

# NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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Veterans of Foreign Wars  
of the United States

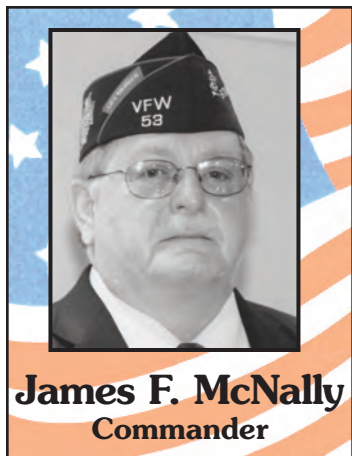


June/July 2006

*"We honor our warriors because they are brave and because by seeing death on the battlefield they come to respect the greatness of life."*

-Winnebago Elder

Volume 26, Issue 1



**James F. McNally**  
Commander

Here it is finally:

This will be my last article as your Commander. This year has

been and continues to be one of many challenges. Our Department officers, District Commanders, and the Council of Administration have made some crucial decisions to keep our organization strong and plan for the future.

Our committees have worked hard this year to accomplish our organization's goals and programs. Some of our successes have been our Legislative, Operation Uplink, VOD, and Patriot's Pen programs. We also have recognized Police Officers, Firefighters, and EMT personnel, along with Teachers, VAWS

Reps., Hospital and Community Volunteers. These goals have been accomplished with the hard work and financial support of our Ladies Auxiliary under the capable leadership of President Christine Merriweather.

Our Blue Star program was well received in many parts of the state. The innovative program, "Flags for Soldiers," has been successful in welcoming home our returning New York State Veterans. Our Gold Chevron Ball Journal and associated raffle were very successful and set new totals, thanks to the hard work of Junior Vice Commander Bob



*L to R: State Sergeant-at-Arms Robert G. Wasiczko congratulates Commander James McNally on an outstanding year.*

**Jack T. Smith**

*The Family of Jack T. Smith would like to thank the VFW for their kindness, cards, and love during his surgery and death, also for your donations to the VOD Father Salmon Fund. All was greatly appreciated.*

*Thank You*  
*Lorraine W. Smith*  
*and Family*

## Donald Doell Senior Vice Commander

Comrades,

As another VFW year comes to a close, we start to look at the challenges and goals of the next year. We ask ourselves, how can we make next year better? One way I can think of is to be more in tune with the individual members. This can be accomplished through the *Overseas Veteran* newspaper. We need to input more information that affects all

the veterans in the Department of New York. This way, we can all be more informed with less chance of any misunderstandings.

In the past, there was a misunderstanding about the fundraisers the Departments uses. To be clear on that issue: we use Xentel Corp. to raise funds to publish the *Overseas Veteran* newspaper. We use Marketing Squad to fund the State Convention journal,

and TN Corp. who offers the DVD program to raise funds to support the veterans' service program in the Department.

There will be a proposal at the State Convention in Binghamton for an increase in dues to the Department for annual members. I ask that you seriously consider adoption of that proposal. With the expected loss of another two thousand members next year, one can naturally see cause for concern. We are working very hard to keep a balanced budget without cutting any programs.



*Both Senior Vices enjoy the night - Martha Ferens and Don Doell.*

*SR. VICE COMMANDER, continued on page 2*

## Officer Training Institute

The State VFW has launched a drive to attract a larger attendance of Post officers to this year's Officer Training Institute (OTI).

The school will be conducted July 28, 29 and 30 at the SUNY campus at Binghamton as it has been for the past several years and is, again, directed by Dean Melvin Garrett, a past State Commander.

The State OTI, which will mark

its 31st year in 2006, offers three separate courses including training for Post line officers, Quartermasters and Service Officers.

Over the 31 years, thousands of New York VFW Post officers have been students at the school, which is a major reason our state has so many successful Posts and leaders. This state's OTI has been cited several times by the

National organization for the excellence of the school's curriculum and instructors.

Incoming State Commander Don Doell and Dean Garrett both stressed the need for newly elected officers to receive correct VFW background and training as they take over their duties. "It's not as easy as it looks to run a successful VFW Post," the Commander said.



*OTI, continued on page 2*

**Photographer:**

**William Juteau**



**State Editor:**

**William "Doc" Schmitz**

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# New York State Overseas Veteran

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### 2005-2006 State Officers

- Commander:**  
James McNally
- Sr. Vice Commander:**  
Donald Doell
- Jr. Vice Commander:**  
Robert Barnhart
- Judge Advocate:**  
E. Henry Sanchez
- Surgeon:**  
Jack Haight
- Quartermaster:**  
Harold Burke, Jr.
- Adjutant:**  
Art Koch, III, PSC
- Chaplain:**  
Rev. Edward R. P. Kane
- State Chief of Staff:**  
Jack Haight
- Inspector:**  
Al Davenport
- Patriotic Instructor:**  
Edward Bassett

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All members and other interested parties are encouraged to submit articles, opinions, letters to the Editor, or any other copy of pictures for publication on subjects relevant to veterans' issues and concerns. *New York State Overseas Veteran* reserves the right to edit material for length or grammar and to reject any material that is deemed not to meet current editorial needs.

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## Robert Barnhart Junior Vice Commander

Dear Comrades:

By the time you receive this newsletter, I will be finishing my term as your Jr. Vice Commander. It certainly has been a pleasure to serve you under Jim McNally's administration.

I'd like to thank Commander McNally for appointment me to look into the Health Insurance Plan for our Department employees and the associated cost. After researching many scenarios, we were able to find a policy that was suitable yet have a cost saving of \$13,000 for the year.

Commander McNally also appointed me to oversee the Gold Chevron Ball Raffle, which was a success. I'd like to thank all the Posts and Auxiliaries for their continued support to make this such a success.

I look forward to your continued support as your Senior Vice Commander of this Department during the next administration under Commander Don Doell.



*L to R: Patriotic Instructor Ed Bassett and Department Junior Vice Robert Barnhart discuss Department upcoming issues.*

## Harold "Hal" Burke Jr. PSC, Quartermaster

Comrades,

Spring has finally sprung. It is certainly nice to see the green grass, flowers and enjoy the warmer weather.

It appears that the wisdom of your Department Leadership and their courage to make a number of difficult decisions early this year has resulted in financial stability and resulted in the control of the Department Funds. To date, April 30, 2006, there have not been any withdrawals from our line of credit; nor have we had to take funds from our investments to subsidize our income. At this point in time, the income from membership dues and the effort of our fundraisers are providing the funding to cover our disbursements. The question is, with 97% of the annual membership dues collected; will we be able to sustain the current financial performance through June 30, 2006? Based on the available information, it appears that we will.

Membership is a key to the Department's overall success in our programs, service to our veterans and finance. Many County Councils need less than 100 members to be 100% as well as the Post who need less than 10 members to achieve 100%. Let's get out there and finish the job for our members and for the veterans we serve. Let's bring the Department 100% in membership. The National deadline is June 30, 2006.

At the Spring Conference, the State Commander, Line Officers and District Commanders were provided with the Third Quarter Summary of the Department Accounts, financial statements and related documents, respectively. As I promised when I was elected, a full disclosure of the Financial Status has been provided to date to our Department leaders with the expectation that they will circulate this information at the District Meeting to the District's Line Officers and through the Council to the Post and finally to every member of the Department that was interested. The changes in our financial program made our budget preparation process much easier this year, since we were using actual income and expenditures to prepare and complete the budget.

I want to thank members of the Department of New York VFW for allowing me the opportunity to serve this past year as the Department Quartermaster. I will be seeking the re-election to the Office of Quartermaster for 2006-07; and therefore, I am asking for your continued support at this year's June Convention.

If I can ever be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr., PSC, Quartermaster

### COMMANDER, continued from page 1

Barnhart, Patriotic Instructor Ed Bassett and their committees; but we need to do a lot better in this very critical area. A "WELL DONE" goes out to the backbone of our Department, the Council and Post Commanders for their dedication and support.

This year, I have traveled from Dunkirk in the west to Long Island in the east, from Beekmantown in the north to Brooklyn in the south. I have seen the beauty of our state and met with and broke bread with some of the finest Americans to be found in our great country. I sincerely thank them for their dedication, hospitality and camaraderie.

The goals that we set last June in Buffalo were: (1) To have one more members attend our Department meetings. (2) To have one more dollar in our funds. (3) To have one more member in our organization than last year. Our first two goals will be realized. The last is achievable but not yet accomplished. There is still time to show our National organization that the Department of New York can do it. Sign up that member today.

The Department is in good hands with capable officers ready to be elected. I wish them the very best.

It has been a great honor for me to represent the Veterans of New York State this year, thank you. I hope to see you all at the Convention in Binghamton.

### SR. VICE COMMANDER, continued from page 1

The Convention is almost here and several of next year's committee chairmen are getting anxious. PSC Harry Wurth and his team are ready to get the membership program started. The Flying Squadron meeting will be held Sunday morning, June 25, 2006, after the Convention.

Special Projects Chairman William (Doc) Schmitz wants to hit the ground running. The special project for next year is the PTSD program at the Batavia VA Medical Center in conjunction with the PTSD program that addresses problems unique to women veterans. Programs that are in line with Commander-in-Chief (06-07) Gary Kurpius' theme of "Veterans First."

I am looking forward to working with you and for you this coming year. Thank you for all you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In comradeship,  
Don Doell

### OTI, continued from page 1

"Leadership is actually what the OTI provides, so make every effort to attend this year. You will be glad you did."

Both the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary conduct their OTI schools at the same time at the SUNY campus using separate dormitories but joint dining facilities.

The school provides an exceptional staff of qualified instructors who meet several times a year to assess the courses and teaching methods plus discussing student comments, which are requested at the conclusion of the school each year.

Cost of attending the OTI is \$95 per person, which includes two nights lodging, five full meals and classroom material distributed to each student. It is important to note that a Post can pay for members attending from the bell jar and relief funds. This has been ruled a legitimate expense for both of these funds.

Paying the student fee by this means should eliminate the cost issue but more important for new officers to take the course based on your office. The school offers full instructions on all three courses but students, of course, can only take one of the three and must register for their choice. The classroom teaching includes both lectures and many visual aids. Time is always allotted for questions.

Members attending should plan to arrive at the registration center no later than 4 p.m. to have time to get their room assignment and be ready for dinner. An orientation meeting will be held Friday evening (July 28) when the instructors and the State Commander will be introduced by Dean Garrett. Rules and regulations for the weekend will also be announced. When you drive into the campus, signs will direct you to the parking areas.

A copy of the OTI registration form is printed on page 6 of the *Overseas Veterans*.

Daniel Dwyer, Chairman  
Department Publicity

## Karl Rohde PSC & Legislative Chairman



**Karl Rohde**  
PSC & Legislative Chairman

It is always time for legislation. At a recent POW/MIA ceremony held at Steward Air National Guard Base, Past State Commander Ben Thompson sent a message that is clear and precise. He asked us to "sing our own song." To sing the song for all to hear that we are veterans and that we are tired of having to ask year in and year out for what is due the veterans of this wonderful country. Many who prowl the corridors of our nation's legislative halls seem to forget that they would not be there if it were not for the sacrifices of citizens who took up

arms to defend this great nation and the world at large. Ben has asked us to sing our own song so all will remember. Not a bad idea.

Two items that Legislative Vice Chairman Cliff Lockwood has asked we keep in mind and contact our state legislators about: 1 – A.8883-S.3027 – exempts compensation use taxes at gift shops located at NYS veterans homes and 2 – A.10488/S.7218 – Crime of disturbance of a funeral or memorial service, keep protestors 200 feet from a funeral or memorial service. Please contact Albany about these. I think the second one is especially critical. We cannot have this type of interference during funerals or memorial services. Contrary to the opinion of a few, there are some that are sacred.

Last, not wanting to step on the toes of our PAC Chairman Tim Kuhn of Richmond County, it is important that I mention some changes in the way that PAC will operate. This November, there will be elections that include every member of the House of Representatives and one third of the Senate. Each incumbent and each challenger will be sent a survey by the PAC. If they do not return it, they will not be considered for endorsement. While the determination of who to endorse will be decided ultimately by the National PAC Committee, they are looking for our input. We need feedback regarding these people.

Remember, sing the song of veterans; and if you cannot carry a tune, like me, take up our new weapon, the pen, to write your elected officials.

## Non-VFW Members Wishing to Receive the Department Newspaper

The Department has been approached by a number of non-VFW members (Ladies Auxiliary, Men's Auxiliary, Schools, etc.) requesting a subscription to the Department newspaper. At the Spring Conference, the Council of Administration approved a subscription program for non-VFW members as follows:

For non-Veterans of Foreign Wars members that would like to receive a copy of the Department newspaper, the annual subscription fee is \$10.00. All monies and subscription requests must be received at Department Headquarters on or before July 1 to receive the next year's publications (July to June). Money and subscription requests received after the stated date will be returned.

It is the subscriber's responsibility to notify the Department of any address change during the subscription period. All subscriptions are renewed annually. Renewal is the responsibility of the subscriber, as renewal notices will not be sent out.

The requestor, along with the \$10.00 fee, must provide the following information – please print this information:

First and Last Name  
Full Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code



## Buddy Poppy Report for 2006 Spring Conference

With this year's Spring Conference a little later than last year, our Buddy Poppy totals have risen by more than 1,500 since last year's Spring Conference. As of April 18, 2006, total purchases for the Department of New York currently stands at 471,500, which is 73% of goal. With two months left, 650,000 is a feasible number with your help.

Moina Michael in 1918 proposed "Flanders Field Poppy Day," which eventually became our "Memorial Day." England has 60 million residents with a total of 40 million "English Poppies" distributed annually. The question of proper distribution – with England able to distribute over 66% of their citizenry while we in the United States cannot distribute to even 66% of our Veteran population. We, as Veterans of Foreign Wars, must bet out the word that "Freedom Is Not Free!" and Buddy Poppies may be worn by everyone to serve as a reminder of all Veterans who have died for preservation of our freedoms.

All Buddy Poppy orders must be processed through the Department of New York, VFW, with at least a 500 order recorded in order to be eligible for a White Hat for membership. Current cost for Buddy Poppies is \$130.00 per 1,000 and all proceeds are to be recorded in the Post Welfare Fund.

Increased numbers of Buddy Poppy sales indicates that your hard work is paying off. Department of New York thanks you for your efforts, but there is still a lot more work to be done. In order to reach our goal of 178,500, more Buddy Poppies must be purchased, which is more Buddy Poppies than were purchased for Veterans Day. Only with your assistance can the goal of 650,000 be achieved. I know you will help us achieve the goal of 650,000.

This concludes the Buddy Poppy 2006 Spring Conference Report.

Yours in Comradeship,  
**Fred P. Schwally, Chairperson**  
Department of New York  
Veterans of Foreign Wars

## Life Membership

Through the end of April, you have transmitted 1,848 Life Memberships. You have all done an amazing job, and we hope you will continue through May and June. As you may know, National is trying to almost double the cost of Life Memberships. Last year, it was narrowly defeated; but this year, it may pass. That means it would take effect January 1, and you have until sometime in December to get all the Life Memberships that you can. For every one that you get, that is one less regular member that you have to get – ever again. It is also \$5.50 more that your Post will receive every September.

I urge ever Post to send out letters to each regular member explaining the proposed increase. We don't know who will be the Chairman next year but do it for yourselves. Send the letters July 1st. Get some bell jar money and offer to pay a portion of the Life Member's cost. It is legal, and it works ... and it may be the last time we can get Life Members at a reasonable price. Can you imagine an 85-year-old paying \$170 for his Life Membership, or a 55-year-old paying \$335?

**George H. Osborne**  
Life Membership Chairman

### Life Membership Awards

Division	Post	Commander
1	9008	Lonn E. Moore
2	6396	Eugene Bryant
3	7336	Donald T. McBride
4	375	Joseph A. Porcelli
5	292	John C. Battista
6	1371	George Carrigan
7	1469	Thomas Ronayne
8	524	James W. Austin

## Voice of Democracy Report

The following participation totals were submitted to the National organization. All remained the same except for the Department expenses that were estimated at the time to be \$1,700.00.

### Money Awarded:

Posts: \$17,551.35  
Districts: \$3,300.00  
County Councils: \$1,000.00

### Additional Expenses:

Posts: \$3,835.24  
Districts: \$1,038.68  
County Councils: \$85.00

### Department Awards:

First Place \$500.00  
Second Place \$300.00  
Third Place \$200.00  
Other (4-6) \$300.00

### Department Expenses:

Trophies \$123.02  
Student and Parent Dinner and Room \$150.00  
No expense for Valley Forge  
**Total: \$273.02**

### Total Scholarships & Money:

\$23,151.35

### Total Expenses:

\$5,231.94

**Grand Total:** \$28,383.29 (Two Districts were incomplete as to their awards and expenses)

### Other Participation Totals:

Posts 68, Auxiliaries 48, Students 1,218, Post winners advanced 83, Districts 6 of 8, County Councils 5, County Auxiliaries 3

I wish to thank Commander McNally for allowing me to serve as the Department of New York VOD Chairman.

Respectfully,  
**Michael W. Webster**  
Department Chairman 2005-2006

Each year as the members of Brewster VFW Post 672 place American Flags on the graves of veterans in preparation for Memorial Day, we receive help from the current sixth grade class from St. Lawrence O'Toole School here in Brewster. This year's class arrived at St. Lawrence Cemetery at noon on Wednesday, May 10, and worked for two hours under the direction of Post Chaplain Bob Palmer. They were assisted by Post Life members, Steve Santeramo, Walt Seick, John McQueeney, John Santorelli, and Commander Art Hanley. Commander Hanley presented the class with a framed VFW Americanism Award Certificate and thanked them for their help and for the respect that they showed to those who they came to honor.

Post 672



*The Sixth Grade Students of St. Lawrence O'Toole School who participated in the graves decoration: Christine Berry, Adriana Bueti, Matthew Carlesi, Steven Caruso, Zachary Cecere, Marisa Delzio, Ryan Donohue, Mackenzie Feehan, Luke Haskell, Ailish Hogan, Matthew Infantino, Arizona Kilbride, Gerard Ledley, Zachary Lowe, Liza Malaguit, Nora McGoldrick, Thomas Mitko, Christine O'Loughlin, Christopher Pasquarella, Joseph Perucci, Lauren Quattrocchi, Anthony Senese, Blake Stascavage, Frank Tobitsch, Moira Tolan and Kathleen Tucker.*

Post 2937



*Post 2937 – Medford – Tim Bishop presents a Flag that was flown over the National Capitol to Commander Joe Theumann in recognition and appreciation for the use of the hall for medal presentations.*

Post 3083

**Lowerre VFW Post 3083 in Yonkers has done it again**

Lowerre Post held another WELCOME HOME PARTY for returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. Christopher Torres and William Smith, both still on active duty were invited to attend. Unfortunately, Sgt. Smith, who is a Marine Recruiter here in the Westchester area, was ordered by his Sgt. Major to attend the Marine Corp Ball in Albany on November 5th. But Sgt. Smith was represented by his proxy, his mother. Both Marines were issued Certificates of Merit by State Assemblyman Louis Mosiello. Yonkers Mayor Phillip Amicone and Vice Mayor William Regan were in attendance as well as State Senator Nick Spano to pay their respects to the Veterans.



*Mrs. Smith, Chris Torres and Commander Phil Wise*

Post 6394



*Pictured, seated, L-R: Angelo Solomino, Chaplain Jerome Amodeo, PPC Vincent Varisano, and PPC Joseph Cifelli. Standing, L-R: John Lamb, Jr. Vice Michael Grande, Sr. Vice Arthur Celuzza, Quartermaster Rick Walk (rear), Councilman Coschignano, Commander Robert Thompson, PPC Gus Scutari, Louis Addimando, and Surgeon Roy Anderson.*

VFW Post 6394, Syosset, New York, celebrated their 60th Anniversary on March 19, 2006, with a catered dinner at the Post. Shown is Councilman Chris Coschignano presenting a citation to the Post in recognition of the event.

Post 4787



**Eagle Scouts Honored by Queens Council's Post**

*L to R: Matthew Mathew; Alexander Dressner; Benjamin Singer, Whitestone Post 4787 Post and County Chair VFW; Christian Salvatto; Dr. David Copel, active on the Post and County of VFW; and Thomas Feeks, Assistant Chaplain Whitestone Post 4787 VFW.*

Appreciation Plaque



*Macedon Flaherty's Inn owner, Tim Flaherty, was presented an Appreciation Plaque for his continued support of veterans' causes with the Poppy sales along with special fundraising for veterans' assistance. Shown in the picture are some of the 17 members of the Post who were present. They are: Dick Cronkite, Plaque Award Chairman Dick Grube, Past Commander Pete Swanson, Tim Flaherty, Poppy Chairman Bob Allevalo, Commander Bill Kuhn, Chaplain John Dreste, Honor Guard Captain Andy Mendes, and Honor Guard President Frank Balik. Plaques were also awarded to Victor K-Mart Manager, Mr. Gary Agosti, and the Perinton Martin's Super Food Store for their exceptional help in the Poppy sales.*

LEGION DONATES TO VFW



Post 4787 Whitestone showing their patriotism – from left to right: Arthur Demerst, Dr. David Cohen, Bill Costello, Itlo Sgaraglia, Bob Damamico, Thomas Feeks, Commander Ernie Malvicini, Frank Alex, Loretta Z. Weiss, Louis Boromei, and Al Fabrizio.

LEGION DONATES TO VFW



LEGION DONATES TO VFW – American Legion Beacon Post 203 Commander Luis “Chico” Humphreys, right, and Treasurer Leon Stevens, left, are shown handing a donation check in the amount of \$500 to Louis S. Fusaro, Quartermaster of VFW Post 170. The VFW Post is constructing a pavilion in honor of lifetime member Mark A. Paganelli, who was a Marine Vietnam veteran, a member of The American Legion Post 1466, the Marine Corps League Detachment 861, Beacon and the Laborers Union Local 1000. The pavilion will be available, free of cost, to children’s groups, veterans’ groups or senior citizen organizations for functions such as barbecues and picnics. Donations for this cause can be sent to VFW Post 170, Vail Wolff McKenna Frye, 1 Violet Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

Post 1688



Patriot’s Pen Chairman Charlie Boyd of Theodore G. Nier Post 1688 of Williston Park presents a \$100 savings bond and Certificate of Acknowledgement to the New York State winner, Megan McCune, a student at St. Aidan’s School in Williston Park. Megan placed 17th in the National Competition.

L to R: Walter Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, receives a flag and t-shirt from Lloyd Creeley, State Citizenship and Education Vice Chairman.



Cindy Campbell has a talk with the boys at the Spring Conference (a dog joke was told, guess who’s not happy?) L to R: Jack Haight, Surgeon; Ed Bassett, Patriotic Instructor; Cindy; OTI Dean Melvin Garrett, PSC; and State Convention Director Elton Klein, PSC.



O.C.C. Commander John Halstead is thanked by Commander McNally for the membership he turned in.



L-R: Karen Barnhart brought her parents in for the hospitality at the Spring Conference. Ted and Marge Daley, and Junior Vice Robert (Bob) Barnhart.

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK  
 VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
 1044 Broadway  
 Albany, New York 12204

## Officers Training Institute Presentation

**Dates: July 28-30, 2006**  
**At SUNY Binghamton Campus**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE JULY 14, 2006**

Please Note: Applications received after deadline date, applicants must supply their own linen.

PLEASE PRINT AND FILL OUT FORM COMPLETELY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (MI) \_\_\_\_\_ (Last)

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Street) \_\_\_\_\_ (City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip)

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_

(SELECT ONE COURSE ONLY)

OFFICERS TNG

QUARTERMASTER

SERVICE OFFICER

**(Please Note): Those traveling together and wishing to share rooms must submit all applications at the same time. No switching at the Registration Desk.**

WILL YOU BE STAYING ON CAMPUS? YES NO

ARE HANDICAPPED FACILITIES NEEDED? YES NO  
 (Circle Yes or No)

PLEASE INDICATE IF FEMALE MEMBER YES

**ENROLLMENT FEE \$95.00 PER STUDENT**  
 MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DEPT. NEW YORK VFW  
 AND MAIL TO:  
 Art Koch III, PSC  
 State Adjutant  
 1044 Broadway, Albany, NY 12204

**NOTICE:**  
**ALL MEMBERS ATTENDING THE OFFICERS TRAINING**  
**MUST FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN TO:**  
**Art Koch III, PSC**

## Important Alert for VA Customers Patients' Personal Data Stolen

WASHINGTON, May 22, 2006 – The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is alerting all members that computer records with personal information on millions of veterans were stolen earlier this month from the home of a data analyst who works for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In conference calls today with veterans, service organizations and with members of the national news media, VA Secretary Jim Nicholson admitted that up to 26.5 million names, social security numbers, dates of birth and, in some cases, home addresses, disability ratings and spousal information were stolen during what appeared to be a random burglary.

The VA employee, whom the secretary said was not authorized to take the information home, has been placed on administrative leave as FBI and local law enforcement officials continue the investigation.

VFW Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller called the admission deeply disturbing, but said he would help the VA inform the 2.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliaries. Then he demanded accountability.

“What happened is absolutely unacceptable, but the task at hand is to inform every veteran family so that they can begin taking steps to safeguard their personal information,” said Mueller, who then wants those employees and/or officials who may be at fault to be held accountable for their actions.

“Above all else, we demand accountability from those who work for the people,” he said. “Whether the investigation reveals it was one person involved or includes others in more senior positions who may have given tacit approval, we expect their employment to be terminated immediately. The severity of this incident does not permit second chances.”

Nicholson said the 26.5 million names represent every military veteran discharged since 1975, and possibly earlier if the individual filed a VA claim. He said that there is no indication that anyone’s medical or financial records were compromised, but did acknowledge that the reason he decided to go public with the news was to alert all veterans of the incident and for them to be more vigilant of their personal information.

The VA will send out individual notification letters to veterans to every extent possible. Veterans can also go to [www.firstgov.com](http://www.firstgov.com) <<http://www.firstgov.com>> for more information. Also, the VA has established a manned call center for veterans to receive information about this situation and to learn more about consumer identity protections. That toll free number is 1-800-FED INFO (333-4636). A special call center has been established and is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT), Monday-Saturday, as long as it is needed.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.vfw.org/resources/pdf/VAFAQ.pdf>

Go here to read VA’s official statement

<http://www.vfw.org/resources/pdf/vastatement.pdf>

Go here to read VA’s letter to veterans

<http://www.vfw.org/resources/pdf/vanotification.pdf>



S.T.C.C. Senior Vice Douglas Herbert presents Commander McNally with a check for \$500 from Hornell Post #2250 for his special project.



Spring Conference – lots of meetings? YES! Lots of business to do!

## Washington Conference



Commander McNally addresses the National Legislative Conference.



Jr. Vice Bob Barnhart and Doc take a moment to discuss VFW issues.



Even William "Doc" Schmitz takes a break in the Department hospitality room at the DC Conference.



L-R: Department President Merryweather, Commander McNally, and PSC George Smith enjoy the dinner festivities.



Two more pretty faces at the Washington Conference - GUESS WHO?



L-R: Department Surgeon Jack Haight and Department Inspector Allan Davenport enjoying the National Conference.



L to R: Chairman of the Citizenship Education and Community Service Committee, Harold "Mick" Leavor, reviews his report with Department Inspector Allan Davenport.

### VFW 75th Anniversary Banquet Resolution



Auburn - Senator Mike Nozzolio recently presented members of the Auburn Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1975 with a special New York State Senate Resolution commending the VFW upon the occasion of its 75th Anniversary. Senator Nozzolio's special resolution praised the VFW and its members for their long-standing commitment to patriotism and selfless service to our nation and state. Pictured from left to right are Jack Haight, Auburn Mayor Tim Lattimore, Patricia Fletcher, Senator Nozzolio, Post Commander Joe Barwinczok and Assemblyman Gary Finch.

### Update 2006 Service Officers Raffle and Journal

#### Raffle:

Tickets were sold for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. The winning tickets were drawn at the Gold Chevron Ball during the Spring Conference in Binghamton. The winners were:

1st Prize	\$500	B. McElroy
2nd Prize	\$300	M. Goebel, Wappingers Falls Post 5913
3rd Prize	\$200	L. Johnson
4th Prize	\$100	Herb Stacey
5th Prize	\$100	Brooklyn Post #107
6th Prize	\$50	Brooklyn County Council
7th Prize	\$50	Post #9217, Liberty

#### Journal

The purpose of the Journal was twofold - first, to recognize and honor our service officers and their assistants throughout the state for their dedication and professionalism in assisting our veterans and their families; and second to raise funds to offset the state budget in the operation of these four offices.

The design and layout of this year's very attractive spiral-bound journal was done by Ed Bassett, VFW Chairperson, and Donalyn Wexell. They, of course, could not have done it without the help of their committee: Barbara Gibbs, Ladies Auxiliary Co-Chairperson; William Smith; David Deyo and David Gibbs; Arnold Anderson; William Juteau; Bruce Mullenax; Earle Heusinger; Edward Bergmann; and Elmira Ver Plank.

*The amount raised for this project was approximately \$11,000.*

#### Total Amount Raised:

*The total amount raised for the Raffle and Journal was \$25,000.*

Many thanks to all who made this possible.

## POST TO POST

**POST #9587 – STATEN ISLAND** – Commander Joe Pirrello announced that Assemblyman Mirones deposited \$25,000.00 at the local Post Office in order that parcels could be sent to the troops free of charge.

**POST #7172 – STATEN ISLAND** – Commander Danny Ingellis – Pearl Harbor Day was celebrated with the JROTC of Curtis. Comrades Crispine and Russo were also in attendance.

**POST #7462 – PIERMONT** – Walkway of American Heroes Ceremony, Memorial Day Parade and Program and G.I. Joe Dedication all planned.

**POST #2883 – NEWARK** – Forming a Men's Auxiliary, window banners available, flags available, all types are available for purchase.

**POST #1955 – LA FAYETTE** – 174th Fighter Wing flew over at 10 A.M. for the Memorial Day salute. Steak Bake, Chicken Barbeque, Texas Hold-em Tournament.

**POST #1666 – YONKERS** – Happy Birthday, Daniel Capozzi, Robert Fernandez, Edward A. Jones and Emmett J. O'Brien.

**POST #2476 – RIVERHEAD** – Irene and Richie Mazeski, Ken Kendall, Ed Iberger and Marianne get a thanks for a great job on Post clean up.

**POST #951 – LIVERPOOL** – Chaplain John Cecil is keeping up on all the sick and shut-ins. Commander Jerry Lepinske gives a good plug for the O.T.I. course in Binghamton.

**POST #5540 – PHOENIX** – A new Commander John Halstead; congratulations Past O.C.C Commander Lewis J. Steinbrecher, great job!

**POST #438 – BINGHAMTON** – Jim Furch, Howard O'Daniels and Mike Hill have been working hard on the new kitchen.

## Ruth Bauer Memorial Fund

The Ruth Bauer Memorial Fund was formed several years ago from the balance of the VFW-Bauer Transplant Fund with the balance of the funds raised to cover a liver transplant for Ruth Bauer, Palmyra, NY, who passed away after two liver transplants.

The purpose of this fund is to aid organ transplant patients, to help pay those expenses not covered by most health insurance.

At the Spring Conference, a meeting of The Bauer Memorial Fund Committee was held to establish guidelines for the fund and to get it publicized.

PSC Jack Simons, Department Chaplain Father Kane, Barbara Gibbs representing the Auxiliary, and Department Surgeon Jack Haight, Committee Chairman, attended.

The Committee recommendations were:

- 1) Raise the maximum amount to \$2,000 to cover expenses such as travel, lodging, and patient care not covered by insurance.
- 2) A more permanent committee be established to include a representative from the Auxiliary, the Department Chaplain and Surgeon and the three Junior Past State Commanders (1, 2, 3 year)
- 3) The funds would be available for VFW members or their immediate family (i.e. spouse, son or daughter) until the present funds are depleted.
- 4) Funds are for liver or kidney transplants only.
- 5) Further donations would not be solicited.

Applications will shortly be available at the Department Headquarters (518) 453-7427.

For further information contact one of the committee members (use the State Directory for phone numbers) or Department Headquarters.

## U.S. Department of Labor

Dear VFW State Official:

**GovBenefits.gov** is the official benefits Web site of the U.S. government. Across the country, veterans in need of assistance may not be getting the help they need, simply because they may not know help is available. In just five minutes, anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can answer a few questions about their life situation or the lives of those they are assisting, and receive a custom list of benefits they are most likely eligible to receive. It's free. It's easy. It's confidential.

We need your help to spread the word about this valuable resource. We have a limited supply of full color 18" x 24" posters that we would like to distribute to VFW Posts.

Here's how you can help:

1. Forward this to the Post in your state, and they can individually order posters directly by replying to this message; or
2. Order a supply of posters on behalf of your local Posts, and we'll get them to you to redistribute as you see fit. Just let us know how many posters you want and where to send them.
3. Encourage local Posts to place a link to [www.GovBenefits.gov](http://www.GovBenefits.gov) on their Web site.

We appreciate your help. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this e-mail or call me at (202) 693-7809.

## Mark 60th Anniversary

### Volunteers Donated 13 Million Hours Last Year

WASHINGTON – For as long as the United States has had veterans, the nation has also had men and women who volunteered to help in the care of the wounded, the sick and the injured.

But 60 years ago, a partnership was formalized when the Veterans Administration (VA) created an office to oversee the volunteers assisting at the agency's facilities. That office now has about 140,000 volunteers on its rolls, with 94,000 contributing more than 13 million hours last year. VA would have needed 6,200 employees to replace the time donated by the volunteers, at a cost of nearly \$228 million.

"Volunteers have always been at the heart of VA," said R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "They free

our doctors, nurses and technicians for work that only a professional can do. They are visible proof, especially to our combat-wounded, that the nation deeply appreciates the many sacrifices of our veterans."

In April 1946, former General of the Army Omar Bradley, then head of the Veterans Administration, convened a meeting of veterans groups and welfare organizations to establish a national plan for volunteer assistance at VA facilities.

From that meeting grew the Voluntary Service Office that now works with more than 60 national groups to provide volunteers for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Our volunteers take your breath away with their spirit, selflessness and dedication," said Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "Our health care system is immeasurably better for their priceless contributions."

Volunteers assist hospital staff. They work in nursing homes, hospital wards, clinics, recreational activities, end-of-life care and many other programs. They also work in national cemeteries and benefits offices.



## Conference Schedule

### Dates – Conference – Location

#### 2006

- 21-24 June – State Convention – Binghamton
- 26-31 Aug. – National Convention – Reno, NV
- 27-29 Oct. – Fall Conference – Syracuse
- 17-19 Nov. – Eastern States Conference – Warwick, RI

#### 2007

- 24-26 Feb. – Spring/Legislative Conference – Albany
- 4-7 Mar. – National Community SVC/Legislative Conference – Washington, DC
- June – State Convention – Binghamton
- 18-23 Aug. – National Convention – Kansas City, MO

#### 2008

- 2-5 Mar. – National Community SVC/Legislative Conference – Washington, DC
- June – State Convention – Binghamton
- 16-21 Aug. – National Convention – Orlando, FL

#### 2009

- 15-20 Aug. – National Convention – Phoenix, AZ

For forms and information, contact the Department, (518) 463-7427, 1044 Broadway, Albany, NY 12204

## From the Past – VFW Member Honored

Past Post Commander Vernon Webster, US Army Retired, was honored by William Coon Post 2674, VFW, USA, at their installation dinner on May 25, 2005. Vernon was presented with a plaque in appreciation for his 20 years of service as Adjutant (Secretary) of that Post. In addition to Adjutant and Commander, he also served as Bell Jar Chairman since 1990 and has also served Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy Chairman and as interim Quartermaster. Mr. Webster is a Korean War Veteran and was also an instructor in the Combat Engineering Units at the US Army Reserve Units in Horseheads and Ithaca, NY.



Past Post Commander Vernon Webster