



# Marine Corps League

Westchester County Detachment

PO Box 505 • White Plains • New York • 10602-0505

<http://www.mclwestchester.org>

## NEWSLETTER



Commandant Kevin O'Keefe (718) 644-3101

May 2016

### MEETING NOTICE:

First Wednesday of the Month

**Next Meeting:** 1 June 2016

**Location:** American Legion Post 135  
57 Mitchell Place, White Plains, NY 10602

**NOTICE: NEW MEETING START TIME**

**Muster:** 7:30 PM      **Meeting:** 8:00 PM

### Got Email?

Be sure to sign up for our newsletter. Send your request to:

[mailcall@mclwestchester.org](mailto:mailcall@mclwestchester.org)

Be sure to add [mailcall@mclwestchester.org](mailto:mailcall@mclwestchester.org) to your allowable senders list so that it is not blocked by your spam filter. **Note:** Detachment Announcements are also being sent from this email address. If you do not want to receive emails from the Detachment, please select OPT-OUT and let us know. Thank you.

### Newsletter Team:

**Editor:** Steve Topilnycky

(914) 263-0840 ■ [spt1@mclwestchester.org](mailto:spt1@mclwestchester.org)

**Assistant Editor:** Kelly Topilnycky

New job, promotion, transfer or participated in a League activity or Corps event, or got some awesome news, we would like to hear from you! Contact our Editor using one of the methods above.

Westchester County  
Veterans Service Agency  
914-995-2145 / 2146  
Yonkers  
Veterans Service Agency  
914-377-6700

### MEMBERSHIP

FY 2015 (July-June): We are at **402 Members** with **282 Life Members**. Invite those Marines to associate with our Detachment.

**Renewal = \$31      New = \$35**

**Active Duty:      Renewal = \$15      New = \$20**

**Think LIFE!**

**Life Member Dues:** To age 35 = \$500; 36-50 = \$400; 51-64 = \$300; 65+ = \$200

You can pay our dues online at <http://www.mclwestchester.org/renew/>, It's quick and, easy, save a stamp and envelope and the check writing time. Try it, you'll like it!

**Welcome Aboard!**

### SICK & DISTRESS

**Contact:** [chaplain@mclwestchester.org](mailto:chaplain@mclwestchester.org)

### TAPS

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of Detachment Life Member **Maurice "Kid Sharkey" Sposato** on 13 May 2016 and Iris Davis Grant, Toys for Tots-Westchester Coordinator and Young Marines of White Plains Adjutant passed on 21 May 2016. Please see the obituaries on Page 3.

### CALENDAR

**30 May 2016: Memorial Day Parade –White Plains.** Muster at 0930 on Church Street for a 1000 step off. The parade will head down Main Street to the Cemetery for a Memorial Service. Sr. Vice Commandant Fischer will be in attendance. We are the HOST post this year. We need members to fall in.

**30 May 2016: Memorial Day Parade-Yonkers (McLean Avenue Route).** Muster at 1330 for a 1400 step off. There will be a Memorial Day Service at Stillwell Park 1018 McLean, Yonkers before the parade steps off. The Parade will run to 840 McLean Avenue. Jr. Vice Commandant O'Keefe and honor guard will be in attendance. All Marines are welcome to fall in with our Detachment.

**2-4 June 2015: Department of New York Convention.** The Convention will be held at the Embassy Suites, 6646 Old Collamer Rd, Syracuse, NY

**6 November 2016: Detachment Birthday Brunch** Celebrating the 241<sup>st</sup> Birthday of the Marine Corps. --SAVE THE DATE--Details to follow.

### MEMBER NEWS

Detachment Member SSgt **John Lee** has been commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the United States Marine Corps on 20 May at Fordham University/SUNY Maritime.

Once A Marine, Always A Marine



Honor • Courage • Commitment • Tradition



Semper Fidelis

**Veterans in Crisis**

Free confidential support to Veterans in crisis, as well as their family and friends. Save this number to your phone: **1-800-273-8255** (press 1 for Veterans). You can also chat online or text professional responders at 838255.

**Who Are You Going to Call?**

**General Communications:**

Commandant Kevin O’Keefe  
(718) 644-3101 ■ [kevinnycl46@gmail.com](mailto:kevinnycl46@gmail.com)

**Membership Issues:**

Jr. Vice Commandant Donald O’Keefe  
(718) 796-6582 ■ [okeefebx@aol.com](mailto:okeefebx@aol.com)

**Payment/Dues Issues / Meeting Minutes:**

Adjutant / Paymaster Steve Topilnycky  
(914) 263-0840 ■ [spt1@mclwestchester.org](mailto:spt1@mclwestchester.org)

**Sick & Distress/Taps:**

Chaplain  
[chaplain@mclwestchester.org](mailto:chaplain@mclwestchester.org)

**Bylaws/Grievances/Detachment Policy:**

Judge Advocate Drew McFadden  
(917) 796-6638 ■ [drewmcfadden@aol.com](mailto:drewmcfadden@aol.com)

**Newsletter Editor/Web Site Issues:**

Web Sergeant Steve Topilnycky  
(914) 263-0840 ■ [spt1@mclwestchester.org](mailto:spt1@mclwestchester.org)



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**NOTICE:** If you have changed your postal address, email address or phone number, please notify us with the changes so that we have current contact information for you. Send your changes to [paymaster@mclwestchester.org](mailto:paymaster@mclwestchester.org)

**DETACHMENT ACTIVITIES**



Photo Credit: K. Topilnycky, MCL Westchester

Detachment Jr. Vice Commandant **Donald O’Keefe**, Adjutant / Paymaster **Steve Topilnycky** and Associate Life Member **Kelly Topilnycky** attended the officers commissioning at Fordham University on 20 May 2016. Adjutant / Paymaster **Steve Topilnycky** presented the Mameluke sword to honor graduate, Detachment Member SSgt **John Lee** who received his commission to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the U.S. Marine Corps.



Photo Credit: Lu Caldara, Marine Executive Association

Detachment Adjutant/Paymaster **Steve Topilnycky** attended the memorial service for **Maurice “Kid Sharkey” Sposato** at the Westchester Boxing Club in White Plains on Sunday 22 May 2016. Marines from 6<sup>th</sup> COMM presented the flag to Nick Delury, a good friend of “Kid Sharkey” and owner of the Westchester Boxing Club . “Kid Sharkey” was a mentor to Nick Delury and so many others. Please see the attached article.

**MARINE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

*“Lest We Forget”*

In memory of former Marine and fellow Detachment Member

**SGT Anthony Kalladeen NYARNG**

**KIA Iraq 8 Aug 2005**

**Andrus Children’s Home, Yonkers**

In memory of Westchester County Marines who were killed in the terrorist bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon October 23, 1983.

**LCpl Craig Wyche USMC**

**Ossining HS**

**Cpl James J. Jackowski USMC**

**John Jay HS**

**Support our Scholarship Fund**, donate today! You can send your donation to the Detachment PO Box with Marine Memorial in the memo section or donate online at <http://www.mclwestchester.org/programs/donate.asp>.

**YOUNG MARINES**



The Oldest, Continuously Running Young Marine Unit in the Country

Support our Young Marines!

Visit: <http://www.youngmarineswp.org> (Note: New Web Site)



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## Obituaries

### Maurice A. 'KID SHARKEY' Sposato

Maurice A. "KID SHARKEY" Sposato passed away on May 13, 2016, at Kindred Greenbriar Nursing Home in Nashua, NH. Maurice was born on May 22, 1917, in upstate NY. As a young adult, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He was wounded in the Battle of Tarawa, losing two toes, and spent many months in a hospital convalescing, thus earning him a Purple Heart, the Presidential Citation, and a Gold Star for his war efforts. His injuries destroyed his dreams of becoming a professional boxer, but he never let it get him down. He would often tell people when life gets tough, you gotta "Keep On Punchin'."

Prior to joining the Marines, Maurice's boxing career consisted of a 59-9 record, scoring a draw to Sugar Ray Robinson. Upon returning to the states, Maurice enrolled in NYU, majoring in psychology. He later became a private detective. Maurice never gave up his love of the sport of boxing, and he found his way back into the ring as a trainer to many professional fighters. He could often be found in the corner as a cut man for many Golden Gloves boxers such as Archie Moore, Doug Dewitt, Buster Mathis, Jose Torres, Larry Holmes and Lou Savarese. Maurice encouraged many kids to get off the streets and into his gym, where they learned how to box but, more importantly, how to live an honest life through his gift of wisdom - wisdom that he bestowed upon us to his last day.

### Davis-Grant, Iris Mae

Iris Mae Davis-Grant, age 63, passed away on May 21, 2016 in her home in White Plains, NY. She was born in Swansea, SC on July 29, 1952 to the late Thomas Livingston & Marian Davis. Widow of Joseph M. Grant Jr. of Mt. Vernon, NY, she graduated from Mercy College in 1975. She had a stellar 31yr. career with the Dept. of Social Services in the Mandated Preventive Services, Child Protective Services, Housing and Homeless Services. She held various titles in the Mt. Vernon, Yonkers & White Plains District Offices. She was a pillar of the community, known for her love, compassion, energy & endless giving spirit. She was involved in the Relay for Life, Young Marines program of White Plains, and was the Westchester County Coordinator for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots.

She is survived by her loving daughter Kira Freeman; Brothers & Sisters, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins & beloved family members.

Viewing, Thurs May 26<sup>th</sup>, 5-9 pm, where family will receive friends & wake will be held 7-9 pm at Calvary Baptist Church, 188 Orawaupum St., White Plains, NY 10606. Funeral Fri. May 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 am at Calvary Baptist Church. Burial Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in her name/memory/honor to the Young Marines or Toys for Tots in which she was active:

The Young Marines  
8 Moss Drive  
Brewster, NY 10509

Toys for Tots  
PO Box 1207  
White Plains, NY 10602  
<https://goo.gl/rM7XDx>



# Local boxing legend 'Kid Sharkey' Sposato dies at 98



Richard Liebson, rliebson@lohud.com

7 p.m. EDT May 22, 2016

## **Legendary trainer once fought Sugar Ray Robinson to a draw; promising career cut short by World War II**



(Photo: file photo/The Journal News)

WHITE PLAINS - Boxing legend Sugar Ray Robinson is widely regarded as the greatest pound-for-pound fighter in the sport's history

But he couldn't beat Maurice "Kid Sharkey" Sposato.

In 1939, the White Plains native, who had sparred with Robinson, fought him to a draw in an amateur bout in Poughkeepsie. Robinson went on to world championships in the welter and middleweight divisions en route to a Hall of Fame career. Sposato went on to enlist in the Marines in World War II, where he lost two of his toes to a machine gunner at the Battle of Tarawa. It cost him what had been a promising career, but Sharkey, in what became his lifelong

mantra, kept on punching

He earned a college degree in psychology and for many years worked as a private detective. He also stayed close to the sport he loved well into his 90s, working as a trainer and cut man for hundreds of professional and amateur fighters, including several who became champions. His advice, to everyone from heavyweight champion Larry Holmes to anonymous kids he taught at the former Cage Gym in White Plains, was the same: "To be happy, you can never accept defeat. You have to keep on getting up, and keep on punching. Always, always keep on punching."

Sharkey died last week at a nursing home in New Hampshire. On what would have been his 99th birthday, about 50 friends gathered at the Westchester Boxing Club in White Plains on Sunday for a memorial service. The crowd included politicians, Marines, veterans, current and former boxers, Hells Angels, police officers, and just plain folks — testament to the smallish, gentle man with the big smile and encouraging word for everyone he met.

"We thought he was teaching us boxing, but he was really teaching us how to live good lives," said Rev. Douglas Gray of Yonkers. "He never had a bad word to say about anyone. Sharkey loved people. He wanted people to do good. He made us all better people."

Ron Tocci, director of the Westchester Veterans Service Agency and a longtime friend, said Sharkey "was one of those special people. He sacrificed his own career to serve his country, but it never stopped him. All of the characteristics you think of in a champion, Sharkey had them, especially heart. No one had a bigger heart than he did. He cared about people. He was an inspiration — the epitome of what it's all about to be an American."

Asked in a 2007 interview whether fighting Robinson was the highlight of his career, Sharkey chuckled and shook his head. "Fighting for my country was the highlight of my career," he said.

About eight years ago Ann Marie Charbonneau, now of Brewster, began training with Sharkey.

"He nicknamed me "Long Stem Rose, because I'm tall," she remembered with a smile. "Sharkey taught me how to box, but more important, he taught me how to fight through a very tough time in my life. If I hadn't met him, I don't know how I ever would have made it."

Another legend in local boxing circles, 99-year-old Steve Acunto, said that "in all my years, I never met anyone who was more compassionate than Sharkey. I'm so sad that he's passed, and I already miss him very much."

"He was a father figure to all the kids who walked into the gym," said "Irish" Peter Wood, a boxing writer who, as an amateur middleweight, was a New York Golden Gloves finalist in 1971. "He was someone the kids looked up to, trusted and loved. They knew he would always be in their corner, no matter what."



Westchester Boxing Club owner Nick Delury, with flag presented at Maurice "Kid Sharkey" Sposato memorial service in White Plains. (Photo: The Journal News/Rich Liebson)

At the memorial, a contingent of Marines presented Westchester Boxing Club owner Nick Delury with a U.S. flag in Sharkey's memory. Delury, who organized Sunday's event, was homeless when he met Sharkey after wandering into the Cage Gym in 1992 with a drug problem, a police record and "a bad attitude," as he puts it.

"Sharkey turned my life around," said Delury, 46, one of the region's pre-eminent trainers. "He taught me how to be a good person. He helped kids like me get off the streets and stay out of trouble. He was an inspiration. He was a truly great man. If not for him, I know I wouldn't be here. I loved him, and I'll miss him. We all will."

Twitter: @RichLiebson (<http://twitter.com/RichLiebson>)

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