

Island veteran honored for volunteer work with blood center

By Erin Tiernan

Local veteran and JEMS member Jim McLoughlin reached quite a milestone last Sunday – he coordinated his 80th blood drive for the R.I. Blood Center.

McLoughlin, a longtime blood donor, has coordinated 32 drives for Jamestown EMS and 47 drives for the Arnold Zweir Post 22 American Legion and Memorial Post 9447 VFW, according to the R.I. Blood Center.

On Sunday, McLoughlin was honored for his extensive contributions to the R.I. Blood Center.

If you were to add it up over the years McLoughlin is responsible for collecting 2,772 pints of blood and helping to save potentially 9,261 lives.

He has personally donated more than 40 gallons of blood.

Since the R.I. Blood Center's founding in 1979, McLoughlin has been a major player. But his

commitment to donating began well before the center's creation.

"For me, it started in the Korean War," he said. "In the medical tents, I saw that blood was important in saving many lives."

Representatives from the R.I. Blood Center described McLoughlin as an inspiration.

"Just because at 86, he's stepping down as a coordinator, don't think he's going to stop donating," said Jennifer Siegal, account manager in the R.I. Blood Center's South County office.

McLoughlin donates platelets faithfully, she said – every two weeks at the Aquidneck center.

In recognition of McLoughlin's contributions to the R.I. Blood Center – which, according to its website, must raise 240 to 280 pints of blood daily to meet the community's needs – and to inspire other donors, the Aquidneck center has created an award



Jim McLoughlin

in McLoughlin's honor.

The James McLoughlin – or 20/20/20 Award – honors vol-

unteers in three categories: Individuals who have donated over 20 gallons or coordinated over 20 drives, and businesses and organizations who have sponsored over 20 mobile blood drives.

McLoughlin's name will appear first on the award in the donors and coordinators category. JEMS and the VFW will appear first and second in the sponsor category.

R.I. Blood Center Media Contact Frank Prosnitz emphasized McLoughlin's humility.

"He'll tell you he's okay with all the attention as long as it helps attract more donors," he said, adding that McLoughlin's attitude is something we should all strive to reach.

During the ceremony, which lasted about 45 minutes, Peter Hanney of the R.I. Blood Center presented McLoughlin with the award and a plaque that will be hung above McLoughlin's "usual" chair at the Aquidneck

center.

That "usual" chair will now be known as "The James McLoughlin Donor Chair, in memory of years of saving lives."

Ron Lizzote, a blood donation recipient, highlighted the importance of donating blood, as well as the impact it can have on the lives of people in need of blood – and their families.

True to form, McLoughlin stood to speak and said, "Oh good gravy, I didn't expect all this."

He went on to say that he appreciated everyone and all those who donated, and he hoped they would all continue to give.

The goal of 30 donations was almost doubled during Sunday's drive, with a total of 58 pints collected, according to Siegal.

Commander of the Jamestown American Legion Bob Edgar said he will step up to coordinate future mobile blood drives.



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