

## **06-30-04 Auxiliary Leads – Riders Bring Up the Rear!**

During an impromptu discussion at Gold Star Post 820 of Monroeville, the Auxiliary's two, June hospital parties became the item of attention.

As the Auxiliary's party details were covered, an idea surfaced. The Riders thought it might be fun to help out but felt uncertain how to conduct a hospital party. On hearing that, incoming Auxiliary President, Ellen Lewis, pleasantly replied, "Well boys, just come on along and we'll show you how it's done!" Party dates and gathering times were then exchanged.

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, a small convoy of Auxiliary members and Riders left Gold Star Post 820 and headed for the VA Medical Center in Oakland. Pastries and snacks were unloaded and the groups made their way to the recreation hall.

Handshakes and greetings were exchanged with our hospitalized Veterans. The Auxiliary and Riders shared a few games of bingo and some refreshments, told a few jokes and enjoyed the camaraderie of a group of very special Americans.

Back at the Post, while recapping the event, the Riders found they had quite a worthwhile and enjoyable evening with the Veterans and Auxiliary members. Additionally, the Riders found themselves quite impressed with the Auxiliary's quiet tenacity in putting on literally hundreds of these parties and more throughout the years!



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Well, it seems the Auxiliary must have cast a spell on the Riders during that first party. Just two weeks later, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Auxiliary was set to depart for the Aspinwall VA Medical Center. Suddenly, Riders were scrambling into their vehicles so they could help out again!

At the hospital, the Auxiliary and Riders functioned as tandem support units, calling bingo, helping the patients and serving refreshments. With over 50 hospitalized Veterans present, the folks from Post 820 were kept stepping.

By the end of the evening, everyone from Post 820 felt their time had been well spent. The Auxiliary and Riders had bonded as comrades in support of their mutual cause; American Veterans!

Could this be the start of a new American Legion Team? We'll just have to wait and see however, we are aware that July 31<sup>st</sup> is being planned as a Post 820 Team Event – Aspinwall VA Hospital summer fest!

Gold Star Post 820 members would like to offer their thanks to American Legion Auxiliary Representatives Ms. Elizabeth Wega (Oakland) and Ms. Mary Connell (Aspinwall) for their time spent in bringing our Post together with America's hospitalized Veterans.

June 16' 2004 Post 820 Participants: Terry Banaszak; Bob DeMarcki; Mary Ann Hogan; Mike Lang; Dot Lewis; Ellen Lewis; Willy Lewis; Matt Seaman; "Pebbles" Springer; Rachela Sulkowski; and, Lou Szoumetz.

June 30, 2004 Post 820 Participants: Bob DeMarcki; Mary Ann Hogan; Mike Lang; Bob Lewis; Dot Lewis; Ellen Lewis; Willy Lewis; and, "Pebbles" Springer.

**ALR-(06-16-04)-DSCF0003-kn:** (l to r): Dot Lewis, Pebbles Springer and Lou Soumetz.