

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

Official Publication
Dept. of New York,
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States



April/May 2008

"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 27, Issue 3

Robert Barnhart Commander

State Legislative and Spring Conference/Gold Chevron Ball Weekend

I'd like to thank all of you who attended our State Legislative and Spring/Gold Chevron Ball Conference in Albany.

We had an exceptional turnout of members who went "On the Hill" to meet with their area representatives to promote our Legislative program and request money for our Service Officers throughout the state. We also had a great turnout at the reception - 22 representatives attended the cocktail party on Monday night. We haven't seen that many

attend in several years.

For the Spring Conference/Gold Chevron Ball component of the weekend, we did quite well. The

COMMANDER, continued on page 3



Department Commander Robert Barnhart and Governor Peterson discuss the Veterans issues at Windham.



Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr. PSC, Quartermaster



Department Quartermaster Harold "Hal" Burke is working on Department business at the Legislative Conference in Albany.

Comrades,

Spring is in the air, and soon the flowers will bloom as we begin the last quarter of our VFW year. Many things have taken place since the last issue of the *Overseas Veteran* that you should be aware of.

At the Legislative conference, we had a great presentation from an Internal Revenue representative on non-profit organizations filing of the new electronic 990N, 990EZ and standard 990 forms. This year all non-profit organizations are required to file with the IRS. If the gross income of a Post is less than \$25,000 (twenty-five thousand dollars), the Post is required to file a 990N, which can only be done via the Internet. If your Post does not have a comput-

QUARTERMASTER, continued on page 2

From the Family of Ralph DeMarco

e-mail address: Rudemarco@aol.com



L-R: James McNally, PSC and Ralph DeMarco, PSC, taking a needed break between meetings.

Dear VFW members and Ladies Auxiliary members,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your heartfelt expressions of sympathy on the passing of our father, Ralph DeMarco. We really appreciated your sharing experiences (sometimes quite humorous) that you had with Dad. The memorial ceremony presented by your members was extremely moving and will forever remain in our memories. We are certain that Dad, had he been able to be with us, would have been both pleased and overwhelmed with emotion (as we were) to see how many of his friends from the VFW were there to bid him final farewell.

Thank you, again, for being there in this time of sorrow,

The Family of Ralph DeMarco

Photographer:

John Brunato



State Editor:

William "Doc" Schmitz

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Jack L. Haight Senior Vice Commander

The end of this VFW year is rapidly approaching. If you are working for a White Hat, your programs should be near completion, and you should be near to having the required membership. Don't forget the last Community Service and Trustee reports.

Election time is near. Officers on all levels, Post, County Council, District and Department will be elected. Remember, your representative to the Council of Administration (C of A) is your District Commander and your

voice for a roll call vote at Conferences and Conventions is your County Council Commander. Make sure they truly represent you and your ideals.

Post Quartermasters, you should have gotten your Election of Officers Package by now. If you haven't, call Art at Department Headquarters. In the package is the form for registering at least one delegate for the National Convention. Remember, this is required, and Charters have been threatened for not doing this.

Good luck on the rest of your year. See you in Binghamton.

In preparation for a wonderful dinner at the Albany Legislative Conference, Sr. Vice Commander Jack Haight and wife, Charlotte, have a bit of juice.



Allan E. Davenport Junior Vice Commander

My term as Junior Vice Commander is coming to an end this June. I worked with recruiters around the state to get members in that live in our District. I recruited over 30 new or reinstated members and put some in other local Posts. I've encouraged the Post to work on many

programs as well as my own. I've done everything asked of me from our State Commander mostly with good results.

I have represented the state at a Charter School and was invited back next year and at a mental

JR VICE, continued on page 2



L-R: Department Commander Robert Barnhart, Department Junior Vice Allan Davenport, Jr. Vice Commander-In-Chief Thomas Treadwell and Department Sr. Vice Jack Haight at the Legislative Conference.



Dick DeNoyer, a candidate for Jr. Vice Commander-In-Chief, is escorted in to our Legislative Conference by State Sgt.-at-Arms Robert Wasiczko.

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Photographer: John Brunato

2007-2008 State Officers

Commander:
Robert Barnhart
Sr. Vice Commander:
Jack Haight
Jr. Vice Commander:
Allan Davenport
Judge Advocate:
Phillip Schiffman, PSC
Surgeon:
William "Doc" Schmitz
Quartermaster:
Harold Burke, Jr.
Adjutant:
Art Koch III, PSC
Chaplain:
Rev. Edward R. P. Kane
State Chief of Staff:
Jack Veazy
Inspector:
Ed Basset
Patriotic Instructor:
Harold "Mick" Learor

POLICY

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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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Karl Rohde, PSC Legislative Chairman



L-R: Thomas Treadwell, Junior Vice Commander-In-Chief; Department Commander Robert Barnhart; and Department Legislative Chairman Karl Rohde, PSC, prepared to address our elected officials in Albany.

We have recently returned from a successful foray to Albany. Our Legislative Conference was successful beyond our hopes. We presented our agenda to a full gallery of Senators and Members of the Assembly. Our reception was also a success with over 20 of our legislators or their staff coming by to visit and speak with us. While it may well have been that this is an election year, hence the good numbers, we still thank those who attended the two events. It is important that we get the word out.

QUARTERMASTER, continued from page 1

er, there are computers available at the public library for your use. For a Post that has a gross income of more than \$25,000 (twenty-five thousand dollars), they will continue to file a 990EZ form or the standard 990 form. If you have not filed a 990 and need some additional information on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact me at State Headquarters.

The response of the membership to the IRS Presentation was well received. For our Comrades and Auxiliary members who could not attend this presentation at the Legislative Conference, we have asked the IRS Representative to make a similar presentation at the 2008 Fall Conference in Syracuse. Tentatively, we have scheduled the presentation for Friday afternoon beginning at 2:00 p.m. and concluding at 4:30 p.m. The date, time and details of this presentation will be provided in the Fall Conference Package and on the Department Web site.

To obtain additional facts and instructions for tax filing information for non-profit organizations: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html>.

The Department Membership Team needs your help to reach out to those comrades that have not paid their dues. At this writing (3/14/08), the Department has approximately 3,200 annual members who have not paid their dues. Now is the time for each Post Commander, Post Quartermaster and Post Membership Chairman to take action. We ask

JR VICE, continued from page 1

hospital with young adults talking about my military experience, all as a question and answer basis. I participated in a 911 program last year but this year couldn't even get a parking spot. The event was led by the Young Republicans. I presented the Navy Cadets program with an award on behalf of our State Commander and more on normal assignments.

In our first paper this year, I mentioned that we should make sure our Post Quartermaster sends in the election reports in April - please do that and also that he pays the one delegate fee to our National Convention - do that, it's all mandated.

Membership is down. You all must know someone that can join, and someone who hasn't paid their dues yet. Please give the person a call and ask them to renew their membership.

In your comradeship,
Allan E. Davenport
Junior Vice Commander

It was also my distinct honor to do a 15-minute video with Senator Leibell, who is the chairman of the Senate Veterans Committee. This is in fact the second year in a row that I have had that privilege. This year it was with Chris and his aid dog Ruthie. They were the stars of the show; the Senator and I were the supporting cast. Chris is a disabled veteran, and Ruthie is his aid dog. Some of you may be wondering why we are mentioning this in a legislative report. Well, one of the other guests of the Department was Sheila who is the Director of NEADS, an organization that trains dogs for the disabled. NEADS has a program that helps veterans get these invaluable dogs called "Canines for Combat Veterans." In its infinite wisdom, the VA had decided that there is only antidotal proof on the value of these dogs. Chris told us that at times he has to care for his three-month-old son. His legs are bothering him and walking is difficult. Ruthie goes to the refrigerator, opens the door, gets a baby bottle, brings it to Chris and then returns to close the door. Other times when Chris is depressed and does not feel like getting out of bed, Ruthie gets a tennis ball and shoves it into Chris' face until Chris, with

a smile, gets up and plays with Ruthie. The VA claims that they can provide devices to supplement the antidotal claims of the need for aid dogs. Tell me what type of device will retrieve baby bottles? So the VA will not fund these animals for our disabled veterans, thus the appearance of this program in my article. We need to write to our federal and state legislators and tell them to get on the ball with this program. The federal government needs to fund this program. Our elected officials in Albany were impressed and are willing to seek funding; however, the ultimate responsibility is with the federal government. **Write letters to our two Senators and your Congress member that you want this program funded.** It is more valuable than another prosthetic limb or a tool to reach something. It is a living, breathing part of the family.

Please also read the legislative agenda for the upcoming year. It is vital that you get this information out to our elected leaders. When you are asked to speak on behalf of our fellow veterans, try to include one of the points in the agenda in your remarks.

LEGISLATIVE, continued on page 3

that you call or visit those comrades in your Post who have not paid their dues. If they are ill or need assistance, the Post can pay their dues from the Post Relief Fund.

If you cannot access your Post's membership information from the National Membership Program, please contact me; and I will help you obtain that information.

In April 2005, we made a presentation to the members of the Department C of A regarding our finances. As a result of that presentation, we promised if the steps identified were followed the Department would gain financial stability in a three-year period. I am very pleased to report that all of the goals set by the members of the Council of Administration in April of 2005 have been reached. The \$200,000 (two hundred thousand dollars) borrowed from the Department Investments have been returned to the investments. We have not borrowed from our line of credit during the past 36 months. Nor have we withdrawn funds from our investments to cover bills or expenses. Currently we operate the Department Budget within the monies that are currently raised by our solicitors and membership dues. Bringing the Department to financial stability was a difficult challenge with much criticism. The task is finished, and the financial goals have been attained as promised.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank PSC Jim Vinsonhaler for his insight and open mindedness in looking objectively into the Department finances and supporting the changes necessary to go forward. Special thanks to PSC Jim McNally, who, like PSC George Smith, came into a year of financial uncertainty and fully supported the efforts to correct the Department's negative financial trend. Thanks to PSC Don Doell who weathered the continual negative criticism and supported our efforts to complete the actions necessary to bring the Department to financial stability. Commander Barnhart has been an integral part of this process from the beginning under PSC Vinsonhaler, spending countless hours reviewing the many records and working with the staff to provide better employee benefits at lower cost. I am pleased to report that the Department Finances are stable. Thank all of you for your efforts and support.

Currently our solicitation income is behind from last year. The vendor has promised to meet the contracted goals but that remains to be seen. We need to continue to be very cautious with our finances in the coming months as we border on a recession, which could degrade our

financial position. I will continue to watch our finances and keep our Department leadership and members apprised of the Department finances as promised when I was elected.

We continue to provide Quarterly Financial reports to the Department Officers and Council of Administration and Past State Commanders for their information and so that they can disseminate it to their District, Council and Post membership. These reports provide the financial disclosure that the Department Line Officers and C of A have come to demand. The Department's current investment strategy provides security given the nation's current financial situation. I hope that your District Commander is providing the financial information that they have been receiving this year to the County Council Commanders and the members that are interested in the Department Finances.

I appreciate the support I have received from the Line Officers, members of the Council of Administration, comrades and Past State Commanders of the Department of New York during my tenure as State Quartermaster. It has been my pleasure to serve as Department Quartermaster since June 2005. I continue to review and approve all disbursements, write all checks, make all deposits, and administer all of the financial accounts of the Department. Stringent controls have been placed on the Department finances during my tenure as Quartermaster, which has resulted in better management and accountability. The level of effort to perform all of the Quartermaster's duties requires me to be in Headquarters approximately 24 hours each week. The performance of the Quartermaster's duties is accomplished at **no cost** to the Department of New York as I do not receive a salary or pension benefits for performing this work.

Our successful record speaks for itself. I do care about the financial stability of the Department and want to ensure that we enjoy this stability for years to come. Therefore, it is my intention to seek the office of State Quartermaster again at the June 2008 State Convention. I ask for your continued support again at this year's State Convention.

Once again, thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as the Department Quartermaster.

If I can ever be of any assistance, please do to hesitate to contact me.

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

Wilbur A. Gray

State Bowling Chairman

The opening ceremony for the 3rd annual Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries State Mixed Bowling Tournament will be held at Sunset Bowl in Geneva on Saturday, April 19, 2008, at 9:15 a.m.

Following the opening ceremony, bowlers will bowl their doubles and singles followed by a 2:30 p.m. shift.

Dates and times for the remainder of the doubles and singles will be April 26 and May 6 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Team events will be held on each Sunday starting on April 20th, April 27th and May 4th at 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Team captains for each team and one member of the doubles events must report to the lanes with each bowler's

VFW 2008 membership card at least 45 minutes prior to their scheduled time to bowl for their assigned lanes.

The Geneva Post 2670 and their Ladies and Men's Auxiliary have a fun-filled weekend planned for the bowlers and their guests.

On Saturday, the Post is hosting a New York Strip Steak Dinner at a cost of \$10.00 per person from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. followed by a DJ for your dancing or listening pleasure from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Hope to see you there and may you bowl a 300 game.

Respectfully submitted,
Wilbur A. Gray
State Bowling Chairman

The Department of New York 2007-2008 Bowling Tournament will be hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2670, Geneva, NY. It will be held at the Sunset Lanes, Border City Road, Waterloo, NY. While preparing for our Post 75th Anniversary, the Ladies President came across a paper that was the letter sent out for the 1st Department of NY Bowling Tournament 1947-1948. This will be the 60th Anniversary of the Department's Bowling Tournament. We are now a mixed league...this means that teams, doubles and singles, can have any number of ladies or men on these teams. A team, of course, consists of four (4) persons. We hope to have all info out by Fall Conference or shortly there-

after. The Post made some mistakes when we held this Tournament two years ago. We know what they are and have made plans to improve on them. We are looking into shuttle service for evenings from hotels to club. *We will be having entertainment each Saturday night as well as dinner, which will be steak.*

We hope everyone will come out and have a good time. When you get packets in the mail, please ensure that copies are passed to your Men's Auxiliaries. Let's make the 60th one a good one.

Yours in comradeship,
Allan L. Fox
Tournament Co-Director
Post 2670

COMMANDER, continued from page 1

combined proceeds from the Raffle (\$12,000+) in addition to the ad journal (\$12,000), totaled approximately \$24,000. This money is greatly needed to support our Service Officer Program.

With our dwindling membership over the last several years, we have been finding it increasingly difficult to procure the money to support our Service Officer Program. So, this year I decided to meet with the NYS Budget Director from the Governor's office to request that funding be put into the annual budget for this Service Officer Program. We are requesting \$500,000 be put into the NYS Budget for that purpose. We have never asked for this before; but at this time, it is critical to attain this funding. It is important that the Assembly and the Senate get behind this proposal to get it passed. I appreciate your effort while you were "on the hill" to inform them of the proposal in the budget for this purpose. Please remember that voting on the annual state budget is happening now. It is imperative that you get everyone you know to contact their Assemblyman and Senators to support this very important piece of the budget. Keep in mind that we have soldiers returning daily from Iraq and Afghanistan, and it is critical that these services be available to them. Service Officer Services are also available to all veterans.

Membership

As of March 1st we are at 95.4% in our membership. We are so near and yet so far from 100%! We need to focus on getting the remainder of the outstanding members and/or new members to make it to 100%. Please remember that we need our membership to sustain all our programs.

Did you know that we have a competition going with the Ladies Auxiliary on membership? We also have a competition with New Jersey on membership. We need to beat them! We "CAN DO" it!

My Special Project – Fisher House

To date we have collected approximately \$20,000 for my Fisher House project. It is so important to support this program at this time as we have many returning wounded/sick soldiers who need their family's support in their time of medical attention. Fisher House is very comfortable housing next to a VA Hospital for families of current veterans and now returning soldiers to stay close by.

A Post or County Council can donate to the Fisher House project. You, as an individual, can too. Just send your donation into the State Headquarters and earmark it for Fisher House.

National Legislative/VOD Conference – Washington, D.C.

I'd like to thank all the delegates who attended the conference in Washington; in particular, Mel Garrett and Jim McNally, who are on the Legislative Committee for National. They met with all the Congress personnel and Senators to promote the National's Legislative agenda.

The winners for the VOD Scholarship were chosen and our NYS winner, Nicole Bianchi, placed seventh, winning a \$4,000 scholarship. I was very proud to have the privilege to escort her in with our Department Auxiliary President Sally Gagnon. Her parents and three brothers attended the awards ceremony and were "beaming" with pride.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming State Convention.

Fred P. Schwally

Buddy Poppy Chairman

To: 2008 Mid-Winter Conference Delegates

Buddy Poppy reports are not very encouraging as of this Conference. Last year, Posts within the Department of New York had totals of 407,000 as of 2007 Mid-Winter Conference, while readings as of January 31, 2008, have totaled only 261,000.

Goals of the Department of New York have been set at 650,000, which will require double the amount that has been requested to date, which, although difficult, still can be achieved. Only with the assistance of every Post will this goal be achieved.

Memorial Day has traditionally been the major distribution day throughout New York as well as throughout the United States. We must double these orders, which have been made to date and must remember that money received from these Buddy Poppies is to be used to assist every Welfare Fund for your Post and ordering of Buddy Poppies assist disabled veterans who construct these Buddy Poppies.

One of the concerns when distributing Buddy Poppies was the need for insurance. If this is one of your concerns,

please contact the Department of New York who will provide you with the proper papers to eliminate this concern.

Remember in order to support the Department of New York, all Buddy Poppies must be processed through Department Headquarters at a cost of \$130.00 per thousand. Let us make a difference and start ordering Buddy Poppies for your Post for Memorial Day.

Another concern to be considered when attempting to acquire a White Hat is membership reaching 100% and Buddy Poppies being ordered. If this is not followed, your White Hat will not be forthcoming.

Let us try to reach our goal of 650,000 by Memorial Day.

This concludes the 2008 Department of New York Mid-Winter Buddy Poppy Report.

Yours in comradeship,
Fred P. Schwally
Buddy Poppy Chairman
Department of New York
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Harold "Mick" Leavor

Patriotic Instructor

Support Our Troops • Fly Your Flag Proudly

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

"I Love America Day," March 19th, 2008

Write letters to troops, Create Patriotic art, paint a Patriotic mural ...

"Displaying Your Flag"

Mother's Day
May 11th, 2008

Peace Officers Memorial Day (half staff)
Armed Forces Day
May 17th, 2008

Memorial Day (half staff until noon)
May 26th, 2008

Flag Day
June 14th, 2008

Independence Day
July 4th, 2008

Hope Everyone Had a Happy and Healthy Easter



L – Harold "Mick" Leavor Department Patriotic Instructor leads the members in the Pledge to our country's flag. R – Department Adjutant Art Koch, PSC.

LEGISLATIVE, continued from page 2

Legislative Goals 2007-2008

- **Expansion of Health Care:** Nursing home facilities, assisted living facilities and in-home care increases are needed to keep pace with both our aging veterans' population and the almost quantum leap in the numbers of severely disabled veterans from our most recent wars.
- **Homeless Veterans:** There have been conflicting headlines regarding the issue of homeless veterans. Whatever the number, the needs of these individuals are unique. Efforts must be made to address the chronically homeless, the hardest population to assist. However, local and state agencies that deal with the homeless must be adequately trained and educated to the special needs of homeless veterans.
- **Veterans' Real Estate Property Tax Exemption:** Legislation must be passed to enhance and expand this entitlement. A program such as the "Star Program" that impacts the tax bill on town, county and school taxes must be enacted to help those members of society who have made extraordinary sacrifices for our nation.

- **Service Officer Training:** There are an ever-increasing number of veterans from our current wars seeking the expertise of Service Officers. This is becoming a daunting task at all levels of government involved in providing assistance to these veterans. The long wait for receiving care is well documented. Part of the veterans' health care equation is an adequate number of Service Officers. The VFW is a Veterans' Service Organization. The burden we have in funding our Regional offices is equally daunting. New York should fund these Regional offices and help in the training of Veteran Service Officers.
- **The Flag Amendment:** This issue has been a constant part of our Legislative Agenda for several years. To reiterate, the flag is the very foundation of what we, as veterans, fought and died for. We must protect the American Flag at all costs. We also encourage flag and patriotic instruction in our schools, keeping God in the Pledge and further urge the state to refrain from purchasing American Flags that are not made in the USA.

William "Doc" Schmitz Surgeon

Hospital Rounds

Comrades, I am happy to tell you about the many Department accomplishments to improve health care and benefits for veterans and their families this year. As Department Surgeon, I have covered over 11,000 miles in visits to all VAs in VISN2 and three VAs in VISN3, numerous VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and Veterans Outreach Centers (Vet Centers). These activities included meetings with VA Administration, health care providers, and veterans receiving services. The Department was able to voice concerns raised by veterans and VA employees and joined forces to ensure quality care. I have collaborated with the leadership of two other VSOs to bring to the attention of the VA Administration the need for an outreach clinic in an isolated area of our state. We were so successful that plans are underway to establish a clinic in that area. I have been involved in developing local systems to increase the accessibility of service officers to veterans. There have been health fairs for both our Fall Conference and Eastern States Conference that were geared to bring the most current information to our conferences regarding health benefits and health screening. I have been serving as the Department representative and mentor in the Buffalo Veterans' Court Diversion Program and educating law enforcement agents about veterans' issues. This is the FIRST Program in the nation to help vet-



L-R: William "DOC" Schmitz, Department Surgeon reviewing his notes, as Jr. Vice Commander Allan Davenport contemplates the report of the current speaker at the Legislative Conference.

erans get treatment from the VA to deal with alcohol and substance abuse problems, PTSD, and other mental health problems that lead to arrests.

In my capacity, I have been invited to give talks throughout the state, particularly in the areas of PTSD, and returning veterans' benefits and health care needs. I have continued to chair the Advisory Committee that manages the remaining 2006-2007 Special Project Funds at the Batavia VA PTSD Clinics. We have successfully processed two Ruth Bauer Kidney Fund applications and one Emergency Relief Fund. I have been able to link our veterans and their families with needed health care and/or service representative assistance as a result of the many alliances I have made throughout the state of New York. Please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail or phone.

Robert Walton National Home Chairman

I visited the Home in November. While there, I had a tour of New York houses one and two.

At that time, there were no major concerns with the two houses.

The Fiscal year 2007-08 report from the Home states there was \$27,014.34 in the fund balance for the two houses. So far this year, we have donations totaling \$5,400.00. At this time, I would like to thank all Districts, County Councils and Posts that have donated to date this year.

We are still down from last year's total.

Also while at the Home, I toured the two new houses. They are both handicap accessible as any new hous-

es will be.

The infrastructure at the Home will only allow for one new house to be built. After that, if any new houses are to be built, the electric, sewer and water will have to be upgraded.

Aside from the Single Parent Family Program and the Residential Program, there is the Military Family Program and the Veteran Family Program.

Last summer, the Moving Wall was at the National Home. It was well attended by members of the community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert Walton
National Home Chairman

Edward C. Bassett State Inspector

Well, comrades, we are past the halfway mark of this leadership year. The amount of inspections that have been turned in is still very low as of the last update on the computer of February 29th. It is heartbreaking to see some Councils have no inspections at all done. Come on, comrades, you can do better than that.

Another thing that is sad is some of you Post Commanders have your 100% and have not been inspected. Remember



L-R: at the Legislative Conference meeting in Albany, Department Inspector Edward C. Bassett takes notes on a Committee report as National Council Member Elton Klein, PSC, looks on.

L-R: at the Legislative Conference meeting in Albany, Department Inspector Edward C. Bassett takes notes on a

that the deadline for inspections is April 30th and must be received by me or sent to the state by May 16th (Page 14 of the Membership Program Book).

Council Commanders, you need 90% of your Posts inspected.

I hope that a lot of you Commanders were in Albany for the Class on the 990 forms. That seems to be one of the biggest problems on the inspection forms along with the amount of the Quartermaster bond.

Well, there is not much more that can be said. Just go out there and "GIT-ER-DONE." Good luck to all.

Remember, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 607-937-5160.

Yours in comradeship,
Edward C. Bassett
State Inspector

Dennis Sullivan Community Service Chairman

Spring Conference February 23-25, 2008

Community Service is a large part of what we do as members of the VFW. Community Service reports help keep our exempt status so it is very important that they are completed correctly and on time. As you know, the Community Service reports are due twice a year. The first half covered May 1 to October 31, 2007. After compiling all the reports sent to me from the Posts and the Ladies Auxiliaries, the totals are as follows:

- All eight Districts participated
- 260 out of 569 Posts participated (which is 50% of Post participation)
- Total money spent was \$613,204
- Total hours was 130,819

I am now poised to receive the second half reports that cover November 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008. Keep them coming. Remember, if you want to receive credit for Community Service or if you are going for an All-State Post status, you must submit your report by the deadline of May 15, 2008.

Also, I would like to report on Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year Award. We had five Districts participating, nine Posts and nine Ladies Auxiliaries participating. Eighteen teachers were nominated from 15 schools. Total expenses were \$2,095.00.

There were three teachers chosen as outstanding teacher who promotes



L-R: Department Community Service Chairman Dennis Sullivan is congratulated on his report by Department Special Projects Chairman Michael Pascal.

Americanism and Citizenship.

The winners were:

Category K-5 Christine Leavor

Category 6-8 Sharon Naftzger

Category 9-12 Michael Companion

Our children are our number one priority, and teachers are such an important influence over them. Let's honor our teachers, start early in June to encourage schools to nominate their teachers for next year's Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year.

As always, if anyone needs information on Community Service and I could be of assistance, please contact me and I would be glad to help.

Dennis Sullivan
Community Service Chairman

Ron Bush Membership

This is the last time that I will address you before the State Convention. I wish to thank all of the Post Commanders that have achieved 100% in membership and have completed all of their programs. I would also like to thank all County and District Commanders that have completed all the membership programs. This doesn't mean that we are out of the running. New Jersey was looking for me to turn in the towel at the Washington Conference. But it ain't over until it's over. **Please don't give up!!!!** The New York Giants didn't give up, and they won the Super Bowl. We can win our own Super Bowl of sorts by calling on that continuous member and getting his dues.

At present, the National organization as a whole is down over 59,000 members from last year at this time. Most of this deficit is in the continuous members. Post Commanders, get the list of unpaid members out and read it at a Post meeting and post it so everyone can read it. You might get some feedback as to why a member hasn't paid. He or she may be sick or disabled. These types of dues can be paid out of the dues reserve fund. If the Post decides to pay a member's dues, and if you want the card to be returned to the Post for disposition (instead of the member), you must get it in to National early. They pull

these cards by hand on the third Friday of the month, and you won't get credited for these members until this happens.

I would like to thank all the Posts that have stepped up to the plate and picked up the members that I have asked them to by paying the first year's membership. If we continue in the direction that we are headed, we will probably see a reduction in the programs for next year. **Let's not let that happen.** Again, thanks to all of you; hope to see all Post Commanders wearing a new white hat at the Convention. LET'S GET-ER-DONE!

Semper Fi,
Ron Bush



PSC Ron Bush, Department Membership Chairman, fields questions at the membership meeting in Albany.

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Jack G. Veazy Chief of Staff

Comrades,

On January 16th, 2008, Corporal John P. Sigsbee, 21-years-old from Waterville, NY, was killed in Iraq. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 101st Air Borne Division from Fort Campbell, KY. This was the second time he was wounded.

He was shown January 20th to 25th at the Waterville High School.

The night before, I was asked by the Commander to possibly recruit members from our Post to attend the Funeral at Waterville High School. It was said that there would be protestors from a church organization that would be carrying signs that said, "We do not support the war in Iraq."

Members including the State Color Guard attended the funeral. There were over 1,000 people in attendance. We were placed outside the auditorium door where a Military Honor Guard brought the casket out of the Auditorium. We were asked to give the hand salute as the casket exited.

There were no protestors as previously indicated.

On February 2, 2008, I met with the State Membership Team at Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, NY. This was for a membership roundup for troops coming



Department Chief of Staff Jack G. Veazy and wife, Terri, at the Albany Legislative Conference.

back from overseas who live in the local area. The team recruited 30 new members who were eligible.

I received a list of 187 veterans who are eligible to join the VFW and live in the Pawling, NY area. Our task is to open a new Post in the Pawling area. In order to do this, we are required to recruit 25 new members to open a new Post or get new members in a local area Post. Follow-up action will be taken.

Jack G. Veazy
Chief of Staff

Michael Spellman Patriot's Pen Chairman

The following are the winners for the Patriot's Pen contest for 2007-2008 at the Department level and how they finished.

1st Place – \$500.00

Mitchell Stull
143 East High Street
Painted Post, NY 14870
Post #524 – Corning
Southern Tier County Council – District #5

2nd Place – \$300.00

Ty Togonon
P.O. Box 255
North Salem, NY 10560
Post #672 – Brewster
Putnam County Council – District #2

3rd Place – \$200.00

Daniel DePinto
24 Seventh Avenue
Kings Park, NY 11754
Post #5796 – Kings Park
Suffolk County Council – District #1

4th Place – \$100.00

Tiffany Cross
6194 Route 23C
Prattsville, NY 12468
Post #1545 – Windham
Rip Van Winkle County Council – District #3

4th Place – \$100.00

Nathan Fifield
179 Battlehill Road
Gouverneur, NY 13642
Post #6338 – Gouverneur
St. Lawrence County Council – District #4

4th Place – \$100.00

Gregory Hoytink
6495 East Lake Road
Mayville, NY 14757
Post #8647 – Mayville
Chautauqua County Council – District #6

4th Place – \$100.00

Cameron Scott
21 Hunt Club Drive
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
Post #26 – Lima
Western County Council – District #7

4th Place – \$100.00

Christopher Kirby
21 Park View Drive
Pittsford, NY 14534
Post #8495 – Fairport
Monroe County Council – District #8



Post #524 Corning Commander Dan Mehoczko introduces 1st place Department Patriot's Pen winner Mitchell Stull to Assemblyman James Bacalles during our Albany visit.

Service Officers Raffle 2008 Winners

On behalf of the Department Service Officers and their staffs, we would like to thank those who were so generous in their donation of the \$2,350 in prizes. Listed below are this year's

drawing winners:

Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr.
PSC State Quartermaster
Chairman

Place	Prize	Winner
1st	\$500 Louis W. Oppenheim Post 1019	VFW Post 455
2nd	\$250 in Memory of Neil "Cuddles" Connolly – The Connolly Family	Peter Vesey
3rd	\$200 in Memory of "A Few Good Men" – Anonymous	VFW Post 7393
4th	\$100 in Memory of Warren Barnhart – Robert and Karen Barnhart	VFW Post 2246
5th	\$100 in Memory of James Searight USMC, KIA Vietnam – Sally Gagnon	Henry Craft
6th	\$100 in Memory of Jonathan Looters – Jack and Charlotte Haight	Post 107
7th	\$100 in Memory of Harold M. Burke, Sr. – Harold & Carol Burke	Joel Vanik
8th	\$100 in Memory of Art Koch, Jr. – Art and Brenda Koch	Post 1374
9th	\$100 in Memory of Jack Longendyke – Jim and Mary Longendyke	Randy Staats
10th	\$100 in Memory of Ralph A. Fields, KIA WWII – E. James Fields	VF Post 7552
11th	\$100 in Memory of Robert G. Choquette, KIA Vietnam – William "Doc" Schmitz	Sophie Thorson
12th	\$100 in Memory of Lyle Young, MIA Korea – Cindy and Skip Campbell	Charlotte Rava
13th	\$100 in Memory of James A. Bassett – Edward Bassett	Al Davenport
14th	\$100 in Memory of Frank Leavor – Harold and Christine Leavor	John McKee
15th	\$100 in Memory of James Reape – Jane Reape	Dorothy Reid
16th	\$100 For God and Country – Karl Rohde, PSC and Charlie Miller	John Calamis
17th	\$100 in Memory of All of Those Who Served – Suffolk County	VFW Post 7914

\$100 Ticket Seller Drawing

\$50
\$50

Winner

T. William Bossidy
Post 107

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Department Patriot's Pen Participation Report Summary Department of New York

Participation Totals:

64 Posts, 24 Auxiliaries, 1,943 Students, 144 Post Winners Advanced
8 Districts/8 Auxiliaries
3 County Councils/3 Auxiliaries

Listed below is the actual amount of money awarded to participating students:

Posts – \$12,400.00
Districts – \$1,642.35
County Councils – \$475.00
Department Awards:
First Place – \$500.00
Second Place – \$300.00
Third Place – \$200.00
Other – \$500.00

Total Savings Bonds – \$16,017.35

Listed below are all additional expenses associated with Patriot's Pen Program:

Posts – \$3,610.00
Districts – \$497.00
County Councils – \$25.00
Department – \$250.00
Other – \$0

Total Additional Expenses – \$4,382.00

Add **Total Savings Bonds** column (left) and **Total Additional Expenses** column (right) for **Grand Total** (below):

Grand Total \$20,399.35

Michael Spellman
Department Patriot's Pen Chairman
1-24-08

Veterans Airlift Command

Dear Post Commander or Gambling Manager,

The Veterans Airlift Command provides free air transportation to wounded warriors, veterans and their families for medical and other compassionate purposes through a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots.

We encourage you to support us through your gambling operations or other giving.

Our priority is on the veterans of Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). As capacity allows, our mission will expand to serve veterans of other conflicts.

We are headquartered in Minnesota but serve our wounded warriors nationally.

Please take a look at our Web site www.veteransairlift.org for more information on who we are and what we do.

We look forward to calling your Post a supporter of Veterans Airlift Command. If possible, we would like you to consider recurring support due to the ongoing nature of our mission.

Sincerely,

Walt Fricke
CEO and Founder
Vietnam Veteran and VFW Member
Veterans Airlift Command
5775 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 700
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Office 952-582-2911



New VA sign – from left, Bill Friday, VFW Hospital Chairman; Steve Leaton, owner of Leaton Signs; Dennis Heberling, VA Site Manager; Wilbur Gray, Veness-Strollo VFW Post #1602, Junior Vice Commander and Sign Chairman; and Kate Martin, volunteer service specialist at VA, stand by the new Batavia VA complex sign at the intersection of West Main Street and Redfield Parkway Thursday. The sign was erected and will be maintained by the Veness-Strollo VFW Post #1602.

VFW clock donated to the Buffalo Service Office
L-R: Department Service Officer Tom Todaro, E.C.C. Commander Charles Camillo making the donation on behalf of the Council.



Friendly Rivalry – Army Navy Game, December 15, 2007 – Navy 35-Army 3



Reprinted from Times Herald-Record, Friday, December 21, 2007
In the wake of Navy's 38-3 football victory over Army earlier this month, members of Port Jervis' Roosa-Fleming VFW Post #161 rolled a keg down the street Saturday to the victors' Post, Tri-States VFW Naval Ship No. 7241. Accepting the keg for Navy were, from left, Irene Noeller, Tony Slowick, Roger Fuller and Capt. Charlie Flieger. Delivering were, starting next to Flieger, Army's Bill Eagan, Commander George Kurtz, Cy Kean, Ray Kahmar, Dawn Amato and Floyd Babcock. Amato and Noeller are also members of Post 161's Auxiliary. The victor getting a keg tradition has been going on forever, said Kahmar. For the record, Navy has won 52 of the 108 games played in the big rivalry; Army has won 49; there have been seven ties. Photo by Jennifer Currier.

VFW Post 5086 Hurley

State Commander Bob Barnhart was guest speaker at the Hurley Post #5086 Veterans Day services in Hurley Cemetery. He also presented Saipan Commemoration Medallions to four Post members. The 60th Anniversary

Commemoration Medallion was given out by VFW Post 3456 Saipan, to Veterans who served in the Pacific Theater during WWII, in appreciation to the sacrifices they made for the freedom of the Mariana Islands.

Bob Barnhart with Medallion recipients (l to r): Jack Jordan, Tom Forcino, Bill Morehouse and Jack Decker.



Bob Barnhart with Post Color Guard.

One Hard Working VFW Member

To William (Doc) Schmitz,
How nice of you to invite me to send you the events that led me up to where I am today. Sometime in March of 2004, the Commander mentioned to me that he might have to go to Germany. His company wanted him to go with some kind of electronic gadget his department had developed to show in Germany, and so he went two weeks later. Now I am the Commander three months earlier than I expected.
I had gotten only one or two meetings under my belt when I got a phone call from a school principal's secretary asking if I was the new Commander. I said yes. I was informed that everything had been done, but the prizes never came to the winners; and the Principal was getting very angry. The Principal told me what I needed to know, and I took care of the problem.
Next came a phone call from a high school teacher wanting to know when I was going to pickup the essays for VOD. She would leave them in the office. I picked

them up the same day, got them judged and with the help of George Whitfield and Pete Verzillo got them in on time. (That wasn't the only time they had to help me.)
Next came an invitation to speak to a Pittsford Middle School eighth-grade class. Of course, I went in. Talking to the teacher, I found out they didn't have a VOD/Patriot's Pen program there. They have now, and it yielded 87 essays.
Then, after I made a speech at a Memorial Day parade, I saw a middle school teacher from Fairport; and after exchanging pleasantries, I asked him if he would run our Patriot's Pen program. He accepted, yielding 102 essays. The total last year was 209.
I now realize that we can't do all of this, so I asked the Ladies Auxiliary for help; and they said yes.
Mike Lucci
Chairman VOD/Patriot's Pen
Post 8495
Fairport, NY

- Alcohol/substance abuse treatment
- Clothing/food/personal goods
- Counseling/crisis services
- Education programs
- Employment counseling
- Energy assistance
- Family life/parenting
- Health/wellness
- Legal/dispute resolution
- Seniors services & supports
- Shelter/housing/transportation
- Support/self-help groups
- Alcohol/substance abuse treatment
- Clothing/food/personal goods
- Counseling/crisis services
- Education programs
- Employment counseling
- Energy assistance
- Family life/parenting
- Health/wellness • HIV/AIDS testing
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- Seniors services & supports
- Shelter/housing/transportation
- Support/self-help groups
- Alcohol/substance abuse treatment
- Clothing/food/personal goods
- Counseling/crisis services

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Allegany County United Way
NYS Office of Children & Family Services



Post #8647 – Mayville



Life member Harold Peters belongs to the William Travis Post #493 American Legion in Mayville, NY, and has served locally in the Boy Scouts and volunteers at a local hospital. We are very honored to have Post Officers dedicate the “Brian Bliss Award” to Harold who is also known to many of his friends and family as “Moose.” A big Thank You to Past Commander Janet Derbish who submitted his name so he could receive the award. Current Commander Paul Holthouse was honored to escort Harold at the ceremonies at the Boy Scout Camp Merz in Mayville, NY, recently. L-R: Commander Paul Holthouse, Harold “Moose” Peters, Jay McManus, Andy Cesarz and Past Post Commander Janet Derbish.

Post #2813 – Woodside

Daniel’s Post Veterans Donate for Children’s Gifts

The veterans of the John V. Daniels, Jr. VFW Post #2813 in Woodside started a collection to buy Christmas presents for poor children. The project was organized by Jr. Vice Commander Marvin Jeffcoat and Service Officer Edward Avila. In addition to the contributions, the Post added its own donation.

quartermaster George Custance, with Comrades Jeffcoat and Avila, visited the office of Neighborhood Housing Services – Northern Queens in Woodside, to deliver the check to Coordinator, Ms. Gladys Beague. She thanked the veterans for the donation and said that it would be delivered to a local homeless children’s shelter so that they could have gifts for Christmas.



L-R: Marvin Jeffcoat, Jr. Vice Commander; Gladys Beague, NHS Coordinator and Jerry Sisco, Post #2813 Commander.

Honoring Our Veterans



State Senator Serphin R. Maltese joins Boy Scouts from Pack 390 (sponsored by the John V. Daniels, Jr., VFW Post #2813) and Scout Leader Marvin Jeffcoat (Jr. Vice Commander #2813) to lay a commemorative wreath at the World War II Memorial at Laurel Hill Boulevard and 48th Street in Woodside. Also pictured: George Custance, Quartermaster #2813.

Convention Guest

Paul A. Spera
Commander-in-Chief, 1995-96
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States



Paul A. Spera of Attleboro, MA, was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 96th National Convention in Phoenix, AZ, on August 25, 1995. He was the seventh native of the Bay State to be elected to this high office.

Paul A. Spera
Commander-in-Chief, 1995-96
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Spera served in the U.S. Army from 1964 to 1967. He earned his eligibility in Nha Trang Vietnam while serving with the 39th Signal Battalion from 1965-66. Upon returning home, he was stationed at Fort Ritchie, MD, where he was part of an equipment installation team until his discharge.

Joining while still in Vietnam, he remains a member of Post #144 in Boston, MA, and currently serves as the Post Quartermaster.

Upon discharge, he attended Northeastern University where he studied business administration. He then went to work for the Department of Labor’s Jobs for Veterans Program. He also was Assistant Service Officer for the Department of Massachusetts from 1977-79.

He was named the “Outstanding Veteran of the Year” by the National Alliance of Businessmen in 1977, and he served on the Massachusetts and Attleboro Memorial Committees.

He is currently employed by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs as one of six veterans’ liaisons to the Secretary.

He and his wife, Joanne, have five children – Dawn, Anthony, Angela, Michelle and Paul. They also have two grandsons, Tyler and Matthew.

They Penned Winning Efforts

The decision of the judges was something to smile about for Natasha Warders (third from left) and Anna Prolos (second from right), eighth graders at St. Sebastian’s School in Woodside, as they were declared Post-level winners in the annual Patriot’s Pen essay, a national program conducted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The girls’ essays, with the theme of “Why I Am an American Patriot,” were selected from among the entries received by Woodside’s John V. Daniels, Jr. VFW Post #2813.



In a presentation of checks to the winners, Natasha received \$200 and Anna was awarded \$100 by the Post. As shown from left, the winning essayists are pictured with George Custance, Quartermaster; Jerry Sisco, Post 2813 Commander; Natasha Warders, 1st Place Winner; Anna Proios, 2nd Place Winner and Marvin Jeffcoat, Jr. Vice Commander.



Department VFW in Albany addressing issues that impact veterans. R-L: James Vinsonhaler, Department Sr. Service Officer; Commander Robert Barnhart; James D. McDonough, Jr., Director NYS Division of Veterans Affairs and Harold Burk, Quartermaster.



Department Adjutant Art Koch, birthday boy, gets a mug with Mike Pascal and Dennis Sullivan’s pictures on it. Nice!

Stepping Out



Congratulations to our Color Guard who participated in the Color Guard Competition at the Erie County Fair Veterans Day Parade and managed to take 3rd Place!!! Last year, we placed 6th, this year 3rd and next year 1st Place!!!! Participants were: Commander Chuck Catalina, PC John Fitch, Don Frier and PC Harris Bartz. Submitted by PC John F. Fitch, Post

A Letter to Mom from the Field

Dear Mom,

Although I cannot mail this letter, I need to write you. I only arrived here a few minutes ago, and I feel like I have been here an eternity. Everything and everyone seems so familiar to me. I don't know where the rest of my unit is and can't find out what happened yesterday. The last I remember was we were under a heavy attack and pinned down in the middle of a rice field. We were held up at the last village giving first aid to two children who had been burned the day before. They were flown out to the nearest field hospital and should be just fine. I can remember thinking about the kids when a bright flash kind of went right through my skin. I didn't feel anything, and my thoughts changed to you and Dad before everything went dark. Now I sit here writing a letter that they tell me I cannot mail. I don't know why.

It's funny, mom, but I just can't feel sad or worry about the war anymore. I know what the war was like, I know I have done things that gave me nightmares, but I just can't remember them. Mom, I can remember the moment I was born, I was so scared and cold. The first time you held me the fear left me, and your warmth filled my new soul. That's the only way I could describe how I am feeling all the time.

Do you remember writing me about Grandpa dying? You said he will be at peace and is going on to a better place. Mom, hold on to your hat, he just walked in. I know where I am now, and I remember the flash was a mortar shell. Grandpa wants me to send his love even though he knows I can't mail this. He has written a few letters of his own. Got to go, Mom, Grandpa wants to show me around, he has been bragging about me and needs to show me off.

Mom, one thing that still lives in my heart is the love I have for you and Dad. I love you both and that will never die.

Your loving and so very happy son.

By Robert Foster June 24, 2005

Sheridan Post #6390

Even though the population around Western New York seems to be dwindling, the VFW in Sheridan is still going strong. Post 6390 was started by 10 veterans and had 32 original members. The Ladies Auxiliary was formed six years later. They have been growing ever since.

When the Post was originally formed they did not have a building to conduct their monthly meetings. Members' homes doubled as meeting places until a place was finally rented that allowed them to also hold gatherings. Members were happy in their new home; however, the lease ran out; and there was a tough decision to be made. Where would they go where they could have a home of their own?

An existing building on a site in Sheridan, along with ample land for expansion, was purchased and members undertook the arduous task of moving their club to its new residence. For 10 years, the building was home to the vets and their numerous celebrations, parties, meetings and social gatherings. Time eventually took its toll and the building had become obsolete and too old to remodel. The idea to build a bigger and newer Post was in the works.

After three years in the planning stages, including applying for permits, reviewing blueprints and making tough decisions, ground was broken and construction began. A total of 300 loads of fill carried by 10-wheeled dump trucks

were needed to bring the road up to the road level. The waste system was then put in place and in March of 2007, construction of the building that would be their final home began. Once the building was closed in, volunteers proceeded to finish the Post, their new home that would be able to accommodate everyone in Sheridan at the same time, if necessary.

Members donated countless hours and built 70% of the 10,000 square foot building themselves, working seven days a week whenever possible, until its completion and opening in December 2007. They didn't do it on their own, though. Throughout the whole building process, the Women's Auxiliary raised money to buy some of the things necessary for Post construction, including supplies and fixtures for the kitchen and bar and barstools.

A dining room, banquet room, five bathrooms, a kitchen, cold storage, dry storage, a meeting room, three closets, an office, an electrical room and a furnace room make up the new Post.

To welcome visitors, the entrance foyer has a glass showcase filled with military artifacts and a wall of bricks carved with



Canteen.

the names of the donors to the building fund. Post 6390 is over 300 strong in membership and currently has 63 life members. The Ladies Auxiliary now has 46 members who contribute to the flourishing organization.

A special thank you goes out to all of the vendors who gave their time or donated money or materials. Cathy Young, our New York State Rep, worked hard to ensure that we would receive the grant funds needed to complete this project. And to all of our friends who donated their time and money, or that we might have missed, a big thank you for making the VFW what it is today. We are very grateful.

We invite all VFW members and their guests to stop in and say hello and see the new Post, the showcase of Sheridan, NY.



Post #7763 Massapequa Park

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 3, 2008, for the 11th year in a row, members of VFW Post #7763 Massapequa Park, NY, provided hero sandwiches, salads and sodas for 260 patients at the VA Hospital at North Port, NY. Pictured left to right: Jerry Rosenthal, Commander Richard Begandy, John Bruda, Hospital Liaison Officer Robert Duffy, Artie Baldwin, Al Arcery, John Ronga, Lou Pisano, Frank Cornell, Tom Maurici and Steve Piller.



Legislator Gonsalves gave Saipan Commemoration Medallions, Mariana Island in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of World War II to George Becker, Otto Jensen, John Crease and Carmine Cella of Post #2736 VFW, East Meadow, NY.

Post 5942 Plainview

Commander Joseph W. Varrone, along with members of the Plainview Post #5942 and members of the 2007 Poppy Committee donated \$3,000.00 in supplies to help the homeless veterans in the Salvation Army Veterans' Residence at the Northport VA Center. The money was raised thanks to the generosity of the Plainview Old Bethpage community during the recent Poppy Campaign.

Pictured (L-R) are Pat Astegher, Artie Anderson, Ray Brennen, Jim Waters, Tim McDermott, Dennis Cudahy, Vic Zodda, Ralph Plaisance, Ed Seaman, Commander Joseph Varrone and Rocco Figalora.



Post #932 – Marathon



Members of Post #932 volunteer at the Oxford Veterans Home at the Bingo Party for residents. The Post also contributes \$25.00 in half-dollar coins, which are used as Bingo prizes; and community ladies make lap robes, which are also used as prizes.

Post #8495 – Fairport



On the last Wednesday of each month, the Rochester Regional Veterans Business Council meets at the Perinton Memorial VFW Post #8495 for lunch. Post and Council member Dick Grube coordinates the meeting at the Post. The mission of the Council is to provide a forum for members to network, grow their business, support the reintegration of veterans into the workforce, and support the activities of the Rochester Veterans Outreach Center. Officers of the Council are President John Batiste, Major General (Ret.); Vice Presidents Kent Fellows and Rick Barton; and Secretary Jocene Preston. For more Council information, visit their Web site www.veteransbusinesscouncil.org.



Highland VFW Post #6534 members were entertained by Bee Bee the Clown at the Saint Jude Children's Hospital Judeathon held at the Poughkeepsie Galleria Center Court this past Sunday, following their presentation of a \$300.00 donation for this worthy cause sponsored by Radio Station WRWD and moderated by Tommy Lee Walker. From left: John Fasano, Arthur (Red) Tumbleson, VFW Commander Bobby Rhodes, Bee Bee the Clown and Jack Bellochio.

VFW Post 3350 East Rockaway, NY,
District #1 Nassau County Council



L-R: Joe McCarthy, Post Commander; Tom Caffry, Sr. Vice Commander; Bob Jacoby, Quartermaster; Bill Torpey; Pat Iulucci; Pete Vitulli; Marco Benedetto; Dom Roggio; Al Adler, Jr. Vice Commander and Joe C. donated to Saint Alban's Hospital in Queens, NY.

VFW Supports Mayor's
War Memorial Restoration



In appreciation of the special attention given to the War Veteran Memorials around Glen Cove, the VFW James Donohue Post #347 Commander Jim Ruff presented Mayor Ralph V. Suozzi with a check for \$1,000 as a contribution toward their upgrade. The work included and will consist of the installation of new flags and lighting as required by military protocol, landscaping, the sandblasting of boulders and the restoration of the plaques honoring our city's war dead at each of the monuments. Pictured at the doughboy Monument are

VFW members Joe Fencl, Mayor Ralph V. Suozzi, 2007 Glen Cove Veterans Day honoree James Doran, #347 Post Commander Jim Ruff and Post #347 members Louis Noon and Tom Kenary.

New York State Senator Michael F. Nozzolio was honored by the Geneva VFW Post #2670 for his efforts to create Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery at the former Sampson Naval and Air Force Base. Senator Nozzolio sponsored the legislation necessary to create the Veterans Cemetery and successfully secured \$500,000 in New York state funding for the project. The celebration marked the 75th Anniversary of the Geneva VFW Post. From left to right are: Al Fox, VFW District 8 Commander; Donald McGlooin, VFW Senior Vice Commander; Senator Michael Nozzolio; and Frank Pullano, retired Brigadier Major General of the New York National Guard.



Hospitalized Veterans, Widows Feted with Pizza Party

Reprinted from *The Granville Sentinel*, February 27, 2008

A groups of Granville's veterans stopped in at the Indian River Rehabilitation and Health Care Center as a part of observing "National Visit a Hospitalized Veteran" Week.

Veterans and Auxiliary members from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1653 and American Legion Post #39 went down to socialize with the veterans and wives of veterans residing at the rehabilitation center. VFW Post Commander John Norton said the groups consulted with the staff when figuring out something special they could do for the veterans at Indian River: "They told us pizza, so we put together a pizza party," Norton said.

"I want to thank Rich and Luisa at Ma and Pa's for donating the pizza," Norton said. The day was organized after Norton said he heard about the week, which is organized in an effort to make people more aware of the hospitalized veterans to encourage them to go and visit.

Nursing staff and activities personnel, including Kari Gilmore, Ann Schiniski, Nancy Burdo and Mary Eekoff helped the veterans put on the pizza

bash. "Our veterans are fortunate to have some great care," Norton said.

Sitting with World War II veteran and native of Poultney, VT, John Mazur and his wife, Mary Mazur, and sisters, Virginia Scott and Sophie Matorri, and his sister-in-law, Gertrude Lynch. Mazur spent over 18 months in an Army hospital in Germany after being wounded in combat. Norton said Mazur served under Gen. George S. Patton and traveled to Italy, Belgium and France as a tank recovery vehicle driver.

The visitors: VFW Commander John "Hector" Norton; Lee Brown, Chuck McCasland; Rodger Hurley; Walter Hughes; Bud Davies; Frank Heir; Edgar Haskins; George Macura; Luther Reid; Francis Logan; Joe O'Donnell; Art Branigan; Vern Race and Bob Lennox along with Auxiliary Helen Macura, Mary Macura, Dorothy Reid and Sue Haskins.



Residents dig into their pizza Wednesday afternoon.

New VA Rules for Specially Adapted Housing Grants

Program Aids Most Seriously Injured

January 4, 2008

WASHINGTON – A change in the law that allows certain seriously injured veterans and service members to receive multiple grants for constructing or modifying homes has resulted in many new grants, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today.

Before the change, eligible veterans and service members could receive special adaptive housing grants of \$10,000 or \$50,000 from VA only once. Now they may use the benefit up to three times, so long as the total grants stay within specified limits outlined in the law.

“Veterans seriously disabled during their military service have earned this benefit,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “This change ensures that every eligible veteran and service member has the chance to use the maximum amount afforded to them by our grateful nation.”

In order to ensure all previous recipients are aware of this opportunity, VA has mailed more than 16,000 letters to eligible veterans, reaching out to those who used only a portion of their grant or who decided not to use the grant even after initially qualifying.

The response over the past year has been

dramatic, with more than 4,600 applications received thus far. Of these, approximately 3,900 veterans have been determined eligible under the new law, and more than 200 grants already awarded.

VA has averaged about 1,000 adaptive housing grant applications per year during the past 10 years. Since the program began in 1948, it has provided more than \$650 million in grants to about 34,000 seriously disabled veterans.

To ensure veterans’ and service members’ needs are met and grant money is spent properly, VA works closely throughout the entire process with contractors and architects to design, construct and modify homes that meet the individuals’ housing accessibility needs.

Eligible for the benefit are those with specific service-connected disabilities entitling them to VA compensation for a “permanent and total disability.” They may receive a grant to construct an adapted home or to modify an existing one to meet their special needs.

VA has three types of adapted housing grants available. The Specially Adapted Housing grant (SAH), currently limited to \$50,000, is generally used to create a wheelchair-accessible home for those who may require such assistance for activities of daily living.

VA’s Home Loan Guaranty program and the Native American Direct Loan program may also be used with the SAH benefit to purchase an adaptive home.

The Special Housing Adaptations (SHA) grant, currently limited to \$10,000, is generally used to assist veterans with mobility throughout their homes due to blindness in both eyes, or the anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow.

A third type established by the new law, the Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant, is available to eligible veterans and seriously injured active duty service members who are temporarily living or intend to temporarily live in a home owned by a family member.

While the SAH and SHA grants require ownership and title to a house, in creating TRA Congress recognized the need to allow veterans and active duty members who may not yet own homes to have access to the adaptive housing grant program.

Under TRA, veterans and service members eligible under the SAH program

would be permitted to use up to \$14,000, and those eligible under the SHA program would be allowed to use up to \$2,000 of the maximum grant amounts. Each grant would count as one of the three grants allowed under the new program.

“The goal of all three grant programs is to provide a barrier-free living environment that offers the country’s most severely injured veterans or service members a level of independent living,” added Peake.

Other VA adaptive housing benefits are currently available through Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service’s “Independent Living” program, the Insurance Service’s Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance program, and the Veterans Health Administration’s Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grant.

For more information about grants and other adaptive housing programs, contact a local VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or local veteran service organization. Additional program information and grant applications (VAF-26-4555) can be found at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm>.

A Helping Paw

Gingerly a young Veteran walked up to the podium at the VFW Fall Conference to talk about his losing battle with a Russian built rocket while serving in Iraq. Ray Hubbard lost that first fight and lost it pretty badly. Westchester County Commander Robert Foster and Adjutant Frank Morgenthaler found it hard to believe that Ray was still here to talk about it. After Ray told his chilling tale, he changed the subject to his new service dog, Dace. The tone of his voice changed from fear and pain to gratitude and hope. Ray spoke of his new family at NEADS (New England Assistance Dog Services). The new program, “Canines for Combat Veterans,” put Ray together with his new dog, Dace. Ray spoke of Dace

as a new friend not a dog. Dace would even pull Ray out of bed on those mornings when he just did not want to face the day.

Frank and Bob just looked at each other for a moment and said together “we gotta do something.” They could not find Ray in the outer hallway, but they did bring him back to Westchester in their hearts. They took those hearts and put them up to the Westchester County VFW and Westchester County American Legion. Put them up with a challenge for the two groups to raise \$10,000 to fund one service dog for another Veteran in need. The challenge was met so quickly that Frank was talking to Sheila O’Brien at NEADS to order our service dog within two weeks. “I knew we would get support but never expected it to be so quick, so willing and so generous,” said Commander Foster. Westchester Vets stood up to the plate and hit a homerun.

On December 8th, Bob and Frank took a giant check for \$10,000 to Boylston MA. They brought it to a small party for puppy trainers to meet the people who would be getting the dogs they helped train. Among those receiving dogs was a young amputee from Alaska, Josh Ferguson. Josh walked in with his new dog, Maisy. Yes, I said walked. Josh was doing great with his friend by his side and a smile on his face. Josh will be going home shortly and then returning to active duty. Yes, I said active duty. Josh is staying in the Army. I need say no more except for you to call your County Commander and join Westchester in this most needed cause. NEADS wants to do another 26 dogs just for Veterans on its current waiting list this coming year and would like to double that quota the following year. Get together with the Legion from your County and together we can do wonders.



Robert Foster, Commander Westchester CC and R. Frank Morgenthaler, Commander American Legion Post 979.



Pups waiting for a helping hand, and one day they will extend a paw to help a veteran.

Westchester County Commander
Robert Foster 914-263-0222
American Legion 979 Commander
Frank Morgenthaler 914-673-5220
NEADS Director
Sheila O’Brien 978-422-9064, ext. 11

Rankin Healey VFW Post #4785

9312 4th Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11209

Dear Overseas Veteran:

The Rankin Healey VFW Post of Bay Ridge conducted a Holiday celebration on Saturday 12/15/07. The event was free to Military Personnel and their families as well as VFW members. Present at the event was Lieutenant Colonel Paul Cook and Command Sergeant Major Juan A. Cáez from Fort Hamilton; New York State Assembly Member Alec Brook-Krasny; a representative from State Senator Martin Golden’s office and longtime friend of the Rankin Healey VFW, New York City Councilman Vincent Gentile.

Veterans from every major U.S. conflict from WWII to Afghanistan/Iraq and their families came together to honor the sacrifices made by those who have served and continue to serve. It is important during the holiday season to remember those who cannot be with their

families because they are defending freedom around the world. We must also never forget those that made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of justice.

The party was enjoyed by all, including a contingent of soldiers from Fort Hamilton. There was food, music, Santa for the kids and a magician.

Respectfully,
John Bivona
Rankin Healey Memorial Association



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Calling All Bachelor Posts!

Dear Commander,

I am writing again to ask those Post Commanders without a Ladies Auxiliary to consider forming an Auxiliary in the near future. The Extension Chairman has the responsibility to contact each Bachelor Post after the approval of the Department Commander. At this time there are 261 Posts in this Department without an Auxiliary.

However, I am pleased to announce that there has been a new Auxiliary instituted in Windam, District 3, and there is another in the process of forming an Auxiliary in District 4. We, the Ladies, are excited to welcome these new members to the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and to see the work of our organization continue with new ideas and visions for our future.

As you well know, the Ladies of the Department of New York do outstanding work for our Posts, communities, youth and also in fighting for our veterans' entitlements. I am asking that you talk with other Post Commanders that have a Ladies Auxiliary and learn about the beneficial work and

the services that we provide for our veterans in need. It is only because of your dedication to our America that we have the opportunity to volunteer in many ways to make this a better world in which to live. We thank you for our freedom to belong to the greatest Ladies Organization in the world.

If you are interested in forming an Auxiliary to your Post, please contact any of the following people so that the process can be started: Department President, Sally A. Gagnon, 419 North Lake Road, Forestport, NY 13338 or phone 315-392-5442; Treasurer, Marianne McLane, 3550 Deer River Road, Carthage, NY 13619 or phone 315-519-1615; or Chief of Staff Edith M. Horst, 2004 Timberline Drive, Columbiana, Ohio 44408 or phone 330-482-4724. Or you may contact me on my Florida Phone, which is 941-351-8483. I reside in Florida until the 5th of April 2008. Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Loyally,

Edith M. Horst, Chief of Staff
E-mail: evmh04@peoplepc.com

Voice of Democracy Audio Essay 2007-2008

The Voice of Democracy Program is in the hands of the National judges and probably will be decided when this newsletter is published. The Department Judging was held in Rochester, New York on the 5th of January. The winner was Nicole J. Bianchi from Hartsdale, NY, represented by VFW Post #200, District #2. Nicole will be attending the National Legislative and Community Service Conference in Washington, D.C., on March 2-5, 2008.

The Judges are local political and educational standouts that are dedicated to Veterans and Student Affairs and no strangers to this program.

Second Place went to Danielle T. Wolber, Fairport, NY, VFW Post #8495, District 8 and Third Place went to David E. Tobiasz, New Hartford, NY, VFW Post #7393, District 4.

George Whitfield
Voice of Democracy Chairman



Listed left to right are Bruce Finch, a 3rd-Grade Teacher and Department Winner of the Teacher's Award in 2004; Terri Robach, Mother of Senator Joseph Robach; David Fiorito, former teacher that started a program at a local school, Siena Academy, of having Veterans discuss their experiences and display any medals or memorabilia in their possession; Mag-

gie Brooks, our Monroe County Executive and Cheryl Dinolfo, the Monroe County Clerk (both are former judges in the County Council Youth Programs). Not present is the Ladies Auxiliary Chairperson Jackie Herbert from Campbell, New York, who was very helpful in this year's program. Thanks to all who made this a very successful year.

It's Official: DD-214 Now Available Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following Web site for veterans to gain access to their DD-214 online: www.vetrecs.archives.gov. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes or for membership in The American Legion.

NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Veterans and the next of kin of deceased veterans may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other indi-

viduals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can also be downloaded from the online Web site. Because the person making the request will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized.

The new Web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time. Sons are encouraged to pass this information on to former military personnel and their dependents.

MAP Event Reimbursements

This memo provides information on the procedure for VFW Departments, Districts or Posts to request a MAP Grant reimbursement from VFW National Headquarters.

- Do not assume expenditure will be reimbursed. Each MAP Grant Application is reviewed individually.
- Get pre-approval from the MAP office before committing your Department/Post funds if you intend to seek reimbursement.
- Pre-approval request must include event details; all sections of the MAP Grant application must be completed. Go to <http://www.vfw.org/resources/pdf/mapgrant.pdf> for application.

• MAP Grant Application, expense breakdown, receipts and MAP Event Project Report must be completed and submitted with your reimbursement request.

• Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 30 days of the event. Event information submitted for reimbursement must be consistent with event information submitted for pre-approval.

Please distribute this information throughout your Department. If there are any questions, contact VFW National Military Services Director Michael Penney at 816-968-2777.

POST TO POST

POST #8444 - ALBANY - Sponsored a Bowling Tournament at Playdium Bowling Center for Albany High School and donated \$250.00 to needy families for the Holidays.
POST #6478 - BELLEROSE - Two Eagle Scout Projects at the Post, painting the exterior of the building and landscaping.
POST #2250 - HORNELL - Auxiliary and Junior Girls made welcome home signs for the troops. S.T.C.C. Commander Doug Herbert gave out Flags. Sponsored a U.S.O. Show, dinner for Bath VA patients, breakfasts are scheduled. Submitted by Kim Wood, Ladies Auxiliary.
POST #600 - CANASTOTA - Past members working with public officials to protect gravesites of veterans. Submitted by Louis Ezzo.
POST #9587 - STATEN ISLAND - The Post received a certificate of recognition for donating to Operation Uplink. Santo A. Scireani Commander.
POST #8692 - ALBANY - New members Albert E. Couture, James Mason and William Srafford. A breakfast was held to raise money for Muscular Dystrophy and VFW National Children's Home. Sponsored a Boy Scout Troop #77 Breakfast. Robert A. LaDuke, Commander.
POST #1666 - YONKERS - Quartermaster Dennis Fitzgerald trying to get the remaining members to pay their dues. Birthday people: William Connery, William Okel, James Wall, Joe Fay, Joe Nader and John Jennings.
POST #982 - REMSEN - Wes Tompkins gearing up for elections. Seven members short of 100%.
POST #2307 - LYNBROOK - Chaplain Pat Bruno keeping track of the sick and shut ins. Nice job! Post sponsoring a Defensive Driving 55 Alive Class. Phillip Straub, Donald Watson and Paul Roderick had Birthdays.
POST #375 - YONKERS - Joe Porcelli, Commander, got both his hips replaced. MIA-POW Ceremony scheduled. Jr. Vice Commander Ken "Sarge" Fleiger preparing overseas packages for our troops.
POST #2670 - GENEVA - Troop A, 101st Cav, New York National Guard brought a military vehicle for display on Post property. District Commander Allan Fox presented Assemblyman Brian Kolb with a Certificate of Appreciation for his work on the Seneca County Veterans Cemetery.
POST #307 - ROCHESTER - Posting of all local parades for the season - Wow! Birthdays for Tom Valenta, Michael Davis, Frank Lingard and John Deutsch.
POST #8647 - MAYVILLE - Post chartered on April 27th, 1966, a big celebration is planned. Wayne Dunbar, Quartermaster, working on dues and membership. Paul

Holthouse, Commander.

POST #7172 - Commander Ernie Russo has some parties going on with flat screen TVs, Sr. Vice George Congo organized a Valentine Dance. Jr. Vice Mike Arrabito doing the Poppy Volunteer Program.

POST #2893 - SOLRAY - Rita Johnson was honored as Veteran of the Year; she served during WWII.

POST #557 - BEMUS POINT - Newly paved parking lot; Dennis James is building a new trophy case. New dishwasher is on order (What's his name?). Commander Don Anderson, Friday night dinners.

POST #7462 - PIERMONT - Get well soon, Bodi Francesca, Carolyn Ito Bristol, Rose Marie Ciolfi and Ann diFrancesca.

POST #6196 - QUEENSBURY - George "Chick" Daley showed up at a dinner, he's been missed. Commander William Barwell.

POST #478 - BINGHAMTON - Jim Furch, John LaBelle, Jon Fitch and Kevin Kenyon recognized by Commander Wayne Oakley for their work at the Post. Pat McGlynn and Bob Page assisted the Commander with Funeral duties.

POST #5253 - ALBERTSON - Commander Vincent DeMartino. Wow! This Commander reports on conference info in the newsletter, Nice job, "Doc." Eighteen members got their combat medals.

POST #2476 - RIVERHEAD - Commander Gene McSherry announces they are working on repairs to the WWII monument. Putting together boxes for overseas vets.

POST #420 - SARATOGA SPRINGS - Wow, nice paper! Editor Gene Ratiigliano. "Doc."

POST #420 - SARATOGA - Post Adjutant James M. Coyme was recognized as Veteran of the Year by H.M.C.C. He spearheaded many projects (state grant, WWII Memorial Committee, Memorial Day Parade, and increased Tax Exemptions for Vets).

POST #4787 - WHITESTONE - Commander William Costello pushing hard on membership. Sr. Vice Dr. David Copoll, wow a Doctor in VFW Post line, nice! Andy Sich has the Post online, great!

POST #5491 - MAHOPAC - Commander Charles Monte led the Post in their 60th celebration. Ladies Auxiliary "Adopt-A-Unit," nice job, Mary Monte, President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

POST #4927 - CENTEREACH - Commander Dennis Sullivan (on a personal note, this veteran has veterans and their families at heart), I'm impressed - "Doc." Who is Uncle Sam?

Veterans of Foreign Wars Teams Up with Express Delivery Company and New York Community for Annual Trees for Troops Program and Send-Off

For the fourth straight year, Proctor-Hopson Post #1896 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Ladies Auxiliary, through their VFW Military Family Support Center, teamed up with Dee's Nursery, Adelis International Security, DHL, NY and NJ Port Authority Police Department for their annual Trees for Troops program. Through this partnership, 1,000 live trees, thousands of holiday decorations, Hallmark greeting cards, Girl Scout cookies and "Santa Sacks" filled with holiday cards written by school children and scout groups showing support to U.S. troops will be delivered to our deployed troops in the Middle East. The special holiday shipment lifted off December 3rd from John F. Kennedy International Airport. It received a special send-off celebration at Dee's Nursery of Oceanside and DHL's gateway facility at JFK. The New York shipment will be followed by a second shipment of 250 additional trees, holiday decorations and care packages originating from Riverside, California.

With the support of VFW Posts, Auxiliaries and members across New York State, along with other veterans' organizations, families, schools, senior citizen groups, scouting units, corporations from across the country, a total of \$17,313.99 in donations was presented by Past State Commander Ben Thompson of Post #1896 on behalf of

the VFW. This amount funded 692 trees. Transportation of the trees and supplies to the Middle East was provided by DHL, the global market leader of the international express and logistics industry. In addition, DHL will transport from New York a separate shipment of artificial trees complete with lights, ornaments and toys to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and a shipment of toys to the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

A special thank you to Commander Bob Barnhart and the Department of New York VFW for the donation of over 200 cases of the Hallmark cards, and also to District #1 Commander Tom Ronayne and the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County for the generous donation of 250 cases of cookies. An additional 750 cases of cookies are scheduled to be divided and delivered to Walter Reed Army Hospital and Bethesda Naval Hospital.

The send-off commenced at 10:00 a.m. ET at Dee's Nursery in Oceanside, New York. From Dee's, the shipment went by motorcade which was escorted by members of the Port Authority, Nassau County, New York City, Suffolk County, Lynbrook, Rockville Centre, Old Brookville, Hempstead and Long Beach Police Departments, along with the New

TREES, continued on page 12

TREES, continued from page 11

York State Police Motorcycle Unit, to DHL's gateway facility at John F. Kennedy International Airport, where it was loaded onto the aircraft after a brief ceremony. The aircraft lifted off on Tuesday, December 4th for Bahrain, where the holiday shipment will be separated and distributed to military units throughout Bahrain, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

The VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members were honored to have Mrs. Dawn Esposito, a Gold Star Mother who lost her son in Afghanistan, spend the day with them.



(L-R) – Past State Commander Ben Thompson, Mrs. Dawn Esposito (Gold Star Mother who lost her son in Afghanistan) and State Commander Bob Barnhart (fifth from left) with VFW and Auxiliary members from the Department of New York.

Queens County Council VFW Ladies Auxiliary Annual Cancer Luncheon

Queens County Council VFW Jr. Vice Commander Marvin R. Jeffcoat presents St. Sebastian's Natasha L. Warders a "Certificate of Merit" and a check for \$100. Natasha is Queens County Council's 2008 Finalist. Pictured from left to right: Bernard Robinson, Commander Queens County Council VFW; Natasha's brother, Brandon; Mr. and Ms. Warders and Queens County Council VFW Jr. Vice Commander Marvin R. Jeffcoat.



Chautauqua County Home Christmas Party for the elderly



Chautauqua County Home Christmas party on the 8th of December 2007 – from left to right are Ed Durance (County Chairman), Pat Glownik (6th District President), Margaret Sheldon (County President), Dall Kell (County Commander), Nick Frederes (6th District Commander) and Robin Giles (Department Guard). In front is Monica Kenne, Department Junior Girls Guard. They gave out teddy bears to each person that lived there.

State Senator Serphin R. Maltese joins fellow VFW members as they say Farewell to the 812th MP Co at the Daniels Post. VFW Post 2813 hosted a farewell party for the 812th MP Co and family members as they prepare for deployment to Iraq.



Bishop Presents \$150,000 Check for Repairs at Centereach VFW



Congressman Tim Bishop presented a check for \$150,000 to Commander Dennis Sullivan of Centereach Post #4927. In attendance were the members and local politicians. The money will be used for much needed repairs on the building, which will start as soon as possible.



Anyone know this vet? I'd like to talk with him – "DOC."

State Commander's Special Project The Fisher House Program

A Fisher House is a Home away from home for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. What a wonderful project our commander has chosen this year. Just knowing that we here in New York can, and are, making a difference so our troops can have a place for their family members to stay while being a patient.

Last year alone more than 10,000 families were served with an average length of stay between 12 to 14 days, average combat casualties families between 45 and 60 days. The average occupancy level was at 90%, and the average cost per day was none. This saved families more that \$10 million in lodging costs, food and transportation.

So far this year, we are making a difference. But we need your help to complete our mission. So please send your

check to:
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of New York
1044 Broadway
Albany, NY 12204

Earmark it for The Commander's Special Project and make sure your Post, Council or District Number is noted.

Thank you,
Michael Pascal
Special Projects Chairman



Michael Pascal Special Projects Chairman addresses the membership at the Albany Legislative Conference.



Keeping things calmed down has its price!



Post 6764 was host to the Joint Veterans Council on January 20, 2008. Breakfast was provided and the "chow was deemed adequate in quality and quantity."



Nicole Bianchi, our State VOD champ, receiving a check from Vincent Petrucci the Commander of VFW #200 and myself at the Post 2285 Christmas dinner. She was also presented with checks for Westchester County and District 2.



Department Commander Barnhart in a casual moment at Windham ski resort, they support the Wounded Warrior Program. Bob visited with three nurses who suffered amputations from land mines injuries as they were forced off the road while in convoy.



Some of the Washington, D.C., delegation pose with Nicole J. Bianchi (center) and her family. She was our Department winner of our VOD program.



Our team in action in supporting the Wounded Warrior program. Damn good job, comrades!



Post #4927 of Congressman Tim Bishop announcing the first increase in VA travel reimbursements in 30 years. It was raised from 11 cents to 28.5 cents per mile. It covers gas mileage expenses for traveling back and forth to the VA Hospital for medical care. In attendance were Ladies Auxiliary President Mary Michaelis, Suffolk County Commander Dick Woltman and PDC Mike Pascal and members of Post #4927 and PCC Joe Thie-