

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Issue 4

William "Doc" Schmitz State Commander



HARD BALL
First of all I would like to thank the membership for your confidence in me and electing me as your Department Commander. I have always realized it is a tough job, and have found it to be a great challenge and I do enjoy a challenge. At the

Department Convention the membership voted to declare WAR on Membership. So far we are making progress but these are but battles; we must strive even harder to win the war of attrition. The leadership has identified other areas of great concern, which are education and participation. If our members are not in attendance we can't teach, explain, and/or educate. We have

—STATE COMMANDER, continued on page 3

Marlene Roll Sr. Vice Commander



Comrades,
The Commander's plan of attack this year is COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, and MEMBERSHIP!!

COMMUNICATION is essential Information needs to flow both bottom up and top down to have a successful mission. A lot of our communication has gone electronic and that makes for an easier and faster way to share information, but we need everyone to be connected electronically to avoid gaps. If you are reading this and know of a member,

—SR. VICE, continued on page 4

Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr. State Adjutant



Comrades,
I would like to thank State Commander, William "Doc" Schmitz for appointing me as the State Adjutant this year. I will do my best to fill the shoes

Commander, Dennis Sullivan, State Quartermaster, Robert Barnhart, State Surgeon, PSC, Harold "Mick" Leavor, State Chaplain Father R.P. Kane and all the newly elected and appointed Department, District, County Council and Post Officers.

Commander Schmitz is including many new initiatives to include our Website. Take the opportunity to look at the Website and use this resource. Some of the information available includes VFW Forms, the Department Directory, Department Orders, and Don Mackey with his vast staff of one continues to develop much more.

Communications is paramount to our State Commander and we plan to provide all the information necessary for you to be successful. Currently, as information is received, I am forwarding it to those who

—STATE ADJUTANT, continued on page 3

Dennis Sullivan Jr. Vice Commander



Comrades,
I would like to start off and thank you for your confidence and support by electing me as your Jr. Vice State Commander at the 95th Convention in Liverpool, New

York. I'd also like to congratulate all the elected officers at all levels. I look forward to working with Commander William "Doc" Schmitz, Sr. Vice Commander Marlene Roll

—JR. VICE, continued on page 4

Photographer:



John Brunato



Editor:



Don Mackey



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	Thank You to Veteran Partners

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**** 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:**

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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.

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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**



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Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr. State Judge Advocate



Comrades,
I would like to thank the members of the Department of New York for the support and the confidence you have placed in me by re-electing me to the office of State Judge Advocate for 2014-2015. It was a great honor to serve this past year as the National Judge Advocate General. Thank you to everyone who made that possible.

I extend my best wishes and congratulations to our State Commander PNSG, William "Doc" Schmitz, State Sr. Vice Commander Marlene Roll, State Jr. Vice Commander, Dennis Sullivan, State Quartermaster Robert Barnhart, State Surgeon OSC Harold "Mick" Leavor, State Chaplain Father R.P. Kane and all the newly elected and appointed Department, District, County Council and Post Officers.

Congratulations to PSC Michael Pascal and the officers who served with him for a great year.

Once again we would like to remind you each year the State Commander receives letters of concerns or complaints regarding issues within various posts throughout the State. While we are sure all of the concern or complaints are sincere and valid, there is a chain of command that must be followed before these letters reach Department Headquarters. The National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure Article IX provide instruction for those issues that result in disciplinary action. Post-level concerns or complaints begin by presenting the problem at a Post meeting. If after presenting the issue to the Post membership no resolution can be

reached follow the steps outlined in Article IX. It is impossible to address the influx of letters received at Department Headquarters if the correct procedures are not followed. Following the steps outlined in Article IX should bring the issue to the appropriate level of the VFW for resolution.

PLEASE NOTE: A LETTER OF CONCERN OR COMPLAINT SENT DIRECTLY TO NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS WILL NOT SPEED UP THE PROCESS. IT ACTUALLY SLOWS IT DOWN. NATIONAL FORWARDS ALL COMPLAINTS BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR REVIEW AND APPROPRIATE ACTION THUS DELAYING THE PROCESS EVEN MORE. NATIONAL OBSERVES THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND EXPECTS ALL VFW ENTITIES TO DO THE SAME.

At the 115th National Conventions the Delegates passed many minor changes to the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedures. The most controversial resolution passed was for the Adjutant General and the National Secretary Treasurer to propose a By-Law that would establish one Auxiliary to the VFW for next year's National Convention for the VFW Membership to Vote on.

I pledge my support to the Officers and members of the Department of New York. Once again, thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as the State Judge Advocate.

If I can ever be of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me at 518-545-6378.

Sincerely,
Hal
Harold "Hal" Burke Jr.
PSC/PSQM/PNJAG
State Judge Advocate

Michael Burke Chief of Staff

Thank you Commander "Doc" Schmitz for this appointment.

Comrades, as we enter into the 2014 – 2015 year, things have to change, as we are all aware of, for this great organization to survive. First and foremost is membership. "We" have got to put our best foot forward and recruit. No one person can do it alone. Set a goal for yourself this year to recruit at least 1 member and carry those membership cards with you at all times.

To all newly elected officers (and

members), you must attend OTI School. It is very important for you to know how this organization runs and just as important, you should know how your post should be run. This is where you will learn the skills of leadership. Check with your District Commander for OTI School in your District and the cost.

Sincerely,
Michael Burke
Chief of Staff

STATE ADJUTANT, continued from page 1—

we have e-mail addresses for. Please provide me with your e-mail address if we do not already have it so you can receive information as we get it at Headquarters.

State Commander, William “Doc” Schmitz has placed great emphasis on the importance of the Department of New York VFW to respond to all communications in a timely manner. Therefore, he is requesting that all correspondence regarding VFW matters be sent to the Department of New York Headquarters to assure that we are successful in our quest. Headquarters will confirm the correspondence is properly annotated, distributed and responded to with actions that may be necessary to bring the issue to closure.

Cindy, Dale, Gene, Don and I are excited

about the New VFW Year and looking forward to assisting each of you.

As State Adjutant, the staff and I are here to assist and provide information to our membership. Please feel free to contact me if you do not receive the information requested at 518-463-7427.

On behalf of the staff and me, we offer our best wishes for a successful year. The staff and I pledge our support to the Officers and members of the Department of New York. If we may be of any assistance please do not hesitate to call 518-463-7427.

Sincerely,

Hal

Harold “Hal” Burke Jr.

PSC/PSQM/PNJAG

State Adjutant

STATE COMMANDER, continued from page 1—

further identified that Councils and Districts are not having a quorum. That’s correct and we all know it. The posts are not sending their representative, but the national bylaws state we must. So we have taken a long overdue action as attendance insures that our members receive their due representation. “THE MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW.”

If a post does not send a representative, the commander will be removed. We also are attempting to send a Department Representative to all District meetings, along with a list of topics to be addressed in order to insure information and questions can be addressed. This is to augment the District Commanders reports. We have curtailed some non-essential travel to insure we can have people at these meetings. As all combat people know one fills the weak places in the defensive and offensive lines. Yes, we are at war with retention, and recruitment. Another area that is being addressed is the Posts, Councils, and Districts that are having difficulty, as this drains man hours and resources to address their issues. I realize that change is difficult, but please join with me in our battles: persevere, adapt, and overcome. MAKE OUR GREAT VFW GROW ONCE AGAIN. BE A FIGHTER, NOT A CONSCIOUS OBJECTOR.

William “DOC” Schmitz

NYS Department Commander 2014-15

Past VFW Department of NY Surgeon 2007-2012

VFW National Surgeon General 2010-2011



On August 25, 2014 District 7 Commander Art Scheuneman and District 7 Ladies Auxiliary President Charlene Favata escorted Jr. Vice Cmdr. Dennis Sullivan and Ladies Auxiliary Dept. President Irene Rohde and VFW and ladies auxiliary members to Batavia Hospital Ladies Clinic for a tour of the grounds and facility.



in memory of his son Ben. Commander Ratigliano selected the “Ben Osborne Fund” as his Commander’s Special Project as a way to memorialize the sacrifice of Army Spec. Benjamin Osborn of Queensbury, who gave his life while on a dangerous convoy mission in Konar Province, Afghanistan in June 2010. The Ben Osborne Memorial Fund donates clothing, bedding, sports equipment and scholarship funds to needy children in Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties. For more information on the Ben Osborne Memorial Fund, check <http://www.benosbornfund.org>

Veterans of Foreign Wars District 3 Commander Gene Ratigliano presents a check to William Osborn for \$3,200,



SR. VICE, continued from page 1—

especially a post officer, who is not on the computer, please print this newsletter and any other important information and share it with them.

EDUCATION is an ongoing necessity for growth. Please read your VFW by-laws to include your post, county (if you have one) and district by-laws. It is the map to how we conduct business. Officers Training Institute "OTI" is offered to help with educating you on standard practices and new ways of doing things as well as state laws that are in effect. It the place to bring questions you may have and to share ideas. Every member should be taking advantage of OTI for the classes, networking and camaraderie that comes along with it. If you feel you "know everything" then great, come and share that knowledge with the newer members so that they may carry on this organization that you worked so hard to build, for the next generation. Knowledge is power. Imagine how powerful we could be if we put our minds to it.

MEMBERSHIP will be easier if the first two missions are practiced. Everyone is responsible for the growth of this organization and you may do your share of recruiting, but it doesn't stop at the application or even getting them in the door. We lose more members out the backdoor because they are not engaged or feel welcomed. Membership would increase or at least stay steady if more effort was put into letting new members know that they are as equal as the member who has been here for 30 years. They have ideas and ambitions that could serve this organization very well if only we would give them that chance when they ask for it. *"But That's The Way We Have Always Done It"* This phrase needs to be stricken from our use and a new one put in its place...How about- "Let's Try It!"

As line officers of the Department, we are focusing on communicating and educating more in hopes this gives you the tools to improve our membership.

Marlene Roll
Department Sr. Vice Commander

JR. VICE, continued from page 1—

and all the officers in the Department. I also look forward as well to working with you, the members of New York.

Over the past several years I have held many different positions giving me the opportunity to get to know most members throughout the state. I enjoyed meeting all of you and was very glad to be able to assist you when needed. As Jr. Vice Commander, I look forward in continuing my service to you and understand the issues you face on a

daily basis in your Post, County and District. If you need to contact me my email address is dmsullivan9@optimum.net

It is my honor to serve you and will give my all to support and assist Commander Doc and Sr. Vice Commander Marlene to move our Department forward.

Yours in Comradeship,
Dennis Sullivan
Jr. Vice Commander

Dinner at Ladies Auxiliary District 7's 40th Anniversary



Barbara LaBarge, President Charlene Favata and Jr. Vice Cmdr. Dennis Sullivan

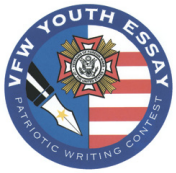


PSC Art Koch III, Jr. Vice Cmdr. Dennis Sullivan and Wilber Gray

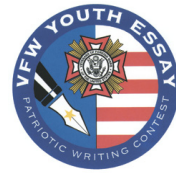


Jr. Vice Cmdr. Dennis Sullivan and PSC Art Koch III





PATRIOT'S PEN



I want to thank Department Commander Schmitz for the re-assignment as this year's Department Chair of Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest. I encourage all Post and District Chairmen to please co-ordinate your efforts with your Ladies Auxiliary counterpart.

All information that is needed for Chairmen to conduct the 2014-2015 Patriot's Pen Program is online now under "My VFW." Visit the VFW website www.vfw.org where you must LOG IN (or create an account and LOG IN). Under the **General Members Tools and Resources** heading, click on **CHAIRMAN GUIDES**, where you will find the "Scholarship Programs" manual that covers both the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs. Listed below that manual, you will find additional brochures, along with other materials and resources. Anyone (including chairmen, student entrants, and teachers) can download and print the student entry forms for Patriot's Pen by visiting, www.vfw.org click on **COMMUNITY**, and then **YOUTH AND EDUCATION**.

Post Chairmen need to copy and provide each student with a Patriot's Pen brochure/entry form directly or through the teacher or youth leader. To participate in the Patriot's Pen contest, a student needs to submit a completed entry form and their essay of 300 to 400 words in length {essays of too many or too few words are eliminated.} Students should have ready a clear, close up, head and shoulders picture, to be sent in only if

they become a District Winner. This year's 2014-2015 Patriot's Pen theme is: **"Why I Appreciate America's Veterans."**

All student entries are due at the Post level by midnight, November 1, 2014. Your Post judging should be done by November 15, 2014. You need to pass your winners on to your District Chairman right away. I am asking all District Chairmen to have their judging completed by December 8, 2014, after which time the winning District entry will be submitted to the Department chairman. The Department judging will be held at the Malsan-Jones VFW Post #7393 during the week of December 15, 2014.

To the District Chairman: Your District winner's entry materials that should be forwarded to the Department chairman are: District winner's completed official entry form, District winner's typed essay, District winner's photograph {clear, close up, head and shoulders picture} — Please send ALL your District winner's information and the District Report Form to: Michael Spellman, 18 Seventh Street, Yorkville, New York 13495.

If you have any questions in regards to this contest please feel free to call me at 315-736-2456. Thank you for your support and your participation in this contest. Good luck to all our Posts and Auxiliaries.

To the District Commanders: Please send me the names, addresses and phone numbers of your District Chairman.

Michael Spellman
Department Patriot's Pen Chairman

VFW DEPARTMENT of NEW YORK

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2014

No. 121

House of Representatives

HONORING MR. HARRY WURTH

Hon. Steve Israel

OF NEW YORK

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Harry Wurth, an esteemed citizen of my congressional district who committed his life to his country and to his fellow veterans. Mr. Wurth, a longtime resident of Albertson, NY, passed away on June 14, 2014 at the age of 87. A veteran of World War II and a leader of the United States Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of New York, Mr. Wurth's life was an example of what it means to serve one's nation.

After graduating high school in 1945, Mr. Wurth enlisted in the Navy and was deployed to the Pacific Theatre toward the end of the war. Aboard the aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Belleau, he served as deck crew and later as a baker. He was honorably discharged at the end of the war.

Mr. Wurth committed the remainder of his life to serving New York veterans. In 1964 he joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3211 in Hicksville, New York, and rose to Post Commander in 1969 and All State Commander. A frequent visitor to VA hospitals in Northport and St. Albans, New York, in 1972 he was elected Chaplin to the Nassau County VFW Council.

Mr. Wurth continued his dedication to the VFW in various positions on the Nassau County and State level. He was elected Chaplin and Commander of VFW District 1 in 1978, and in 1981 he transferred to the Albertson VFW Post 5253. Rising to New York State VFW Chief of Staff in 1993, Mr. Wurth led the effort to establish 19 new Veterans' Posts in New York.

From 1994 to 1996 he continued to move up the ranks in the State Council, rising to VFW State Commander. At the time of his passing, Mr. Wurth was the Quartermaster for the Albertson VFW post and Quartermaster of the Nassau County VFW Council.

Mr. Wurth passed away while attending this year's NY State VFW Convention. Until his death, Mr. Wurth never ceased serving our country and veterans alike. I am honored to have had the pleasure to serve as Mr. Wurth's representative. His life will forever be remembered as one of service and commitment to his fellow countrymen.



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OPPOSES THE "SAFE ACT"... SUPPORTS ITS REPEAL!

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the right of individuals to keep and bear arms. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the right vests in individuals, not merely collective militias, while also ruling that the right is not unlimited and does not prohibit all regulation of either firearms or similar devices. State and local governments are limited to the same extent as the

federal government from infringing this right per the incorporation of the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment was adopted on December 15, 1791, as part of the first ten amendments comprising the Bill of Rights.

Military personnel, public servants and elected officials are required to swear an oath to support the constitution of the United States as well as the New York State constitution. The fourth federal law, 18 U.S.C. 1918 provides penalties for violation of oath office described in 5 U.S.C. 7311 which include: (1) removal from office and; (2) confinement or a fine. As veterans the oath is eternal and in defense of the constitution we regard this action unconstitutional and a violation of federal law not to mention a moral degradation. The passage of the SAFE ACT is a disgrace and the ultimate insult to all those who gave their last full measure in defense of the constitution.

That the Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars go on record as Second Amendment to the United States Constitution and denounce the "Safe Act" as a circumvention of the Constitution that the law be revisited by law makers with public input.



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



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The 2014-15 year is upon us and we are seeking donors for our 2014-15 Service Officer Program. Letters will be going out shortly seeking donors for our program this year but anyone who would like to get ahead of the curve and make a donation to this worthy project can get an early start and send in their donations to the Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 at any time.

As in the past, we are seeking donations of \$100.00 to raffle as individual prizes in support of our Department Service Officer Program. You may dedicate your donation in memory of a friend, loved one or fellow veteran. Please indicate on your donation check or separate note who you would like to recognize with your donation. Please mail your donation no later than September 30, 2014.

The drawing for donated prizes will be held during the June 2015 Department Convention.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 518-885-9666/518-796-4338 or e-mail at mcpo4@nycap.rr.com.

Gene Ratigliano
Service Officer Raffle Chairman



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All inquiries and requests for quotes will be answered promptly. — *Jenny*

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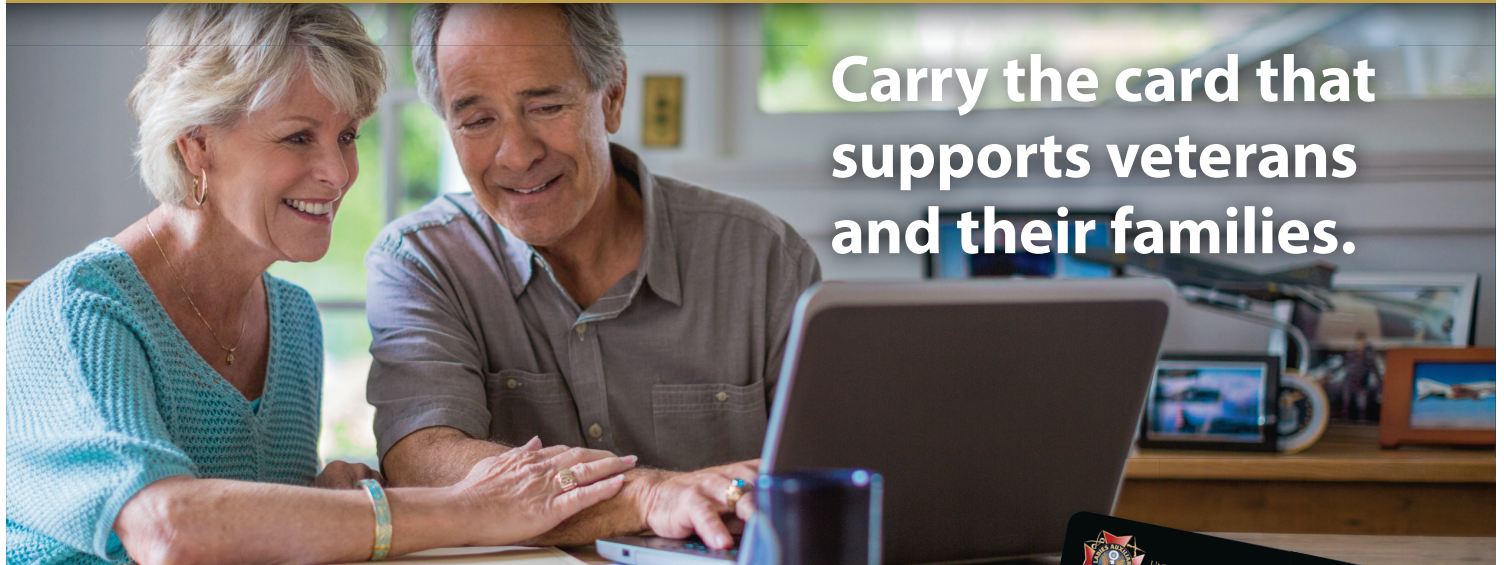
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