community is evident in everything he does."

Barnes said his was not the most glamorous job, but it was a job that was always going to be there. "No matter how rich or how poor you are, you still have trash," he said. He developed his working mantra that has served him well. "It's all about the way you look at it. You can look at the positive instead of the negative and go a long way."



Greenbelt American Legion Post 136 36th Annual Public Service Awards program participants, from left: Richard Bowers, chief of Greenbelt Police Department; Josué Salmerón, Greenbelt city manager; Mike Moore, adjutant, American Legion Post 136; Luisa Robles, Greenbelt Public Works sustainability coordinator; Jenni Pompei, Greenbelt City Council; Michael Barnes, Department of Public Works, Employee of the Year; Greenbelt Mayor Emmett Jordan; Amy Knesel, Greenbelt City Council; Officer Abbey Kipke, Greenbelt Police Department, Officer of the Year; Silke Pope, Greenbelt City Council; Jackson Cole, Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department, Firefighter/EMT of the Year; Danielle McKinney, Greenbelt City Council; Neshia Cabrera Pearson, Greenbelt Police Department, Civilian Employee of the Year; Kendra Mariner and Lisa Paulo, daughters of Wayne Lewis, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Firefighter of the Year (posthumous award); Kristen Weaver, Greenbelt City Council; Ben Ross, Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department chief; Greg Gigliotti, Greenbelt American Legion Post 136 commander



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA
Sunday, December 8, 2024

JOIN US FOR THE ARMY/NAVY GAME
Saturday, December 14, 2024
in the Members Lounge - 3:00 PM



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

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| Sunday, November 3 rd | Early Bird Dinner - 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM |
| Monday, November 4 th | Post 136 Executive Committee Meeting: 6:30 PM |
| Sunday, November 10 th | U.S. Marine Corps 249 th Birthday |
| Monday, November 11 th | Veterans Day Ceremony and Buffet |
| Thursday, November 21 st | Post 136 General Membership Meeting 7:00 PM |
| Thursday, November 28 th | Thanksgiving Day (No Banquet) |
| Friday, November 29 th | Restaurant Closed |
| Saturday, November 30 th | Auxiliary Annual Craft Fair - Sam Hofberg Hall - 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM |
| Monday, December 2 nd | Post 136 Executive Committee Meeting: 6:30 PM |
| Friday, December 6 th | National Security/Pearl Harbor Anniversary Dinner |
| Sunday, December 8 th | Breakfast with Santa |
| Monday, December 9 th | Employee Christmas Party |
| Saturday, December 14 th | Army - Navy Game: 3:00 PM in the Members Lounge |
| Thursday, December 19 th | Post 136 General Membership Meeting 7:00 PM |
| Tuesday, December 24 th | Post 136 Customer Appreciation Day: 3:00 PM in the Members Lounge |
| Wednesday, December 25 th | Christmas Day - Post Closed |
| Tuesday, December 31 st | NEW YEAR'S EVE Please Note: Members Lounge open until 2:00 AM Last Call at 1:30 AM All Must Have a Current Membership Card |