



NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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



2011
Spring

"Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men."
– George S. Patton, Jr.

Volume 30,
Issue 2

New York VFW Partners with Excelsior College VFW members and spouses are eligible for reduced tuition under new education partnership.



ALBANY, N.Y. March 18, 2011 – The Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars has signed an education partnership agreement with Excelsior College, a nonprofit distance-learning institution based in Albany, in a statewide effort to draw younger veterans and their spouses to the membership rolls of local VFW Posts.

The New York initiative, which provides reduced tuition for VFW members and their spouses, builds on VFW's national goal of boosting membership among younger veterans from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. All New York VFW members, regardless of when or where they served, are now eligible for the education partnership benefits, which were announced March 18 in Albany at the start of the New York VFW's Spring Convention.

"A prime goal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is

to bridge the gap with veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the men and women who are vital to the future of our organization," said Jack Veazy, Commander of the VFW Department of New York. "We have taken a major step forward toward this goal by reaching out to New York veterans through an education partnership with a reputable, military-friendly college, which serves students nationwide. This agreement makes higher education accessible to veterans and their spouses."

National Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank joined state VFW leaders at the event to commend the statewide initiative.

Eubank said he is hopeful the New York VFW's education initiative can serve as a model for other states seeking to reach younger veterans. Younger vets, he said, are key to the VFW's future because "10 to 20 years from now, this will be their organization."

Excelsior College President John F. Ebersole said, "We applaud the New York VFW for recognizing the role that high-quality education plays in the security and future of veterans and their families. We truly believe that this initiative will strengthen the VFW, contribute to veterans' quality of life, and provide a model for future such partnerships. For Excelsior College, which has strong, longstanding educational connections with all branches of the military and veterans, this is an extremely exciting partnership."

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE, continued on page 3

VA Urges Veterans to Sign Up for Electronic Payment of Their Benefits

A new US Treasury Department regulation says paper benefit checks must be phased out by March 2013. Beginning May 1, 2011, anyone receiving VA compensation or pension payments for the first time will automatically receive their benefits through electronic payment.

VA will stop issuing paper checks altogether on March 1, 2013, and veterans and survivors who have not signed up for electronic payment of benefits by that time will receive a prepaid debit card instead.

Anyone already receiving federal benefit payments

electronically will be unaffected by these changes. To learn more about the federal government's switch to direct deposit or to change VA benefits to direct deposit, click here. Information about the federal government's "Go Direct" campaign is also available at (800) 333-1795.

Along with payments for VA benefit, the change will also affect recipients of payments from Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement Board, or Office of Personnel Management.

Jack G. Veazy Department Commander



As the snow melts into a vague memory, this year begins to melt away, as well. It seems like just yesterday I took the oath of office, and yet here we are, nearly ready for the next Convention. The spring colors begin to brighten our moods after a long winter and we start to get rejuvenated, excited and motivated.

Springtime signals a new beginning and a fresh start that can get us back in the mood for growth and give us a clear look into the future. The future of our organization is

membership, the core of our existence, the reason we persist and strive for that white hat, a symbol of our growth.

Today, we are far below the numbers we need to sustain our position in the C of A, not to mention the numbers necessary for growth, strength and veterans support. Members are the future of the VFW and we should be looking to them to take our place, so we can pass the gavel to the next generation. If the goal is the white hat, we missed the point; members wear the hats, and one without the other, perpetuates nothing.

Last year proved to be less than desirable, even though there were many white hats handed out. The end result has crippled our ability to reach nearly any goals this year, and many of the big winners last year are seeing their fortunes reversed this year. We can't buy tomorrow; we must work for it, one member at a time and then we nurture them so they have a reason to stay. If every member made every effort to replace themselves by recruiting just one member, our yearly membership drive would be nearly effortless.

Still, there is time left this year to make a difference. There are many Posts out there that need to recruit less than 10 new members, a number that is easily made if there is just one more last ditch effort. So few can take us so far and think about it for a moment – one of those new members could become a State or National Commander someday.

At the Spring Conference we announced our partnership with Excelsior College. That partnership offers our members a substantial college cost savings which is another inviting and enticing membership tool. This member benefit was brought to us by our editor after a conversation he had with another VFW member at a Post in the Northeast. Editor Don followed up on the information and here we are today, with a great opportunity that will save members money and get them a diploma as an added bonus.

Each of us has the opportunity to obtain such benefits for our members. We all have contacts in business, government and community that could open doors to countless scenarios for our members. All it takes is imagination, innovation and determination to add value to our great VFW, and that will draw members like you – members that make a difference.

Photographer



John Brunato



Editor



Don Mackey

**INSIDE
this
NYSOV**



Page 1-2: Officer's Messages

Page 3: A New Web Site

Page 4: VSO Scam

Page 6: Post News

Page 8: Marines Birthday

New York State Overseas Veteran

USPS 507-710
ISSN# 0199 2724

The official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205. Periodicals Postage Paid at Albany NY, 12204-2527 and additional mailing Office Phone: 1-518-463-7427. Periodically with notification specific issues will be in digital format available on-line at VFWNY.COM, select Dept NY then Newsletter.

PUBLICATIONS:

Overseas Veteran is published four times annually by the Department of New York in July/August/Sept., Oct./Nov./Dec., Jan./Feb./Mar. and April/May/June. One dollar of each member's annual dues, paid to a VFW Post in New York State, is used for a year's subscription to the *Overseas Veteran*. Cost to non-members and widows of VFW members: \$10.00; payable in advance to Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.

ARTICLES:

Articles: Any and all articles involving and/or including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, its members, member communities, awards and activities are welcome.

SUBMISSION & FORMAT:

Please prepare all articles in Microsoft Word (version 2003 or newer) or plain text. JPG/JPEG is the only picture format accepted and captions are appropriate. E-mail all articles and pictures as attachments with the sender's name, address and phone number in the base of the e-mail. Submissions from other sources must have complete credits such as publication name, address and dates published.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

Inappropriate, demeaning, unduly critical articles and/or statements will not be published. Article length, inaccuracies, composition and other miscellaneous errors and/or mistakes may be edited.

Although every effort is made to maintain an honorable and accurate publication, the Department of New York and/or its staff, editor and other publication participants are not responsible for the content, views and/or positions of any article(s)/submissions.

ALL ARTICLES AND PICTURES MUST BE E-MAILED TO: CITadmin@VFWNY.com. They become the sole property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York.

DEADLINE:

Deadline: Articles must be submitted by the 15th of each month...July, October, January and April.

If you are using regular mail, send the items to CITadmin, P.O. Box 116, Carlisle, NY 12031.

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT:

American Graphics & Design, Inc.
3380 S. 108th Street, Greenfield, WI 53227
Jenny DeBack, President
Helene Feider, Graphic Designer
Ellen Imp, Composition Specialist
www.agad.com

© VFW Dept. of New York 2011.
All Rights Reserved.



Harold "Mick" Leavor Sr. Vice Commander



Comrades, I hope everyone has had a healthy year. With only a few months left, we still have to keep working on membership. If all Comrades would just sign up one new or reinstated member, we could reach our goal of 100% for Commander Jack. This would be a great achievement for the Department of New York. There are many Posts out there that

still need 10 or less members.

Again, Commanders, a reminder to Section 222 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, each Post will pay in advance a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). This will entitle the Post to one Convention packet, along with the registered delegate named. Each additional delegate attending the Convention will pay ten-dollars (\$10.00). Do not forget to register your Post. Last year, 600+ Posts lost their charters for failing to register according to the National Bylaws.

A reminder to all incoming District Commanders and District Steering chairman when making appointments: Explain to the comrades that it's important they attend all meetings and conferences when called upon. Do not send a replacement to the Conference or meeting unless the State Commander gives approval in advance.

We also need to continue to work on bringing more of our female Veterans into the ranks of our Posts, Counties and Districts. We are all Veterans working together for all Veterans, past, present and the future. There are many young Iraq and Afghanistan men and women out there that are willing to join our ranks. Let's all work together.

"Together We Can Achieve"

Yours in Comradeship,
Mick
State Sr. Vice Commander

Dennis Sullivan State Inspector



Comrades, the year is almost over but we still have time to correct what needs to be done. District Commanders have received a copy of the Post Inspections showing the areas needing to be corrected; so, please ask them to share this information with you.

Inspectors should be reviewing the 990 filing date on line 19j, the EIN Number on line 27, the full

legal corporate name on line 2c and the quarterly audit date

James Durkin Jr. Vice Commander



With the end of the year fast approaching, the Department of New York ranks 41st in Membership. The Commander in Chief told us at the Spring Conference that 134 Posts in New York had ZERO new or reinstated members. That is over 25% of our Posts who cannot get at least one new member. We need to turn this around and do it quickly. Commander

Veazy deserves to do better than 41st place.

My travels around the State are getting more numerous, now that the weather is getting better. I hope to see most of you at your District or County Council meetings in the near future. I also encourage you to let me know what's on your mind; so please walk up and talk to me – it is your Department.

I made the trip to the Washington Conference for the first time a few weeks back. I used this opportunity to visit our congressional leaders with the departments' National Legislative Reps. It is important that you know what a great job they do for us in Washington. With 31 offices to visit in two days, our three National Legislative Reps work their butts off for us. I would like to personally thank James McNally, PSC for letting me tag along with him during his visits on Capitol Hill.

We have a very important event coming up this summer. Yes, the State Convention in Liverpool, New York. Here you will elect your leaders for the Department of New York. You have a say in who you want to lead this Department. Many people are actively seeking your vote for many different offices. Please be sure your Post has a say in the department's future. Send a member to the State Convention and let your voice be heard.

If I do not see you during my visits this spring, I hope to see you in Liverpool in June 2011.

Serving for you,
James Durkin
State Jr. Vice Commander

on line 15a. Also important are lines 16 and 17: completing all balances, bond and bonding company. Most importantly the Inspector *must* sign the bottom of the form before sending to the Department of New York.

After completion of the Post Inspection Form, mail the entire form to: Department Headquarters, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12204.

Should you have not been inspected yet, please contact your County or District Commander to schedule an appointment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at dmsullivan9@optimum.net or call me at 631-736-7722.

Community Service Society Retired and Senior Volunteer Mentoring Program *Mentor and Make a Difference in a Child's Life*

The **Community Service Society of New York (CSS)** is a 160 year-old institution that has been on the cutting edge of public policy innovations to support low-income New Yorkers in their quest to be full participants in the civic life of the nation's largest city. CSS engages in advocacy, research and direct service to champion better job opportunities to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Our work is particularly targeted toward communities of color that have been historically disadvantaged. CSS is a non-profit 501(c)3.

The **Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** is a program sponsored by the Community Service Society (CSS). RSVP has been in existence since 1966. RSVP's mission is two-fold: providing meaningful, invigorating opportunities for older adults and helping nonprofit organizations in New York City reach more clients and provide more services.

RSVP's volunteers are reflective of the unique diversity of cultures throughout the five boroughs.

The RSVP Mentoring Program provides the opportunity to connect nurturing adults age 55+ with NYC youth; and works with partner sites in various boroughs of NYC where at-risk youth, who have been affected by their parent(s) incarceration, or juveniles who may have had a minor infraction with the justice system, may be in attendance. We also work with a program with teens/young adults who need assistance to complete their GED.

RSVP is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and is funded by CSS, individuals, foundations and government agencies.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Brown, Training Technical Assistant Specialist at 212-614-5557 or e-mail: kbrown@cssny.org.

Notice to All Veterans

Caution

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services is providing benefit and general information on the Department of Veterans Affairs and is gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with the VA in any way.

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA's name and seal.

VAS is not recognized by the VA for purposes of assisting Veterans with claims for VA benefits. Veterans seeking the assistance of a VA-recognized service organization for purposes of submitting a claim for VA benefits may search for VA-recognized organizations at the VA General Counsel's accreditation search page: <http://www4.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>

In addition, VA General Counsel requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to the VA General Counsel point of contact's address below:

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel (022G2)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420



NY VFW Member Elected to Congress

Anderson-Lagno Post 5090, New York is proud to announce that one of our members, Michael Grimm, has been elected to the 112th Congress of the United States, representing the 13th Congressional District of New York.

Congressman Grimm defeated the incumbent Congress member in the November 2010 Election, and has recently taken the Oath of Office in Washington, D.C.

Michael Grimm is a decorated Marine Corps combat Veteran who served in the Persian Gulf War and is an active and valued member of our VFW Post.

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE, continued from page 1

About Excelsior College

Excelsior College (<http://www.excelsior.edu/>) is an accredited, nonprofit distance learning institution that focuses on removing obstacles to the educational goals of adult learners. Founded in 1971 and located in Albany, NY, Excelsior is a proven leader in the assessment and validation of student knowledge. It offers more

efficient and affordable access to degree completion through multiple avenues: its own online courses and college-level proficiency examinations, and the acceptance in transfer of credit from other colleges and universities, as well as recognized corporate and military training programs. Excelsior College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.



VETERANS of FOREIGN WARS Department of New York



HOME MEMSTATS VETERANS NEWS VA CONTACTS DEPT NY WOMEN WARRIORS LEGISLATIVE POW/MIA

New Web Site for State

CIT Director Don Mackey unveiled the new State Web site at this year's Spring Conference in March. The new Web site was scheduled to go live on May 1st, but it is online now.

Shortly after his appointment as Director of the newly-created Communication, Information and Technology Department, Don submitted a five year plan to Commander Veazy, outlining technology goals for the Department of New York VFW. At the top of the list was the rebuilding of the old Web site using state-of-the-art software, new technology and today's technical culture and know-how.

After months of planning, designing and basic reconstruction, the new site took shape. As Don stated in his introduction, his entire staff has spent 8 and 10 hour days for over three months, creating a new window to our New York VFW. The "entire staff" Don referred to is just Don, a staff of one.

The new Web site demonstrates drop-down menus, news bulletin slide shows, flash pictures and many other eye-catching and appealing features. A far cry from the

cluttered and sluggish worn out old Web site, the new Web site is expected to be a direct result of member needs, desires, input and expectations.

As Don said, "This is our first step into tomorrow and our first effort to draw and encourage younger members to join our innovative, creative and forward thinking veteran's organization. We are the greatest organization in the world, now the Department of New York members are demonstrating that and everyone can see it."

At the close of his presentation, Don issued a challenge asking everyone join him in the ongoing construction, helping him with ideas, suggestions and expertise so our new Web site can be the best it can be. As stated, the Web site was scheduled to go live on May 1, 2011 but with some extra effort, help from Comrades and just plain hard work, the Web site is online right now. Don reports that the response so far is quite favorable, and he is now able to rest for a few days before the next project kicks in.

There's still a lot to do before the May 1st deadline, but Don is confident everyone will be pleased and proud of our newest and biggest step into the 21st century.

Display and Observance of the POW/MIA Flag

The **POW/MIA flag** is an American flag designed as a symbol of citizen concern about United States military personnel taken as prisoners of war (POWs) or listed as missing in action (MIA). The POW/MIA flag was created by the National League of Families and officially recognized by the Congress in conjunction with the Vietnam War POW/MIA issue, "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation."

The original design for this flag was created by William Graham Wilkin III. National League of Families President and POW wife Evelyn Grubb also played a major role in conceptualizing the flag and gaining its widespread acceptance and use by the United States government and also local governments and civilian organizations across

the United States.

The flag has been altered many times; the colors have been switched from black with white – to red, white and blue – to white with black; the POW/MIA has at times been revised to MIA/POW.

On March 9, 1989, a league flag that had flown over the White House on the 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day was installed in the U.S. Capitol rotunda as a result of legislation passed by the 100th Congress. The league's POW-MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the rotunda, and the only one other than the flag of the United States to have flown over the White House. The leadership of both Houses of Congress hosted the installation ceremony in a demonstration of bipartisan congressional support.

POW/MIA FLAG continued on page 4

An Educational Partnership The College of Choice for VFW Veterans

Excelsior College is an accredited leader in distance education with a long standing tradition of serving the military and our veterans. Each year active duty service members and veterans enroll and are awarded over 50,000 credits for their military training towards a degree.

Accepting military training is just one of the many reasons why Excelsior College is ranked among the top colleges serving the military nationwide as well as the top ranked distance learning college for veterans.

At Excelsior, we offer many degrees from our Schools of Business and Technology, Liberal Arts, Health Sciences, and Nursing.

Services for VFW Veterans:

- Military/Veteran transcript and documentation evaluation for credits
- Listing of available jobs
- Career Center resources and services

Benefits of getting a degree from Excelsior College:

- Accepts more military credit, earning fewer credits saves you money
- Accepts transferred credits from other colleges and universities

- Accepts credits by exams
 - Options for course work: online or CD-ROM
 - Chart your education with dedicated advisors and consultants
 - Affordable, providing lower rates through the partnership
 - Financial Aid experts will explain veteran's benefits, i.e.; Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Career Center provides extensive information, resources and services

Student Requirements:

- Take at least 6 Excelsior College Course credits within the one year period, to bypass annual fee
- Take a minimum of 12 Excelsior College course credits prior to degree completion

Our Center for Military Education office, which includes Veteran Services and Outreach, has a friendly, knowledgeable staff waiting to assist you...many of whom are veterans.

For more information about Excelsior College contact the Center for Military Education at 888-647-2388, ext. 1352 or e-mail veterans@excelsior.edu.

Excelsior College...we're with you from start to finish!

POW/MIA FLAG, continued from page 3

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, recognizing the National League of Families POW/MIA Flag and designating it "as a symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation." Beyond Southeast Asia, it has been a symbol for POW/MIAs from all U.S. wars.

The POW/MIA Flag will be flown on the grounds or the public lobbies of major military installations as designated by the U.S. Secretary of Defense, all Federal National Cemeteries, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House, the United States Post Offices and at official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, and Director of the Selective Service System. Civilians are free to fly the POW/MIA Flag whenever they wish.

In the U.S. armed forces, the dining halls, mess halls and chow halls display a single table and chair in a corner draped with the POW-MIA flag as a symbol for the missing, thus reserving a chair in hopes of their return.

When displayed from a single flagpole, the POW/MIA flag should fly directly below, and be no larger than, the United States flag. If on separate poles, the U.S. flag should always be placed to the right of other flags [*the viewer's left; the flag's own right*]. The POW/MIA flag is always second in prominence to the American flag. It, too, should be placed under, or to the left (observer's right) of the U.S. flag, and to the right (observer's left) of any other flags on display. On the six national observances for which Congress has ordered display of the POW/MIA flag, it is generally flown immediately below or adjacent

to the United States flag as second in order of precedence.

Congress designated the third Friday of September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day and ordered prominent display of the POW/MIA flag on this day and several other national observances, including Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

The 1998 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 105-85) mandates that on these national observances, the POW/MIA flag is to be flown over the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Korean and Vietnam Veterans War Memorials, the offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, offices of the Director of the Selective Service System, every major military installation (as directed by the Secretary of Defense), every post office and all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and national cemeteries. The act also directs VA medical centers to fly the POW/MIA flag on any day on which the flag of the United States is displayed.

And finally this tidbit:

I have three flags and one pole. What order should they be in?

In military use, no more than two flags may be on a single pole. There is no official guideline for civilian use. The order, generally, is as follows, seen top to bottom:

1. U.S. flag
2. POW/MIA
3. State flags (host state first, then others in the order of admission)
4. US territories (Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, etc.)
5. Military (in order of establishment: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard)
6. Other

Most of this research was done at: <http://www1.va.gov/opa/feature/celebrate/powmia.asp>

Veterans Support Organization (VSO)...Scam or Fraud?

"You may, or may not, be aware of this group and its practices and the level of fraud they perpetrate on our sympathetic and unsuspecting public." That is a statement from one of many articles, e-mails and letters received outlining concerns over the group called VSO.

Some basics outlined here were obtained through several months of research. Unfortunately no law enforcement officials would respond when asked about this group making verification difficult if not impossible.

- They are headquartered in Florida and are active in 17 states.
- They collected \$2.6 million in 2009, and expect to collect about \$11 million this year.
- They are facing a fine of \$50,000 in Tennessee for fraud.
- They are most active in Florida, Pennsylvania, New York and Rhode Island.
- They were the subject of a very detailed report by *Fox News* in New York, which earned them a place on the Alan Diaz Wall of Shame (www.myfoxny.com).
- Their primary tactic is to get so called "homeless vets" to stand in front of shopping stores dressed in camouflage fatigues and ask for donations. These same men are then allowed to keep 30% of what they keep. Some have found that some of the guys are not even Vets, by their own admission.
- VSO had a storefront operation on Chester Pike in Prospect Park, Pennsylvania. I visited the site and talked to the guys there who identified themselves as VSO employees.
- Their Director of Treatment, Jack Bittleman, is a convicted felon, and has a record in four states, according to *Fox News*.
- Their leader, Richard Van Houtan, was unable to produce a DD 214 when asked for one.
- Van Houtan reported income of about \$240K last year.
- They publish information that states they have given much money to the Veterans Administration and touts their "partnership with the VA."
- A look at their numbers will lead any reasonable person to conclude that a lot of money is going to administrative costs and salaries, according to the *Fox News* report.
- They are siphoning money from legitimate Veterans groups, they prey on a patriotic, yet unsuspecting public and they must be stopped.

Until this organization can be verified and substantiated it would be wise to confront the individuals with specific questions like, "Where does the money go?" and "How much does the supposed veteran keep?" Requesting to see the supposed veterans DD-214 is not out of the question, but it is doubtful one can be produced.

Note: The editor of this newsletter (*Overseas Veteran*) confronted one of these individuals dressed in camo outside a local Walmart just before Thanksgiving last year. I asked the solicitor, who definitely wasn't a local, what organization he represented and he stated, "The VA." I asked where his office was and he stated "in the city" after which I asked if he meant the VA Clinic or the VA Hospital on Central Avenue in Albany and he said the hospital. So unless they had transplanted the hospital from Holland Avenue, he obviously had no idea where any VA institution is.

I pressured him for more information about the money collected, how much he kept, how much went to Florida and who specifically he sent the money to in Albany. His eyes got real big when I mentioned Florida and he became very nervous. That raised another red flag for me and I entered the store to find the manager, an acquaintance of mine for a long time. The manager was not available, so I went back outside to inform the scammer I was going to call the police. He had vanished.

A couple of weeks later as I drove to the same Walmart and the same guy was set up pilfering the public again. As I walked towards him he tossed his table, boxes, chair and money into his van and sped off faster than Superman leaping over a tall building. I haven't seen him since, but there are Veterans' observance days coming up and I'm betting he, or others like him, will be back. I wonder if he'll have a tax-exempt number or form I could inspect.

The moral to this story is that we must be diligent and check these people out. Think about it...when we solicit funds for Buddy Poppies or just fund raising for our Posts, we are decked out in official VFW garb, especially our caps. Everyone knows we are VFW, The American Legion, AMVETS, DAV or the Marine Corps League. These imposters are dressed in blue jeans, camo jackets or shirts and baseball caps, nothing that proves they are legitimate - no identification of any kind. These imposters are taking money away from real veteran causes...they must be investigated and if they are illegal...STOPPED!

Reunions

The Society of the First Infantry Division, Veterans of the Army's "Big Red One," will hold its 93rd Annual Reunion from August 17-21, 2011 at the Adam's Mark in Buffalo, New York. Details can be found on www.1stID.org.

OR contact:

Society of the First Infantry Division
1933 Morris Road
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Phone: 1-888-324-4733
Fax: 1-215-661-1934
e-mail: Soc1ID@aol.com
Web site: 1stID.org



USS Constellation's 50th Birthday Reunion
October 23, 2011 to October 27, 2011

USS Constellation CVA/CV-64 Reunion
for all Ships Company
Air Wing and embarked Marine Corps personnel

Held at:

Radisson Opryland Hotel
2401 Music Valley Drive
Nashville TN 37214
(615) 889-0800

Contact:

Melba Anderson
1800 Clare Drive
Alice, TX 78332-4112
e.andersen@sbcglobal.net
361-664-6106

*Submitted by William H. Stoddard, Jr.,
Commander, North Babylon Memorial Post 1458*

Wounded Warriors

On Friday, January 7, 2011, members of the Sgt. James F. Carty, D.S.C., Post 1545 in Windham, New York conducted a *Meet and Greet* of 27 Wounded Warriors, their families, members of the NYC Fire Department who served as their escorts, and staff of the Adaptive Sports Program at Windham Mountain Ski Resort.

The event was part of an annual three-day ski and snowboarding program to demonstrate to these veterans that they could enjoy winter sports overcoming their disabling injuries. The Saturday evening dinner for all 87 participants was held at a local restaurant at no cost to the Warriors, families and staff.

Post members were able to share some great experiences with these young veterans and a great time was had by all.

Chris Mattiace, Commander
VFW Post 1545

Veterans' Ranks Dip in Congress

Jan 8, 2011

Scripps Howard News Service

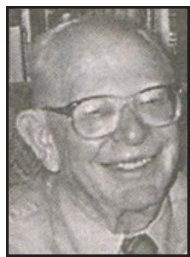
The ranks of military veterans in Congress have shrunk to the smallest number since World War II, with barely 20 percent of the just-seated 112th Congress having firsthand experience in uniform.

Out of the 535 members of the new Congress, just 25 in the Senate and 87 in the House have served in the active-duty or reserve forces.

Compare that to 1969, when 75 percent of those in Congress had served. Critics say the loss of the perspective brought by those who have military experience is damaging to policymaking, particularly when the nation is engaged in two complex wars.

Daniel J. Dwyer

November 15, 1921 - February 19, 2011
Port Jarvis, New York



Daniel J. Dwyer, 89, of Port Jarvis, died Saturday, February 19, 2011, surrounded by family members at Bon Secours Community Hospital. Born in the "Acre" in Port Jarvis on November 15, 1921, he was the son of Daniel J. and Katherine Collier Dwyer.

Mr. Dwyer was an author, newspaper editor, veterans advocate, sportsman, artist and had a long interest in Community Civic and political affairs. He spent many years in the newspaper business and achieved major success during that career by interviewing three presidents of the United States – John F. Kennedy, Dwight D. Eisenhower and in the Oval Office at the White House – Lyndon B. Johnson. His article on Johnson and that interview was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Mr. Dwyer served our country in the U.S. Army in the European campaign in World War II. As a member of Roosa-Fleming Post 161, he chaired and co-chaired the annual Memorial and Veteran's Day parades for over 50 years. He served the New York State VFW as editor of the *Overseas Veteran* publication and as Director of Public Relations. He worked for many years on entitlements for veterans testifying at Congressional hearings. He was a 50+ year member of Metaque Falls Sportsman's Club, and 50+ year member of the Port Jarvis Democratic Committee. As a member of the Mount Carmel Society, Mr. Dwyer was Chairman of the "Acre Reunion" celebration, a one-of-a-kind reunion of over 1,000 people with roots in that special part of the city. He was a lifelong student of history and as a part of the Port of Jarvis Centennial Year celebration in 2007, he wrote a new (and now the official) history of Port Jarvis, "Our Town". He was a devoted member of the Minisink Valley Historical Society. In later years, he worked at Port Jarvis Library and treasured the friendships he had with his coworkers. A family statement noted, "We are grateful for the many wonderful memories of Dad over his long and happy life which recognized his special writing talents and love for the city. May he rest in peace."

Mr. Dwyer is survived by his wife of 64 years, Anne (Reagen); one son, Daniel E. Dwyer and his wife, Gloria of Bardonia; three daughters: Sharon Tomkins and her husband, Thomas "Skip" of Port Jarvis; Barbara Dwyer-Anderson and her husband, Peter of Port Jarvis; and Maureen Dwyer-Hirten and her husband, Michael of Okemus, Michigan, as well as his grandchildren: Caleigh and Keaton Anderson; and Morgan, Ashley and Joshua Gangaware. Also survived by devoted friends, Linda Siwarski and Edward Hedin and several cousins. He was predeceased by his sister, Sister Barbara Dwyer, South Carolina.

A Shot in the Arm

What a busy year putting 150,000 miles on the car; that makes for a lot of time on the road. During my travels and many visits I have stumbled on an area of neglect. We do a wonderful job visiting and supporting functions at various Veteran Administration's throughout our wonderful country, but are we missing the boat?

Do you realize most veterans are not infirmed in a VA hospital nor a State Veterans nursing facility? They are in local hospitals and nursing homes. No one ever visits, sends cards, supports functions or brings them to our veterans' functions.

As I sat in a meeting at a local nursing home looking out the window – it hit me; this could be me or someone I know – and where are my fellow veterans? I would respectfully suggest that you visit these homes and see how we can help. Put on a nice pair of pants, dress shirt and your VFW hat and set up an appointment with management in these respective places and see what you and our wonderful VFW can do.

Take care of your health and try to help others as best you can.

William "DOC" Schmitz

VFW Department of New York Surgeon & VFW National Surgeon General

Excelsior College...Friend to Veterans

Excelsior College has been serving the military and veterans for 40 years. Accepting military training is just one of the many reasons Excelsior is ranked among the top colleges serving the military nationwide, as well as the top ranked distance learning college for veterans.

Our degree offerings include those from our Schools of Business & Technology, Liberal Arts, Health Sciences and Nursing.

Benefits:

- Accepts more military credits towards a degree
- Accepts credits by examination
- Options for course work...online or CD-ROM
- Dedicated advisors and consultants
- Nonprofit, private institution
- Financial Aid experts to explain veteran benefits including the Post 9/11 bill

- Career Center provides information, resources, and services for educational and career endeavors

Excelsior College...we're with you from start to finish! Located at 7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203... (518) 464-8500. Excelsior College is accredited by the commission on higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Excelsior College admits students of any race, color and national origin. Excelsior College a Title IV eligible educational institution (Federal Code #014251) offering Federal Financial Assistance (Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and PLUS Loans) to students who qualify.

Services	Partner Rates	Standard Rates	Purpose
One Time Application	\$75	\$75	Processing of application and establishment record. Fee waived upon receiving courtesy official evaluation.
Enrollment Fee (one time)	\$130	\$395 veteran \$895 civilian	Official evaluation of transferred credits, academic advisement and academic program planning for first year. The enrollment fee reverts to the standard rate if student does not complete minimum of twelve (12) Excelsior College course credits prior to completion of their degree.
Tuition (per credit)	\$270	\$335	Participation in academic course work.
Student Services Annual Fee (paid on an annual basis with the first annual fee charged one year after enrollment)	\$0 Provided 6 Excelsior College course credits taken in one year	\$440	Library services, academic advising and academic program planning. No Student Services Annual Fee will be charged provided student completes a minimum of six (6) Excelsior College course credits within the one-year period. If the student does not complete six (6) Excelsior College course credits within the one-year period, the Student Services Annual Fee will be \$70 for the subsequent year.
Graduate Fee (one time)	\$130 Provided 12 Excelsior College course credits taken prior to degree completion		Final review and processing of student files for conferring of degree and issuance of diploma. The Graduation Fee reverts to the Standard Rate if the student does not complete a minimum of twelve (12) Excelsior College course credits prior to completion of their degree program. In the event the Graduation Fee reverts to the Standard Rate, this fee will be reduced by \$15 per academic credit for each undergraduate Excelsior College course successfully completed. This fee reduction does not apply to academic credits transferred to Excelsior College.

"Ahh, the Poppy"



When we see these cute little Poppies appearing on jackets, bags, hats and even on the collar of a family pooch, we know it must be May or November. Our thoughts, for certain, go to our brave women and men who have voluntarily banded together to protect our country.

But we may question: Why the Poppy? Who makes these Poppies? When and where did the tradition come from? Who benefits from those donations?

Let's go back to 1922, just before Memorial Day, when the Veterans of Foreign Wars first distributed the Poppy and it became the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. This was inspired by Army Colonel John McCrae's poem, "In Flanders Fields", where he described blowing red fields among the battleground of those fallen. A year later during the VFW's 1923 encampment, disabled and needy veterans assembled the Poppies and were compensated for their work to help them financially. On May 20th, 1924 the VFW was granted all trademark rights to the name "Buddy Poppy."

After WWI, the Franco-American Children's League and children in France and Belgium's devastated areas benefited from the donations collected. Today, disabled and needy veterans in VA Hospital's still assemble VFW Poppies. The cost of the Poppies continues to provide financial assistance to various veterans' programs and services. Additionally, it partially supports the VFW



Pictured, L to R: Quartermaster Jim Waters, SCUV CEO John Lynch, Commander Joe Varrone, Sr. Vice Commander Tim McDermott, Sr. and Operations Director Wilkens Young.

National Home where orphans and widows of our brave heroes stay.

The veterans at Suffolk County United Veterans (SCUV) have benefited from this program through the generous contribution to continue to achieve our goal to extinguish homelessness among our returning heroes.

The purpose of SCUV is to provide supportive housing with individual case management. We provide the veterans with the tools they need to regain their independence within the community. We do this by addressing underlying issues that lead to homelessness, such as substance abuse, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and lack of marketable job skills.

Here at SCUV we strongly uphold our motto: "If it's good for the vet – do it."



Post 1896

Comrades and Sisters,

On behalf of the Officers and Members of Proctor-Hopson Post 1896 Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, I would like to thank you for the generous donations to the Proctor-Hopson Post 1896 VFW Military Family Support Center's *Trees For Troops* program.

The *Trees for Troops* program was a joint venture between the Veterans of Foreign Wars, DHL Express, Dee's Nursery, and The American Citizens for Soldiers in Service.

It was our goal to try to bring a little taste of home to our troops serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait during the holiday season. With the support of friends like you, we were again able to ship trees with lights and ornaments to our troops, along with sacks of cards written by schoolchildren and Scouts.

Again, thank you for your support and for showing our



nation's servicemen and women, along with their families, *you care.*

Yours in Comradeship,

Ben Thompson

Past State Commander, Chairman

Post 1896 Military Assistance Program

Post 5444

VFW 5444

3422 Route 22 • Amenia, NY 12522

On February 19, 2011, at 11:00 a.m., Senator Greg Ball (R, C-Patterson) Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, and Assemblyman Robert J. Castelli, Ranking Minority Member of the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee, and Dutchess County Sheriff Adrian "Butch" Anderson, presented WWII Veteran Sergeant George J. O'Boza with six medals that he earned during his service in the European Theater during WWII.

When O'Boza tried to find what was rightfully due to him, he found that the records were destroyed in a fire at the National Personnel Records Center in Missouri in 1973. Having mentioned this fact to a longtime friend, Dutchess County Sheriff Lieutenant Tom Lasher, he began to help find his awards. Senator Ball was contacted, and with the help of his staff, they were able to locate Sergeant O'Boza's military records through the National Personnel Records Center.

The Official Military Personnel File was badly damaged in the fire and the quality of the document was poor. The OMPF is in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration. From this document it was found that Sergeant O'Boza was authorized to wear the WWII Victory Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal with one bronze service star, the WWII Honorable Service Lapel Button, and the Expert Badge with a Carbine Bar.

After the awards were presented to the 90-year-old soldier, Post Commander Ricky Butler presented him with a WWII Veteran Cap from Post 5444 as a token of thanks for his service to his country. Refreshments were served and friends were made.

Submitted by: **Roger J. Muller, Quartermaster**

VFW Post 5444

140 Lime Kiln Road

Dover Plains, NY 12522

Cell: 845-489-2576

Post 6472

SILVER CREEK – The Samuel Cimino VFW Post 6472 in Silver Creek celebrated Veteran's Day, November 11, 2010 with a flag pole dedication with government officials and the younger generation.

State Senator Cathy Young was present to honor local veterans. "I want to thank you for carrying the flag and carrying the patriotic spirit that we have here in this entire region," she said to the audience, young and old. "I want to thank the Commander (Ed Fik) and this entire Post for your dedication for veteran causes and James Lisa, Post Quartermaster, for his work in obtaining a state grant to have a flag pole and memorial area created to hold ceremonies."

"For those veterans that are here today, thank you for your service and for your sacrifice," Silver Creek Mayor Kurt Lindstrom said.

The celebration indoors ended with a first. This year the VFW and the local Boy Scout troop 252 got together and the Scouts were asked to write essays about veterans, especially those who have served in their family.

Ten boy scouts received awards for their essays honoring veterans and three special awards were given out. Third

place went to Ethan Cross who combined artwork and words of honor to a veteran; second place went to Riley Wilson for recognition of his family tree of veterans; and first place went to Steven Romanik for honoring his great-grandfather who served in World War II.

"The Ladies Auxiliary really helped out to get the Boy Scouts involved and they really worked hard on their essays, doing research and honoring our veterans," said Joan Lisa, Auxiliary President.

After the Scouts received their award certificates, those in attendance were escorted outside for the dedication of the flagpole. The day was perfect and sunny and the children enjoyed every part of this Veterans' Day celebration. Afterwards, food and refreshments were served by the Ladies Auxiliary.

Special note: State Senator Kathy Young was instrumental in this Post receiving the state grant of \$15,000 which made this all possible...again, a big thank you.

James Lisa, Post Quartermaster

President of Silver Creek

Overseas Veterans Association

Post 3211

800th Military Police Brigade's Annual Family Holiday Party

On Saturday, December 4, the Hicksville Veterans of Foreign Wars, William M. Gouse Jr. Post 3211, hosted the 800th Military Police Brigade's Annual Family Holiday Party. The Hicksville VFW has been hosting this event since 2004 when the 800th returned from Iraq. The event was attended by over 150 members of the 800th and their families.

The children got to meet the "special guest", Santa Claus, and all received a gift from the jolly old elf. Three young ladies from the USO entertained the guests with a singing and dancing show. There were door prizes and a great lunch was served. Members of the Hicksville VFW volunteered to make sure the guests had a great time.

A number of Town of Oyster Bay and Nassau County Officials stopped by to thank the servicemen and servicewomen for their service, and to thank the families of these men and women for the sacrifices they make in support of their spouses. A great time was had by all.

Post 5005



Genesee recently honored their GOLD STAR Wives at the annual Christmas Party. L-R: Marge Wilkie, Linda Hamilton, Commander Dennis Staley and Sandy Miller.

Post 7062

Altamont, New York

In partnership with Phillips Hardware Stores, Boyd Hilton Post 7062 is the first entity to be gifted with the Capital District-based, hardware chains' "Community Card".

This pocket card is handed out to current paid up VFW members and entitles the holder 5% off all purchases. In addition, the Post of those members will receive 5% of the groups' annual purchases. This is a true salute to our veterans. Thank you, Phillips Hardware.

Post 8495

Golf Tournament

"The Second Annual VFW Post 8495 Golf Tournament was held on Saturday, September 25th at the Eagle Valley Golf Course. Over 100 golfers teed off for a scramble starting at 1 p.m. The tournament was to raise over \$7,000 to aid New York VFW District 8 in providing a much needed van for use by the Canandaigua Veterans Hospital for the residents and outpatients' transportation to medical appointments.

The golfers who participated were provided lunch, 18 holes of golf, door prize tickets and a steak dinner at the VFW Post, where raffle ticket prizes were drawn and awards were given. Also included was a "Silent Auction" with a multitude of great items.

The Tournament was co-chaired by: Dick Grube, VFW Post 8495 Commander and VAVS Hospital Chairman for the Canandaigua VA Hospital; Jim Schenkel, Perinton Overseas Veterans President; and Joe Meindl, Event Coordinator.

At the Post, Ms. Robin Johnson, Canandaigua VA Community Relations Manager, thanked the participants for their support and also thanked the Post for all the aid that the Post provides for the Canandaigua facility.

Veterans Helping Veterans

My name is Morris Sapp, Jr. I am a Life Member of the VFW and a disabled veteran. I, as some other veterans, reside abroad. We disabled veterans need your help.

There is a proposed amendment for the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Foreign Medical Program (FMP), 38 U.S.C. 1724, sitting at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). According to the VA it is "stuck between the VHA and the Office of Management & Budget (OMB)." In the FMP's current form it only allows for medical treatment of adjudicated service-connected disabilities at medical facilities overseas. The term "Adjudicated" too, denies other service origin disabilities.

This amendment to the FMP is for Disabled Veterans who travel and reside abroad to use local overseas facilities for medical care for both service and non-service-connected disabilities. I am asking you to please sign our petition to the Honorable Senator Daniel Akaka, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and the Honorable Congressman Jeff Miller, House Veterans Affairs Committee, to create a bill that will take the Proposal to Amend 38 U.S.C 1724 out of the VHA and put it on the legislative agenda. We need signatures of veterans and non-veterans (American citizens, 18 years old and above). You can access this petition through this link: <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/40998.html>

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States realizes the urgency of this matter and, being an organization that is forward looking and cares for fellow veterans, has established a resolution supporting the amendment. The American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) have stated their support for such legislation, too. You can view the VFW National Resolution 628 by accessing the Web site for VFW Post 12074 at www.vfw-chiangmai.org

Background

Phillip A. Williams, a disabled veteran, received a correspondence, dated January 6, 2008, from the VA's Health Administration Center (HAC), under the auspices of its Director, Ms. Mary Beth Saldin, stating "A legislative proposal to amend 38 U.S.C. 1724 has been drafted to provide all-inclusive medical services to FMP veterans who have been adjudicated by the VA as 100% disabled. This proposal will be submitted for inclusion consideration on the VA's 2009 Legislative Agenda."

The latter having not occurred during 2009, I wrote Secretary Eric Shinseki a couple of times, receiving no response from him or his office. I even wrote the VHA and OMB and received no response. Finally I received a response, dated 11/05/2009, from Mary Beth Saldin, the Director of HAC on the part of the Secretary, and was told, "At this time the legislative proposal to allow 100% P&T Veterans who reside and travel abroad health care coverage for both service-connected and non-service-connected condition has not advanced as part of the VA legislative agenda. Moreover the legislative process involves an extensive amount of coordination within the VHA and OMB to address the priorities and assesses the need of each proposal."

To date, late 2010, this issue has not been corrected. And, why the OMB? This amendment will not cost the government any additional funds or give us any additional benefits. We would only be using the funds, which are allocated for our treatment, in the VA's Annual Budget, and this would likely save the VA some money. We would use local overseas medical facilities that are cheaper. We disabled veterans need help. We need our medical coverage. We are talking medical here. You can access the petition through this link: <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/40998.html>

Further Information

In early 2003, my good friend, Phil Williams, and I went to Honolulu for medical treatment at the VA Clinic and Tripler Medical Center, where our medical records are located. While sharing a hotel room for a week and not being able to find a more affordable accommodation for the period we needed for our medical treatment, we went to the VA and asked for assistance for housing while we were being treated. The VA-Honolulu had what they referred to as Hoptels (2) they used to house off-island and other veterans from areas on Oahu while

they were being treated. We were told to go stay in a "homeless shelter" for the duration of our treatment. Due to the housing situation after some time we were forced to return home before completing our treatments. At the same time, veterans all over rural America were being treated at local (non-VA) medical facilities near their homes on a "Fee Basis." Veterans from the Pacific Islands were being flown into Honolulu and housed in a four-star hotel, at the VA's expense, along with family members, while being treated. We do not in any way begrudge our fellow veterans for this. We just expected and want better assistance from the VA and have been fighting to improve this assistance since then.

Our spouses and dependents are covered under CHAMPVA and can use this as needed at local overseas medical facilities. We, the veterans, are not covered. We are covered for only our adjudicated service-connected disabilities by the VA's FMP, which we can use at certified local medical facilities overseas. These are the same facilities that the U.S. Government uses for its employees and military personnel. Any non-service-connected disabilities, injuries or illness we have are not covered. Please keep in mind also that due to our service-connected disabilities no private insurer both locally and international will sell us any medical/health insurance. So, not due to any fault of our own we are uninsurable in the private sector. We have no way of covering ourselves for a catastrophic illness or injury. You can access the petition at this Web site: <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/40998.html>

Tragic

I hope never again to read such an article that appeared in the *Pattaya Daily News*, dated December 19, 2007, involving an American disabled veteran and the VA FMP. The headlines read, "GALLANT VIETNAM VETERAN ABANDONED TO HIS FATE BY CALLOUS U.S. AUTHORITIES." The VA, after a prolonged period, corrected their treatment of this veteran and covered his non-service-connected medical care under the FMP, but he should not have been denied in the first place. The Director of HAC, after reading this article, stated, "I understand your frustration that 100% disabled veterans is not entitled to all-inclusive medical care through FMP."

In my correspondence with legislators, three senators and six congressional representatives have stated they would support such legislation, while one senator and four congressional representatives state they would look favorable upon such legislation. Two of these legislators are on their respective veterans' committees.

For those who put forth the argument, "you choose to live there," it's just like you have the right to choose where you live, we have that right, too; and a veteran's rights should not be denied or curtailed on the basis of access to medical care that is a problem, due to his or her service-connected disabilities which prevent us from purchasing medical/health insurance in the private sector. Furthermore, the apparatus (FMP) is already in

HELPING, continued on page 9

3rd Annual Arts & Reintegration Retreat for Women Veterans August 15-17, 2011 Registration & Scholarship Form

Workshop: Arts & Reintegration Retreat for Women Veterans

Faculty: Creative Healing Connections, Inc.

Location: Wiawaka Holiday House, 3778 Rt. 9L, Lake George, NY 12845

Dates: August 15-17, 2011

Fee: No fee, full scholarships available; see below

Applicant Information *Please print as clearly as possible. Thank you.*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ Phone (cell) _____ E-mail _____

Check status of service _____ Active Duty _____ Veteran _____

In what branch of the Armed Services did you serve? _____

If you took part in armed conflict, when and where were your tours of duty? _____

Do you have any special needs of which we need to be aware? _____

We are pleased to consider you for a scholarship. We must raise funds over the year to replace the \$299 per participant used for scholarships. You can help! In order for your scholarship to be considered, we would like your assistance in any of the following areas. Please choose at **least one of the below** which you will provide for CHC and indicate with a check mark. **You can write the information on a separate page.**

a. Submit names and contact information (address, phone and e-mail) of two people who you think would benefit from coming to our retreat or...

b. Submit name and contact information (address, phone and e-mail) of one veterans facility or organization to whom we can send information about our retreat or...

c. Submit names and contact information (address, phone and e-mail) for at least one place we can solicit for funding for scholarships. This might be a local organization, church or business in your community.

Can we use your name when we contact the individuals or organizations you have provided? Y____ N____

Please Note

• Wiawaka's campus is drug- alcohol- and smoke-free.

• The program is not a substitute for any counseling or treatment in which you may be involved.

Once your application is received, we will contact you. **Applicants will be registered in the order in which their application is received. For this reason, please consider registering early as space is limited.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call Christine Dixon at 518-203-3101.

Please mail or e-mail this completed form to: Christine Dixon, director@wiawaka.org

Wiawaka Holiday House

P.O. Box 564

Troy, NY 12180

Rep. Michael Grimm Introduces First Bill, Supports Veterans Helping Veterans Establishes program to treat PTSD and train service dogs for disabled veterans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Representative Michael G. Grimm (R-NY) introduced the *Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act (H.R. 198)*, his first piece of legislation as a newly-elected congressman. The bill establishes a program that allows veterans to address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) through therapeutic dog training and handling. The trained service dogs are then given to physically-disabled veterans to help them with their daily activities.

“As a veteran and an American, I wanted my first bill in Congress to give back to those who have given so much to us,” said Rep. Grimm. “This type of program that allows veterans to help veterans could have a tremendous impact in New York. That is why I’d like to see a program established at the Brooklyn VA Hospital, which currently provides care for many of the veterans in my District.”

H.R. 198 establishes a pilot program in three to five VA medical centers over a five-year period, as well as at centers with a training area for educating veterans with mental health conditions in the art and science of

assistance dog training and handling. It also calls for an assessment of the benefits of addressing the symptoms of PTSD through a therapeutic medium of dog training, and it encourages the use of shelter dogs, when appropriate.

The program’s combined approach creates an opportunity to save money by offering an alternative treatment to PTSD while at the same time benefitting physically disabled veterans in need of assistance. In addition, with veteran suicide rates so high and more servicemen and women developing PTSD, this bill meets a crucial need for additional treatment methods.

“The bill takes a private sector approach to implement a policy that is efficient and cost-effective,” said Grimm. “If implemented properly, I believe this program will save money, while addressing the growing need to help returning veterans. Caring for veterans while reducing spending make this program a win-win for all.”

Congressman Michael Grimm is a Marine combat veteran of Operation Desert Storm.

Veterans Stealing From Veterans

For several years now, the Department of New York has had to deal with a lot of issues in Posts throughout the State involving misconduct, misappropriation of funds, malfeasance and outright theft. Recently, the culmination of a case that started several years ago resulted in the indictment of a Post officer for stealing thousands and thousands of dollars from several veterans’ organizations, including one of our VFW Posts here in New York State.

The VFW officer managed to gain access and sole control over every aspect of Post operations, funds and property by doing all the jobs no one else wanted. When he was finally in charge of everything, answering to no one, because of his intimidation and bullying techniques, he kept everyone at bay making it easy to steal at will.

There is nothing new in this case as it happens all too often. Members take the eagerness and insistence of a sole member to take on more and more responsibilities in stride. With every task, some of these eager beavers take on, there’s a feeling of relief because someone else will do those jobs they are tired of or just don’t want the responsibility so...they are off the hook. Surrendering one responsibility after another to just one person became easy and eventually assumed to be the right thing to do.

If there were times that these sole proprietors or the Post bullies in control were questioned, a tirade would erupt and the impertinence would be silenced. Eventually, more and more members realized something was wrong but had no idea what to do, so in effect they had been naturalized. By the time someone did step to the plate and insisted on action, it was often too late and the damage was done. Thousands of dollars vanished, a Post ravaged and pillaged while members stood by and let it happen.

It could have been prevented if members took their responsibilities seriously, divided the responsibilities and did their jobs. More than anything else the members should have followed the Bylaws. Making new rules, or running things according to one person’s dictations, is an invitation to those with no conscience to take whatever they want.

What troubles many is that Veterans are stealing from Veterans and they are doing it with absolutely no second thought or regret. We trust veterans, we trust our friends, we know them and we assume just being in the VFW means we are safe and need not be concerned. But that is deception, a lie we choose to believe and a path to destruction.

The State Director of Charitable Gaming Compliance at the New York State Racing and Wagering Board in Albany, New York, Daryll Messner, addressed the Department C of A on January 15, 2011 to convey some alarming statistics and warnings. He informed the officers that 90% of all the investigations for embezzlement, theft and misappropriation of funds in 2010 involved VFW

Posts and six of the Posts were repeat offenders. One inspector alone has 32 active cases where Bell-Jar funds are missing, and 17 of those involve VFW Posts. Another inspector stated Post members are not watching and monitoring the few in charge – they aren’t holding anyone accountable. He explained the importance of including copies of Post minutes approving the spending of Bell-Jar monies for specific reasons and reporting every penny earned and spent.

Director Messner held up a calendar for December of 2010 and showed that more than 75% of his month was consumed by VFW issues and in every single case, only one person was in total control of multiple Post accounts and funds, as well as the Bell-Jar funds, records, reporting and games. In nearly every case, monies were manipulated from one account to another, much like a shell game, making the job look so very complicated that no one understood what was being done. Over time that one person managed to buy a new truck, take a trip to Turning Stone and pay for a pool, but the Post bills were not being paid. In every case had members demanded an accounting, audits and proper reports, demanded transparency and enforcement of the rules and regulations, the complaints and investigations would not be necessary.

These cases, such as the most recent former VFW Commander accused of embezzling well over \$200,000 from several veterans organizations are not uncommon. Seldom do the cases involve small amounts of money; they are stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Director Messner stressed that these investigations can take a long time, and some cases take two to four years. Many go on stealing for years, feeling secure, because they don’t take very much at any one time and feel no one will guess anything’s missing. Over time greed motivates even more brazen acts and soon larger and larger amounts vanish. These thieves get comfortable as time passes and nothing seems to be happening; they feel they are safe and no one is wise to them. They do not realize they are on the radar, the investigation is grinding on, slowly to be sure, but as every number on the falsified reports are scrutinized, the closer they are to residing in the local jail or prison for a very long time.

Follow the Bylaws; don’t create new rules to satisfy one aggressive member. Why do you think these thieves want the rules changed? It makes it easier to plunder and pillage, that’s why. The Bylaws work and they know it, that’s why they want them gone. Don’t give away your Post and don’t allow it to be stolen on your watch. That’s right...“your watch”...you are responsible; every member is. We are a band of comrades serving brothers and sisters not observers watching from the sidelines while others loot our Post homes and then ask why. When it happens it’s because we let it happen...while we watched.

Leathernecks MC Celebrate U.S. Marine Corps 235th Birthday By Lisa Petrocelli

November 10th marked the 235th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps (www.marines.com) and the occasion was celebrated with a brief ceremony and cake-cutting at the site of the *USS Slater* (<http://www.ussslater.org/>) in Albany, New York. The Leathernecks MC (<http://leathernecksmc.org/drupal/>) were there in force and made a proud and loud entrance into the area when they roared in on their bikes, proudly wearing their Red and Gold.

Lt. Col. Erik Larson gave quite an honorable speech enumerating in the words of many wise men of exactly what qualities define a U.S. Marine. Leadership qualities are common, among many others, as well as a fierce loyalty to his brothers and determination to serve his country to the absolute best of his ability. “The deadliest weapon in the world is a Marine and his rifle!” said Gen. John “Black Jack” Pershing, U.S. Army Commander of American Forces in World War I. Another quote by Sir Winston Churchill: “I am convinced that there is no smarter, handier or more adaptable body of troops in the world.”

It would be difficult to attend a ceremony such as this one and NOT feel a deep level of pride while listening and observing the many Active Duty and Marine Veterans who gathered together and stood righteously among their comrades. Lt. Larson remarked that perhaps God somehow “wires” a Marine to possess the passionate spirit of brotherhood for which this branch of the military is, and always has been, notorious. How very true that seems when witnessing any event that brings the “orchestra” of the U.S. Marines in concert.

In addition to President “Bar” and Crash, Gun-E, Sarge, Snakebite, Uncle Sam, and all members of the Leathernecks MC, the ‘audience’ consisted of family and friends of the Marines in attendance, as well as a few newscasters and photographers. Accompanying the speakers at the podium were Mayor Jerry Jennings, Congressman Paul Tonko, Assemblyman Bob Reilly and Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino. “Uncle Sam” was patched after the official ceremony, while “Moses” (a former President of the Leathernecks Capital District Chapter) was allowed to wear the colors of the Leathernecks on that day in honor of the celebration. Following the ceremony at the *USS Slater*, members celebrated further by chowing down at the new Dinosaur BBQ in Troy, where the barmaid sang “Happy Birthday” to them!

This was a banner day for Albany and the *USS Slater* was decorated in colors that truly represent those men who ensure for all of us that these United States remain the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Leatherneck, Marine or B.F.L. By W.J. Guay

M.C. Motorcycle Club! That title didn’t seem to fit the other day as I was standing there watching a Leatherneck get his colors. True, he prospected as required, just like other clubs require, but unlike other clubs, the initiation into the Leathernecks starts years before prospecting.

A Leatherneck is first and foremost, a Marine, and as a Marine they were awarded their medals or stripes when they were in the Corp. Those honors were not given but earned by that individual and are earned by putting others, their brothers in the Corp, ahead of themselves; some would say at “all costs,” but that’s not the way a Marine sees it. It is to a Marine as natural as breathing. Although it has been said that there are few things deadlier than a Marine walking this earth, it will not show until game time, and for many it will be the last sight they behold.

It seemed, to this observer, that a Leatherneck is a natural evolution to a Marine; the power of their assault rifle is replaced by the power of their bike. The colors on the back of a Leatherneck are worn with the same dignity

USD-C 'Vanguard' Battalion Soldiers Vie for Membership in Prestigious NCO Organization

By Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan S. DeLong, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C



Staff Sgt. Glenn Ballantyne, a platoon sergeant with Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Cortland, New York, native, competes in the pull-up portion of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club selection board at Camp Taji, Iraq, Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011. The SAMC is an organization that recognizes the best among the noncommissioned officer corps and requires candidates to pass a stringent selection board that tests their leadership abilities, physical fitness, military knowledge and tactical and technical proficiency in order to be admitted into the ranks of the SAMC. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. E.D. Lee, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)

BAGHDAD – Four noncommissioned officers from 1st "Vanguards" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center competed Feb. 15 at Camp Taji, Iraq, to be among the newest members named to the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, which recognizes the best of the best among the NCO corps.

Named after one of the most famous NCOs in Army history, the SAMC was created in 1986 at Fort Hood, Texas, by Lt. Gen. Crosbie Saint and Command Sgt. Maj. George Horvath to honor Murphy's service to the nation and to create a group for the finest NCOs Fort Hood had to offer. By 1994, it had spread Army-wide.

Murphy served with great distinction with the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during World War II and fought with his unit in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany. He was the recipient of 33 awards and decorations, including the Medal of Honor and is widely regarded as the most decorated NCO in the U.S. Army.

The battalion-level competition was developed and conducted by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Evans, a native of Columbia, S.C., command sergeant major of 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. Evans himself was inducted into the SAMC in 1999 as a sergeant first class.

"Being inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club is a significant accomplishment for any noncommissioned officer within the formation," Evans said. "It is a time (for inductees) to set themselves apart from their peers, accept the challenge and get after it."

The competition was designed to challenge the NCOs in physical fitness, technical and tactical proficiency, and leadership, military and Audie Murphy-related knowledge.

During the evaluation, the nominees were given a physical training test in which they had to score at least 90 points, on a 100-point scale, in each event. After completing this, they conducted an eight-mile foot march to a rifle qualification range where they conducted a "stress shoot," or a firing while tired and under pressure, to qualify with their assigned weapon.

Their next tasks consisted of evaluations of their ability to conduct first aid, read maps, operate a radio, submit an unexploded ordnance report, and conduct weapons and vehicle maintenance.

After these evaluations, the NCOs appeared before a board which was chaired by first sergeants from within the battalion, SAMC members, and Evans. The board covered all aspects of leadership and military knowledge, as well as the history of Audie Murphy and of the club.

When asked of the preparation and motivation to strive to become a member, each participant agreed it was a way to set themselves apart from their peers and be a part of a great organization.

Many also said it was a difficult process to prepare for the board while also accomplishing their daily mission in Iraq. And to mentally get ready, the NCO's had to stick to an exhaustive study schedule.

"I studied with other platoon sergeants and the first sergeant in my company who (are) members of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club," said Staff Sgt. Jason Thorpe, a platoon sergeant with Company F, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and a Roxboro, N.C., native.

For many candidates, the physical aspect of the board proved to be difficult but rewarding.

"The physical aspect was a fun challenge which pushed me to improve myself," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Speris, a squad leader with Company B, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt.

Overall, Evans said he was pleased with the hard work of the participants and expects more NCOs to attend future boards.

"The Soldiers who attended the board today are the true champions," he said. "They accepted the challenge to rise to the top."



Sgt. Dylan Peterson, a squad leader with Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Jonesborough, Tenn., native, finishes the eight-mile foot march portion of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club selection board, Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011. The SAMC is an organization that recognizes the best among the noncommissioned officer corps and requires candidates to pass a stringent selection board that tests their leadership abilities, physical fitness, military knowledge and tactical and technical proficiency in order to be admitted into the ranks of the SAMC. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. E.D. Lee, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)



Staff Sgt. Glenn Ballantyne, a platoon sergeant with Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Cortland, N.Y., native, prepares to qualify with his weapon as part of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club selection board Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011. The SAMC is an organization that recognizes the best among the noncommissioned officer corps and requires candidates to pass a stringent selection board that tests their leadership abilities, physical fitness, military knowledge and tactical and technical proficiency in order to be admitted into the ranks of the SAMC. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. E.D. Lee, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)

HELPING, continued from page 7

place to deliver us these needed medical services. We are asking you to please support us in this endeavor, as we have supported you. You can access the petition through this link: <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/40998.html>

Summary

- Medical care
- Replace what we lost due to service-connected disabilities
- Delivery apparatus (FMP) already in place
- No additional benefits
- Cost-effective use of benefits

- Cost savings to U.S. taxpayers

We are not asking you to write your senator or representative, though any help we get on this would be greatly appreciated.

**Morris "J" Sapp, Jr.
A Disabled Veteran**

LEATHERNECK, continued from page 8

and honor as a Marine wears his uniform. As the sound and smell of the recently-fired 50-caliber still lingered in the air, Uncle Sam was awarded his colors by a man

named "Bar." Though Bar no longer wears the uniform, he had the respect of those that still do. Though they are free of the Corp, a Leatherneck is still a Marine (Hoo raaa!) and what better way to progress as a Marine than to a Leatherneck. Yes, they have "MC" on their vest but

from the eyes of this observer, those are just words that do not describe the respect of those who wear the colors. Like the North Star on a moonless night, is a Leatherneck in a sea of bikers. Are they B.F.L.s? Find out for yourself, I am sure you will be impressed.



VFW Race Day

Saturday August 20, 2011

\$65 per person



Includes:

Reserved Grandstand Seating
in Center Grandstands for the VFW 200

Access to the VFW Hospitality Tent
Includes Lunch and (2) Drink Tickets
(served prior to race)

Pit Access Pass and Guided Pit Tour
When the pits are cold

\$10 Donation to the VFW Foundation
To continue supporting our veterans, active military and their families

Activities and give-aways all day long

To order call (517) 592-1285 and request the VFW Offer.
You do not have to be a VFW member to attend.
Tickets available until August 5, 2011.

NEW FOR 2011 **Pre-Race Pit Pass Attire** Appropriate dress is required. Shoes and shirts must be worn; however shorts, sleeveless shirts and open toed shoes are now permitted in the pits throughout the weekend. In all cases, attire must be appropriate for a major sporting event and family environment.

Ticket requests, purchases and the fulfillment of tickets are a business transaction between you and MIS. VFW is making the communication of this offer on MIS's behalf but is not associated with the request, purchase or fulfillment process. All ticket-specific questions should be addressed directly to MIS via the Michigan phone number provided. Not valid on prior purchases. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. Offer expires August 5, 2011. While supplies last, restrictions apply.

