



THE AMERICAN LEGION

UTICA POST 229

FIRST CALL!

LARRY WEIBEL, COMMANDER

MARCH 2025

JACK LAPAGLIA, MEMBERSHIP

WE'RE 106 THIS YEAR!



The American Legion's birthday is on Saturday, March 15. This is the day in 1919 when the American Expeditionary Force first met in Paris, France to form the American Legion.



COMMANDER'S CALL

LARRY WEIBEL

It All Began in 1919

Just four months after the American Expeditionary Force founded The American Legion in France, a group of World War I veterans gathered in Utica on July 15 to form a local Post. After approval of the application on Aug. 20, 1919,

Utica Post 229 became a reality. The Post boasted 150 members; a month later, 200; by January, 500. Over the years membership went up and down. By 1987, when the Post moved to its current quarters, membership stood at 290. The membership campaign goal for 2025 is 315.

LEGION & AUXILIARY MEETINGS

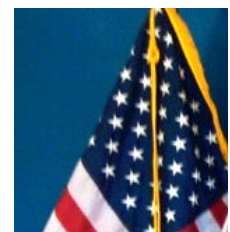
1st Thursday (3/6 & 4/3)
Dinner, 6:30; meetings, 7
Call the Post to make dinner reservation.

TUESDAY BINGO STARTS AT 6:15

Volunteers are needed.
If interested, please call the Post and leave your name and number.

FRIDAY SPECIALS

Fish fry and other specials on Friday evenings.
See weekly menu at facebook.com/UticaPost229



Utica Post 229 And Auxiliary Unit 229 Offer Annual Scholarships to Students Matriculating at a College or Tech School

POST SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS

Utica Post 229 is offering two \$1,000 scholarships to qualified high school seniors who will be entering college or technical school.

Applications (available at utica-post229.org) need to be submitted by May 1. Winners must show the first

semester transcript showing they have attended with passing grades.

Qualifying applicants for the Post 229 scholarship must exemplify good citizenship and be a son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter of a Legionnaire member of the Utica Post 229.

AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS, ADULTS

Auxiliary Unit 229 is offering scholarships to qualified students or adults applying to or already enrolled in an institution of higher learning.

Qualifying applicants for the Auxiliary's *Heather Haggerty Memorial Scholarship* must be involved in the community and be a member or direct

descendant of a member of the Utica Post 229 Legion Family.

Students need to submit a school transcript and letters of recommendation along with the application (available at uticapost229.org). Deadline is June 1.



**FOR GOD
AND
COUNTRY**

CHAPLAIN PAUL WOJCIK

Heavenly Father, as we enter the month of March, we march forward with playful hearts. May this month be a time of divine connection, growth and purpose. Guide us through the days ahead and grant us the wisdom to navigate the journey with grace. AMEN

WORDS OF WISDOM

Love the people
God gave you because one day
He will want them back.

I will never be over the hill,
I'm too darnn old to climb it.

Nominations Due ASAP

Just a heads-up: Per Auxiliary Unit Standing Rules, names of nominated officers for the coming year are to be placed in April's *First Call*. Other members interested in being an officer may be nominated from the floor.

*Yours in service,
Rosetta LaPaglia*

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www.legion.org/renew

A BIT OF HISTORY

UTICA POST HELPED PROPEL LOCAL AVIATION

Utica Post 229 had a big impact on aviation history in the greater Utica area, including lobbying for a municipal airport and sponsoring a meeting that featured aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart (*photo at right*).

The City of Utica built the Utica Municipal Airport in Marcy at a cost of \$250,000 “at the urging of Utica American Legion Post 229,” Observer-Dispatch history columnist Frank Tomaino reports in his Feb. 12, 2010 column. The airport, located near present-day Walmart Distribution Center, opened in 1928 and was a hub for aviation enthusiasts until it was replaced in 1950 by the former Oneida County Airport in Oriskany.

The old Utica airport boasted several visits by Amelia Earhart, the first woman pilot to cross the Atlantic (1928) and the first woman to fly solo

across the Atlantic (1932). Her first visit was in 1928, “when she spoke at the Utica Country Day School (today the site of Wedgewood Apartments in New Hartford),” Frank Tomaino writes in his Jan. 8, 2010 column.



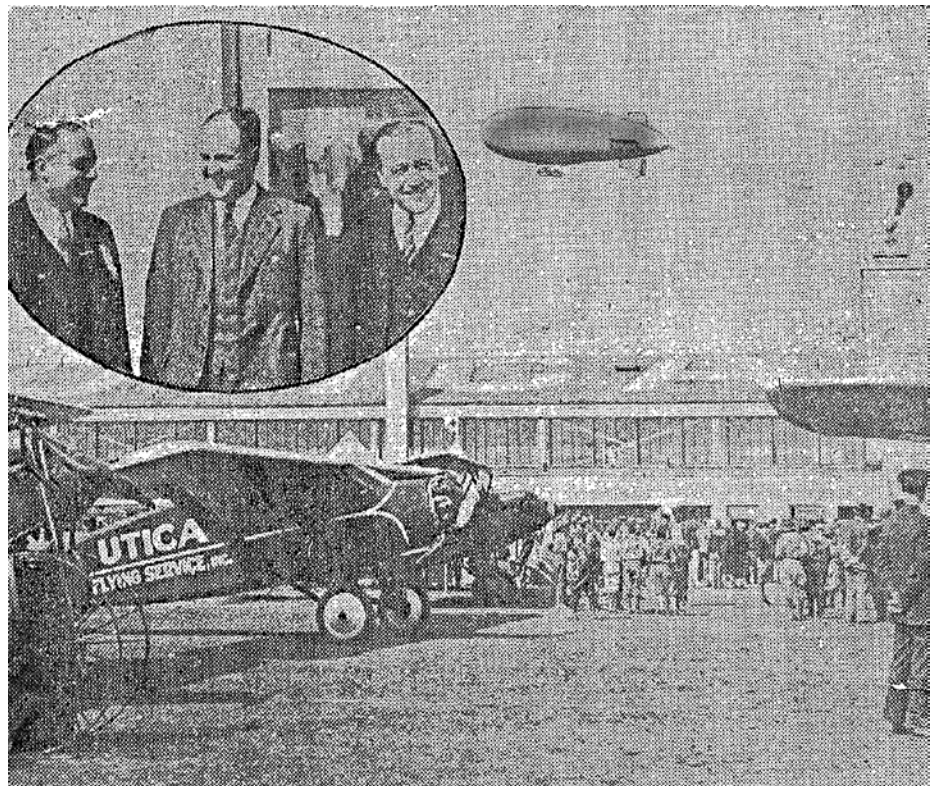
“Her sister, Muriel, taught there for several years. That same day, 500 attended a luncheon in her honor in Hotel Utica. Later that year, she attended an aviation meeting at Utica Municipal Airport on River Road in Marcy sponsored by Utica Post 229, American Legion.”

“In 1929, Earhart made a forced landing in a corn field in North Utica during a snow storm. Also that year, bad weather forced her to land at the Utica airport, and for several hours she chatted with pilots and mechanics there. She visited the airport again in 1931.”

This 1929 Utica newspaper photo shows the celebratory dedication of the Marcy airport. A throng of 15,000 spectators arrived (many armed with 50-cent admission tickets sold by Utica Post 229). More than 750 alone dined at a special luncheon in the hangar.

The sun that “crept from behind clouds”, as the Utica Observer-Dispatch reported, spotlighted a truly glorious celebration as aviators, citizens and local, state and federal officials converged on Marcy on Sept. 27, 1929 to formally dedicate the Utica Municipal Airport. The airport actually had opened over a year earlier, when the area’s first airmail arrived on June 1. But finishing touches to the air strip, the construction of a \$45,000 hangar, and the heady potential of air travel meant the area could plan a proper celebration.

Armed with World War I veterans who saw aviation linked to the area’s growth and future, Utica American Legion Post 229 and its aviation committee proved to be the catalyst.



They worked with Utica Mayor Fred J. Rath’s administration, which came up with \$250,000 to acquire and develop the 354-acre plot (“on the Utica-Rome highway west of the Marcy division of the Utica State Hospital”, which today is the site of the Walmart Distribution Center).

**Utica Post #229
The American Legion
409 Herkimer Rd.
Utica, NY 13502**

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Since its founding in Paris in 1919, The American Legion has been an advocate for America's veterans, a friend of the U.S. military, a sponsor of community-based programs for young people and a spokesman for patriotic values.



Members of the American Expeditionary Force held a caucus in Paris, France from March 15 to 17, 1919, to form The American Legion.

EDITOR: ROBERT STRONACH. SEND NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PHOTOS TO FIRSTCALL@UTICAPOST229.ORG.