

## NEWS

### Phippsburg Legion springs into action

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PHIPPSBURG — Phippsburg resident and Army veteran David Barnes said it might take some arm twisting, but he'd go back overseas for the military if asked.

"I've had people ask me, 'If they needed you, would you go?'" Barnes, 74, said Thursday. "And if it would help save the people of this country, I'd go. (The Army) wouldn't want me at this age, but I'd go."

Barnes is one of the nearly 30 veterans who make up the roster of American Legion Post 216, which received its first permanent charter during Thursday night's meeting at the Phippsburg Sportsmen's Association clubhouse. Officers of the state's newest post said the launch of new Legion branches and restoration of others that had gone fallow over the years are signs that the veterans organizations are reloading with young service members returning from wars in the Middle East.

"We're getting some guys in here in their 20s," said Bryon Miller, adjutant for the Phippsburg post, a Gulf War Navy veteran only in his 40s.

Post 216 Commander Kenneth Kellogg said that the Legion offers a unique support system for younger veterans returning from current or recent wars, by connecting them with older veterans who understand what they've seen in combat as well as what recently discharged service members go through when they return to the United States. He said the Legion helps new veterans plug into the proud military heritage in their local communities.

"We've got one member who just came back from Afghanistan six or seven months ago, but we've also got members who served in Vietnam and Korea," Kellogg said. "We've got members right now who are currently overseas in advisory roles."

Kellogg said that veterans come from diverse professions and backgrounds, "but we have the common link that we served, and that's the common foundation we all work off of."

Joining Kellogg and Miller among the ranks of Post 216 officers are Vice Commander Scott Miller, Service Officer William Rollins, Chaplain Richard Spear, Sergeant-At-Arms Edward Kopansky and Judge Advocate Mike Young. Kellogg credited District 8 Commander Dan Boland of Harpswell for serving as a mentor to the new post leaders.

On Saturday, Post 216 members journeyed throughout the peninsula town's 116 cemeteries and



Ed Kopansky and son Matthew, 4, look for veterans' graves in Holland Cemetery in Phippsburg Saturday, replacing flags at each one.

(Troy R. Bennett / The Times Record)

placed flags by the graves of veterans.

"There are veterans buried in town going back to the American Revolution," Kellogg said, adding that post organizers plan to have a long-lasting influence in town: "Hopefully, we're recognized as being a positive force in the community."

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