

# YORKTOWN&CORTLANDT SUNDAY EXPRESS

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SECTION **D**

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YC Community news as it happens @ [LoHud.com/Yorktown/Cortlandt](http://LoHud.com/Yorktown/Cortlandt)

## Band plans tribute show at VA campus

Trumpeters will bring sounds of classic music greats to veterans

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MONTROSE — The Bensen-Scott Big Band's second gig ever came barely a week after the 9/11 attacks, drawing a crowd that ached for solace and ingraining a patriotic streak in their performances ever since.

They call American Legion Post 136 in Mount Kisco home, and they take their passion for a well-appreciated music form to communities across the region around 25 times a

### LOCAL HERO

#### If you go

Today's performance of the Bensen-Scott Big Band is at 2 p.m. in the auditorium at the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System campus, Albany Post Road in Montrose, a mile south of Hendrick Hudson High School.

For more information about the band, go to [www.bsbbny.com](http://www.bsbbny.com).

year. But at least once a year, they give back to those who've given their all for America — veterans.

"We're real patriots," said Mount Kisco's Regent Scott, who co-founded the ensemble with fellow trumpeter Gene Bensen of Somers. "This

is the greatest country in the world."

Today, though, they take this particular performance on the road for the first time, with a 2 p.m. show at the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System campus in this Hudson River hamlet.

The free show is dubbed "Vets Giving Back to Vets."

"We're giving something back for the boys," said Scott, who conducts. "They gave so much for us."

The Bensen-Scott Big Band bills itself as a tribute to the music of greats such as Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson and Duke Ellington. It's the sound of life, happiness and community, they say, and these legends live on in their original



Brian Howard/The Journal News

Bensen-Scott Big Band members Gene Bensen, left, of Somers and Regent Scott, right, of Mount Kisco stand with American Legion Post 136 treasurer Don Ford outside the band's base in Mount Kisco.

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## HERO: Band brings classic sound to veterans

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arrangements.

Sure, they'll mix in a little Glenn Miller, but theirs is a more contemporary big band sound. It drew raves at Coney Island this month when the band played a free concert in the bandshell there.

"It's very mixed," Bensen said of the crowds the band draws. "The kids that come, you'd be surprised how many of them swing dance."

The American Legion hall became their practice space, and where they host workshops for local high school bands, after they connected with Don Ford, a past commander and now treasurer for the veterans organization.

The Legion exists to support the troops, Ford said, so he jumped at the chance to present the Bensen-Scott Big Band at the VA hospital.

"I thought it couldn't be any nicer a suggestion," he said. "So I grabbed right hold of it."

Bensen, on lead trumpet, is an Army veteran, serving

### Who's your local hero?

The Journal News is seeking your nominations for a "Local Hero" so we can spotlight community members of all ages who deserve credit for going beyond the call of duty to help their friends and neighbors.

We expect to receive many nominations, and will do our best to write up as many people as possible. If we can't cover your nominee, we'll give them a shout out on [LoHud.com](http://LoHud.com).

Nominees must be willing to be photographed and interviewed by The Journal News. Send a brief e-mail explaining why your person should be a "Local Hero" to Laurel Babcock at [lbabcock@lohud.com](mailto:lbabcock@lohud.com).

from 1959 to 1965. Puffing on a little cigar and dressed for the round of golf he had scheduled on a recent day, Bensen told the story of how



File photo by Frank Becerra Jr./The Journal News

The Bensen-Scott Big Band performs at the Mount Kisco American Legion Post.

he and Scott met through a classified listing advertising for musicians.

A pair of ex-trumpeters at the time, they quickly bonded.

In Bensen's case, a car accident left him unable to play for 14 years, and Scott rekindled his passion for the instrument.

"Sal and I don't do this to

make a living," he said, using Scott's given name. "We do this to live."

Adds Scott, "We're trying to keep the flame alive for Big Band."