



**City of Biddeford  
Veterans Committee**

April 28, 2025 at 4:30 PM

City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting Online:

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/95261825383>

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 952 6182 5383

1. Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes
  - 3.a Review/ Approval of February 2025 Meeting Minutes
4. Old Business
  - 4.a Bridge Naming Update
  - 4.b Recreation Department Adopt-A-Flag Program Updates
5. New Business
  - 5.a Vietnam-Centered Events for Memorial Day
6. Discussion/Review
7. Adjourn

**City of Biddeford**  
**Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes**  
February 24, 2025 at 4:30p.m.  
City Hall Council Chambers

1. Meeting called to order at 1630 hours (4:30pm)

- Members in attendance: Roger Beaupre (chair), Eric Gates (vice chair), Jen Fullmer, Fred Oliver, Quang Mihn Le, Jake Hammer (city representative)
  
- Members absent: Kevin Locke (new member), Ben Neveux

2. Minutes from 27 Jan 2025 approved after correcting three minor spelling/grammatical errors.

3. Old Business

- Flags on Veterans Graves
  - No updates
  
- Bridge Naming Proposal
  - No updates
  - Goal is to have the details and plaque finalized for Memorial Day 2025
  - From last meeting: still waiting for: 1) State to approve, 2) work out payment details with Saco, 3) work out where the plaque will be located on the bridge (both sides, middle, etc.?)
  
- Adopt a Flag Proposal
  - No updates – Invite Lisa Thompson back to March meeting for update
  
- National Vietnam War Veterans Day Commemoration – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
  - 29 March – Official date, approval of declaration at next week’s council meeting
  - Mayor trying to get Joe Armstrong to speak again this year
  - All in attendance agreed that the actual Day commemoration event in March should be somewhat somber, honorable, informative, and respectful

4. New Business

- Vietnam as theme/focus for 2025 Memorial Day & Veterans Day celebrations
  - We discussed that the best way to honor, commemorate, and educate about the Vietnam war is to have this year’s Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances focus on Vietnam as the theme since it is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and there will likely be much larger attendance/exposure than during the ceremony in March.
  - Discussed that a Vietnam Veterans panel at the city theater would be a great addition to the Veterans Day celebrations this year – the panel discussion could be taped, distributed to schools, etc.
  - **We will reach out to Heart of Biddeford with these ideas**

- Veterans Health Administration Briefing – Rob McCann
  - Rob gave a great briefing on the VA Health System
  - Togus sends out folks twice per month to Portland & Sanford to assist with benefits
  - VHA is collocated with VBA as they are trying to embrace a “one VA culture”
  - Highlights of Togus: women’s clinic, post 9-11 program, a residential rehabilitation treatment program (RRTP) being built with 12 beds initially, 24 in the future with estimated completion Sept 2025, homeless vet program
  - Programs are offered under geriatric and extended care options
  - If you are 70% or more “service connected” you can get care inside veterans homes if you need nursing home level of care
  - All veterans are eligible for hospice on Togus campus
  - VA Maine has two patient advocates: Judith & Brad, extension x5760
  - Online Portal: MyHealtheVet
  - There is currently a backlog on travel reimbursement claims but they are working hard to adjudicate these claims and are making good headway
  
- Maine Bureau of Veterans Services (MBVS) – Gerard Dubois from Springvale office
  - VSO (veteran service officer) job is to connect veterans with their benefits
  - VSOs help not just with paperwork, but explain entire process to help veterans fully understand the system, what they may be entitled to, and how to go about receiving
  - MBVS website has all sorts of information on benefits, park passes, contact info, etc.
  - There are 4000 veterans in the Biddeford zip code area and less than 100 are receiving benefits from the VA – get the word out.
  
- Veteran Resource Fair
  - Rob McCann mentioned that there are outreach teams that can come to Biddeford
  - We discussed how Biddeford could host a veterans resource fair (perhaps around veterans day, in conjunction with the Vietnam Vet panel, etc.?)
  
- AMVETS - Gene Foster (CMC, USN Ret.)
  - AMVETS hosts a breakfast once/month for charity – all proceeds of the last breakfast went to High School seniors for project sunrise (\$1000)
  - All breakfasts are open to the public – next one on March 16 – proceeds will go to Biddeford little league program
  - They have a large meeting hall that can be rented – 207-282-9461

## 6. Next Meeting & Agenda Items

- Monday, 24 Mar 2025 at 4:30pm at City Hall Council Chambers
- Agenda items
  - Bridge naming proposal - update
  - Adopt a Flag proposal – update from Lisa Thompson of Biddeford Recreation
  - Review, final plan for National Vietnam War Veterans Day Commemoration, 29 Mar
  - Proposal to HOB for honoring having Memorial Day/Veterans Day theme - Vietnam

7. Meeting adjourned – 5:46pm



American Legion

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Thursday Evening – October 20, 1949

#### Legion Proposes New Span as Memorial to War Dead

The Tighe-Beaudion-Farley Post, American Legion of this city, wants to sponsor – with the Owen-Davis Post of Saco – the new Main Street Bridge as a memorial to the twin cities World War 1 and 2 dead.

At a meeting of the local post and its auxiliary last night at the post home, Kennebunk Road, it was announced that the post wants to place a plaque on the bridge.

Approval of Mayor Louis B. Lausier of this city and Mayor Myron Savage of Saco has been given to the project, it was announced, and the local post is trying to arrange plans with the Saco Legionnaires.

At the meeting plans were made by the auxiliary to honor National Vice-President Mrs. Dorothy Mills of Belgrade, formerly of Saco, but no date was set for the affair.

It was voted to assist the post at a whist party in November and a discussion was held on joint meetings.

Donations to Department and National Child Welfare and Christmas Cheer were made and the auxiliary was thanked for assisting the post for aid at the recent bean supper.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Saturday Evening – October 22, 1949

#### New Bridge Will Be Memorial for Cities' War Dead

Definite plans to dedicate the new Main Street Bridge to the dead of all wars were made Friday evening when officers of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley and Owen-Davis Post, American Legion, met in the Owen-Davis Post Home, Saco, Maine.

Alfred Prejean was elected chairman of the committee with Post Commanders Leo Trembly and Arthur Albrecht as vice-chairmen. First Vice Commander Andrew Binette and Thomas Daly were named secretaries, with Daly handling publicity, and other members of the committee include Second Vice Commanders Come Lebel and Eliot B. MacLean, Adjutants Nelson Bergeron and Myron Parker.

Earlier in the week the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post officials had announced that they planned to contact the Saco Post leaders in an attempt to have the bridge dedicated to the war dead.

The project has the endorsement of Mayor Louis B. Lausier of this city and Mayor Myron E. Savage of Saco, Maine.

Under the plans the bridge would be known as the "American Legion Memorial Bridge" and an appropriate plaque will be placed in the middle of the span.

It is hoped that the bridge could be used on national holidays for joint memorial services.

Albrecht was asked to contact state officials next week to discuss the project and the group will meet again next Friday night in Saco, Maine.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Thursday Evening – November 3, 1949

#### Veterans Hit at Legion Name for New Bridge

Strong opposition has developed among some veterans' groups of the two cities in the past two weeks, according to Melvin Marshall, Old Orchard Beach, District Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to the Main Street Bridge over the Saco River being named a memorial structure in behalf of any particular veterans' organization.

Recent suggestions were made by some veterans in the two cities that the bridge be named "Legion Memorial Bridge" in tribute to World War 1 and 2 veteran dead, and is the reason for a movement being started by some veteran organizations in the two cities for appeals to be made to both Mayor Louis B. Lausier and Mayor Myron E. Savage and their respective council members for selection of a more suitable name.

#### Name Suggested

The opposition groups believed that the name "Veterans Memorial Bridge" or some similar title, which would pay tribute to all members of the United States Armed Forces sacrificing their lives, would meet with greater approval of the majority of the surviving war veterans and residents of the twin communities, according to the V.F.W. District Commander.

Mr. Marshall says that while he is a member of the American Legion, AMVETS and other veteran organization in addition to being active in the V.F.W. circles, he believes that the Spanish War Vets and Veterans of other wars engaged in by this country should not be forgotten when a final title is selected for the bridge.

Attention was also called by Marshall to the fact that in any regulation military procession, Spanish-War Veterans are given top ranking position, Veterans of Foreign Wars bodies second place, with World War 1 and 2 Veterans and their affiliated organizations next in order. This custom, as observed throughout the nation is a matter which should weigh heavily in the minds of the groups for making the final selection of the name to which the bridge is to be dedicated, he says.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Tuesday Evening November 8, 1949

#### Legion To Go Ahead with Memorial Bridge Project Despite Vets Opposition

While the Merton Ira Staples Post, AMVETS, came to the support of a Veterans of Foreign Wars official to name the new Main Street Bridge "Veterans Memorial Bridge," and not associate it with any particular veteran's organization, which was organized a few weeks ago to dedicate the bridge to the war dead of the twin cities, continued to go through with its proposition.

The AMVETS Post got behind Melvin Marshall, Old Orchard Beach, VFW District Commander, and his proposal to name the span "Veterans Memorial Bridge."

Meanwhile, Alfred Prejean, chairman of the committee composed of the Owen-Davis and Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Posts, American Legion, officers, said that his group was going ahead with plans to

have a tablet made which would designate the span "Memorial Bridge" and which would bear the Legion Insignia.

Another member of the committee said that since the Legion had instigated the plan and was willing to bear the expense of having a plaque made up, that it should have the right to have its insignia on the tablet.

He continued that the bridge would not be known as "American Legion Memorial Bridge" and would be in tribute to all the war dead of the two cities.

Prejean announced that he had met recently in Augusta with representatives of the highway commission and while they had told him that an act of his legislature is necessary in such a case, they felt that no one would object to the Legion dedicating the bridge according to plans.

The next session of the state legislature – unless it is called into special session – is scheduled for 1951.

Mayor Louis B. Lausier of this city and Mayor Myron E. Savage of Saco have both given the "okay" to the Legion plan, a spokesman said.

The AMVETS Post voted at a meeting Monday night to contact the mayors and offer the name for the span.

Marshall stated that he believed the Spanish War Veterans and Veterans of other wars should not be forgotten when a final title is selected for the bridge.

Legion officials pointed out this morning that the bridge would be dedicated to all the nations war dead and not to World War 1 and 2 heroes alone.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Wednesday Evening – November 9, 1949

#### Veterans Arrange Meeting

#### Bridge Dispute Will Be Aired

In an effort to promote harmony among members of the various veterans organizations of the two cities concerning the feeling which has developed regarding naming of the new Main Street Bridge as a memorial for veterans of all wars, District Commander Melvin Marshall, Veterans of Foreign Wars, an Old Orchard Beach resident, is arranging for a meeting of all commanders and post officers of veteran organizations to be held Monday evening at the AMVETS home, Alfred Street, at 7:30 o'clock.

It is hoped that with representatives from each veteran unit of the two cities and with each group voicing their sentiments concerning the proper type of bronze plate to be placed upon the new structure linking the two cities and the type of dedication exercises to be held can be amicably settled so fitting tribute can be paid to the veterans of all wars serving in the armed forces since the birth of the nation.

Represents V.F.W.

Marshall says that he has interested himself in a fitting name and dedication given the fine new bridge, not as an individual veteran or from his own post at the Old Orchard Beach, but as representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts of Biddeford and Saco concerning his official duties as a representative in these parts from the State Department.

It is his belief and that of the veterans whom he represents, he says, that the placing of a Legion insignia upon the new bridge and the absence of insignia of the other veteran organizations tends to show partiality being granted by those issuing such permission to one particular veterans' group.

"Why not have one large bronze or other type of tablet suitably inscribed as a memorial to veterans of all wars containing the insignia of all veterans' groups or individual metal plates of each organization attached to sections of the bridge so each unit may share equally in the tribute deserving to all those serving in defending their country's principles," Marshall suggested.

The Old Orchard Beach V.F.W. State Department Officer pointed out that the Biddeford and Saco War Memorial fields were named and dedicated for all war veterans living and dead without any particular veterans' organization having their respective insignia placed about the grounds of the recreational area being dedicated to any special group.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Tuesday Evening – November 15, 1949

### Bridge Battle Due for Attention of City Governments

#### Resolution Destined for Biddeford – Saco Action

"The Battle of the Bridge" simmered today as a group of veteran's organization followed a meeting last night at the AMVETS home, Alfred Street, prepared a resolution to oppose the American Legion, which would name the new Main Street span "Veterans Memorial Bridge" and would have the Legion insignia on a plaque bearing the designation.

Veterans of Foreign Wars District Commander Melvin Marshall of Old Orchard Beach, who presided at Monday night's meeting, said that his group had planned a resolution which would name the bridge "Twin City Veterans Memorial Bridge" and which would bar the insignia or name of any one organization from appearing on the plaque.

#### Destined for Mayors

Commanders of the different Twin-City Veterans Organization will be asked to sign the resolution, Marshall said. Then, he continued it will be presented to Mayor Louis B. Lausier of this city and Mayor Myron E. Savage of Saco. The city heads will be asked to present it to their respective City Council and board of aldermen for final action.

The fight began a short time ago when the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, this city, and the Owen-Davis Post, Saco, both American Legion groups, announced that they planned to name the bridge "Veterans Memorial Bridge" and to have a legion insignia on the plaque bearing the name.

#### No Objection Seen

Officials continued that the span would honor veterans of all wars. They have the blessings of Mayors Lausier and Savage and state officials, while telling them that an act of the state legislature is necessary in such a case, stated that they might go ahead with plans for they felt no one would object.

Marshall said that groups represented last night included the Merton Ira Staples Post, AMVETS, Jewish War Veterans, Biddeford Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Biddeford-Saco Chapter, Disabled American Veterans.

He added that several other organizations which were not represented are reportedly behind the movement.

Neither of the American Legion Posts had a representative at the session.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Tuesday Evening – December 6, 1949

### Saco Aldermen Approve Legion Bridge Request

Members of the Saco Board of Aldermen at the December business session Monday evening, approved the request in the form of a resolution received from the executive committee of Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, American Legion, this city, and in a letter received from Adjutant Edmund E. Rowell, Owen-Davis Post American Legion, Saco, that they be permitted to place a bronze plaque bearing the American Legion Emblems of the posts upon the new bridge across the Saco River on Maine Street. The Saco municipal officers also approved giving the structure the name of "Memorial Bridge," this title being selected in honor of all war veterans of the two cities.

According to the petition received from the executive committee of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, signed by the following committeemen, Alfred A. Prejean, Leo C. Tremblay, Andrew Binette, Come J. Lebel, Nelson J. Bergeron, James Cutrules and Frank Feinberg, the bronze plaque to be affixed to the bridge is to be 12 inches in width and 20 inches in length and to be inscribed as follows: Biddeford – Saco Emblem of American Legion, Memorial Bridge, November 1949.

No opposition being voiced by and representatives of other veterans' organizations in the two cities to such a plaque being affixed to the bridge at the date of its official dedication, the requests made were unanimously favored by the board members.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Tuesday Evening – December 13, 1949

#### American Legion Plan Assured for New Bridge

Approval of an American Legion plan for the dedication of the Main Street Bridge was given at a meeting of the municipal officers Monday evening in the city building.

A committee from the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, American Legion, this city, led by Commander Leo Tremblay, petitioned that a 14 by 20-inch plaque be placed on a cement post near the center of the bridge.

Wording on the plaque would consist of "Biddeford-Saco-Memorial Bridge, November 1949." The group was given permission to have the American Legion Emblem placed on the plaque.

#### Honors All Veterans

Alfred Prejean, chairman of a joint committee composed of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post members and the Owen-Davis Post, Saco members explained to the officers that the group wanted the bridge dedicated to Veterans of all wars. However, he pointed out that since the two posts instigated the project and were willing to share the expense of having the plaque made, they felt that they should have their emblem upon it.

There was no opposition present.

The municipal officers were also presented with a supporting letter from the Owen-Davis Post of Saco, Maine.

At a recent meeting of the Saco City Government, approval for the project was given to the Owen-Davis Post.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Wednesday Evening – May 10, 1950

#### Legion Post to Nominate Officers

Officers of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, American Legion, will be nominated at a meeting Thursday night at the post home on the Kennebunk Road.

There will be considerable discussion, it was reported by a post official, on the dedication of the Main Street Bridge and the decoration of the graves for Memorial Day.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Friday Evening – June 9, 1950

#### Legion Post Maps Dedication Plans for New Bridge

Plans for the dedication of the Main Street Bridge June 18 at 2 p.m. were discussed at a meeting of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, American Legion, Thursday night at the post home, Kennebunk Road.

The members also accepted the invitation of the Spanish War Veterans to participate in the parade during the department encampment, which is to be held here Saturday.

Those who are to march will report at 9:30 a.m. in the Veterans Service Center, City Building.

The state convention, which will be held at Waterville June 23-25, was discussed.

Commander Henry Rocray presided and Chaplain Frank Feinberg led prayers. It was announced that the next meeting will be held July 23, 1950.

Refreshments were served.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Friday Evening – June 16, 1950

#### Main Street Bridge to Be Dedicated at Sunday Rites

Dedication of the new Main Street Bridge will be held Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.

Mayor Louis B. Lausier, this city, and Mayor Myron Savage, Saco, and other city officials have been invited. The National Guard will be present.

The introduction will be given by Arthur Albrecht of the Saco Owen-Davis Post, American Legion, and Leo Tremblay of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, will read the invocation. The dedication will be given by Alfred Prejean of the local post and Frank Feinberg, also of the local post, will be chaplain.

The Owen-Davis Post Drum and Bugle Corps will play.

Biddeford Daily Journal – Biddeford, Maine  
Monday Evening – June 19, 1950

#### New Bridge on Main Street Is Dedicated Sunday

##### Legion Posts Sponsor Event

The Main Street bridge was dedicated Sunday by the Owen-Davis Post, American Legion, Saco, and the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post, this city.

Past Commander Arthur Albrecht was master of ceremonies for the affair, which was witnessed by 200 persons.

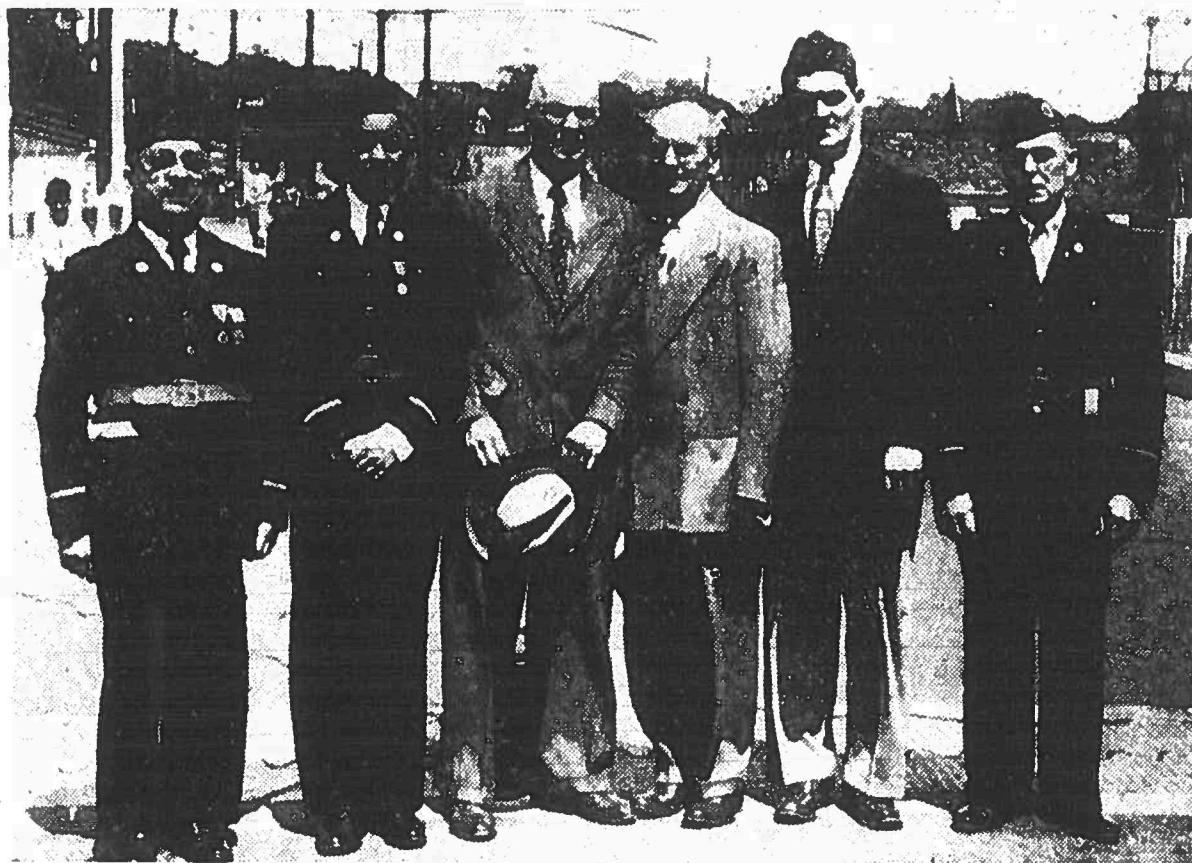
Alfred Prejean, co-chairman of the joint committee from the two posts which arranged for a plaque to be placed on the bridge, unveiled it. Chaplain Frank Feinberg of the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley Post placed a wreath over the plaque.

Mayor Myron E. Savage of Saco and Councilman Omer Provencher, this city, representing Mayor Louis B. Lausier, spoke.

Past Commander Leo Tremblay of the local post read the invocation.

Arnold Ballard Played taps and a National Guard firing squad fired a salute.

## Participate In Dedication Of Bridge



The Main street bridge was dedicated Sunday afternoon by the Owen-Davis post, American Legion, Saco, and the Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley post, American Legion, of this city, and among those participating were, left to right: Frank Feinberg, chaplain, Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley post; Past Commander Arthur Albrecht, Owen-Davis post; Saco Mayor Myron F. Savage; Councilman Omer Provencher, representing Mayor Louis B. Lausier; Past Commander Leo Tremblay, Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley post; Alfred Projean, Tighe-Beaudoin-Farley post, chairman of a joint committee in charge.

BIDDEFORD SAGO



MEMORIAL

BRIDGE

NOV. 1949