

# NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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Veterans of Foreign Wars  
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Issue 1

## James Durkin State Commander



At the time I am writing this report many of our Comrades and Sisters are still without electrical power, heat, food, gas and a place to live. SANDY has made a huge impact on these Comrades and Sisters.

We will soon start processing Emergency Relief funds to those in need. I understand the storm has passed and for those who were not,

or still are not standing in line for food and gas, it is time to dig deep into our pockets to make sure the funds are there when needed. To all who have sent in money to the fund, I thank you and I know those who received thank you more. Remember No One Does More for Veterans than us.

By this time most, if not all, of you have heard about the cancelling of the Spring Conference. The Council of Administration and committees will meet in the spring the full details have not been worked out yet. The cost of the Conference was to be about

*COMMANDER, continued on page 2*

## Michael Pascal Sr. Vice Commander



With our Fall Conference behind us, we move into the holiday season. Always a time to be with family and friends and share great cheer.

This season is a little different. Hurricane Sandy

dealt us a severe blow in the southeastern part of our State. We here on Long Island, and west along the South Shore into Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island and all of New York City, have been subjected to great devastation. With some communities being without power for extended periods of time, major flooding and loss of homes and property, it has become a very real time for all of us to come together as citizens. Our

*SR. VICE, continued on page 2*

## Dennis Sullivan State Surgeon



District 1 and District 2 was hit violently by Hurricane Sandy. Approximately 90% of Long Islanders are without power and this will continue in some areas for 7 to 15 days and other areas for several weeks. Some homes were destroyed by fire and falling trees and families were displaced.

We have downed trees and wires making it very difficult getting around. With the extensive outages, we have difficult times looking for a gas station to purchase fuel and food stores to purchase groceries.

The percentages of power outages are equally high in other areas like Queens,

Brooklyn, Staten Island and Westchester and Putnam Counties.

We were hit much harder than we ever imagined. We have such devastation throughout the downstate area.

I am reaching out to you in desperation for donations to help our needy veterans at this very difficult time.

The Emergency Relief Fund is dwindling down, so please open up your hearts and please donate as much as you can.

Please send all donations payable to the Department of New York and earmarked: "The Emergency Relief Fund". Send to: 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.

**Dennis Sullivan  
State Surgeon**

*See Hurricane pictures on pages 9-13*

## Marlene Roll State Inspector

I am happy to say the inspections are coming in steadily. Please make sure the form is completed to include dates and signatures of the Commander, Quartermaster and Inspector. If it doesn't apply to the Post, be sure to put an "N/A" or "0" to let us know it was not overlooked.


If you are a Post Commander or Quartermaster and your Post has not been inspected, please contact your County or District Commanders to schedule an appointment. If you need further assistance,

*INSPECTOR, continued on page 2*

**Photographer:**  **John Brunato**

**Editor:**  **Don Mackey**



**INSIDE this NYSOV** 

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## New York State Overseas Veteran

The official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.

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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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### \*\* DEADLINE:

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### COMMANDER, continued from page 1

\$40,000.00, which the Department does not have the income to support this year. Note: if the dues increase was passed at the State Convention in June 2012, that dues increase would have netted us \$43,000.00 based on current membership. We continue to look at ways to generate new income for the Department. Many of our old sources have been reduced. These sources were commission from the VFW store and the mail that National sends out for us. When you get the Calendar or Address Labels in the mail, every dollar you send in comes back 100% to New York. When you buy or have VFW products made locally, it reduces the Departments' commission from the VFW Store.

At the Fall Conference in Corning, we changed a few things around and I got some very nice feedback from many of you. One of the major changes was to have most of the committee meetings early to allow committee members to attend the Membership meeting later. Membership is key to this Department moving forward. We lost over 3,000 members last year. We started the year with just over 61,000 members. This has to be the year we stop the bleeding. We all need to Aim High this year; 100% will not make it. If your Post, Council or District needs help, call the membership team. They are there for you and we have a great team this year.

Let me repeat the next message again:

I would like to again talk about Poppies, which are down again this year. Veterans in New York are now making Poppies. I hope we can get our Poppy orders in, so these veterans can get a little overtime. This is where we get the funds to support local Veterans and their families at the Post level.

Please read the other officer's reports, as many topics are covered by them. We are all looking to improve the Department, Districts, Councils and Posts and the way we are seen by our local communities. When the Post has an event locally, make sure it is covered by the press. Good press will never hurt us.

Thank you for your service to this Great Nation and to your continual service to our Nation and its Veterans.

Serving for you,  
**James Durkin**  
State Commander

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**OVERSEAS VETERAN**

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additional information.  
[CITadmin@VFWNY.COM](mailto:CITadmin@VFWNY.COM)

### SR. VICE, continued from page 1

Department and National Organization have responded very well in support of our State Surgeon, Dennis Sullivan, as supporters of our Disaster Relief Fund. His efforts have been more than commendable.

As we move forward in both disaster recovery and our programs, we need to keep in mind membership. Our Department Commander Jim Durkin has set the bar high. Let's see how well we can do with a strong effort in all we do.

Again, this holiday season a group of comrades will be traveling with me to several VA medical centers and nursing homes to visit with veterans and bring them some gifts and cheer. I hope some of you can do the same.

Happy Holidays to all, and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Yours in Comradeship,  
**Michael Pascal**  
State Sr. Vice Commander

### No One Does More for Veterans.

### INSPECTOR, continued from page 1

you may contact me at 716-937-4549. Let's see if we can get these done before the holidays. Thank you for your cooperation and efforts in completing the inspections so far.

I would like to let our comrades who were effected by Hurricane Sandy know that we are thinking of them at this difficult time. We are saying prayers for you and your communities.

**Marlene Roll**  
Department Inspector

## Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr.

State Judge Advocate



Comrades,  
During the first six months of this year we have had the opportunity to assist many Posts with internal issues. Most issues stem from the lack of knowledge of the National Bylaws

and Manual of Procedure. One of the many areas that are those described in Article II – Posts, Section 218, Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations. Many have held a position in their local Post and have not reviewed their applicable portion of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. There are many specifics that could be discussed, but in general, these situations that arise from

————— *STATE JUDGE, continued on page 3*

*JUDGE ADVOCATE, continued from page 2*

failure to understand one's duties is, for the most part, blamed on a predecessor with the statement "that is the way we have always done it, or that is how so and so showed me how to do it." Either response is not an excuse as when we are obligated to our elected or appointed office, the Installing Officer instructs the Officers Elected or Appointed: *"Officers, you now occupy the positions of honor to which your comrades have elected you; the duties of which you will assume. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. The Bylaws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties."*

Another section of the Bylaws that have presented some difficulties this past six months is Article XI - Ladies Auxiliary. Some VFW Members are of the belief that their Ladies Auxiliary are under the jurisdiction of the VFW. The Ladies Auxiliary is a Unit formed to assist the VFW, and they are not a subservient unit of the VFW.

The Bylaw states: "No Auxiliary to a Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting." The VFW Bylaws require the President of the Ladies Auxiliary to a District, County Council or Post shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander of the respective District, County Council or Post an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Auxiliary over which she is presiding officer. Such reports will be acknowledged by each respective Commander during the

next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled.

The accepted financial report is the last Auxiliary's Financial Audit for that year. The Post may not ask for any further financial information. Additionally, it is not the Post's responsibility to review applications and approve eligibility of perspective members of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Further, if issues develop between the VFW and their Ladies Auxiliary in which the VFW thinks disciplinary action should be taken and those issues cannot be resolved at the Post level between the VFW and Auxiliary Officers, the chain of Commander for resolution is to provide all of the details of the issue to the respective District President. The Auxiliary has a process they will follow to resolution for disciplinary actions.

District's OTIs provides instructions in these and other Bylaws. State Officers, Past State Commanders and other knowledgeable Comrades reside in each of the Districts and may provide assistance with application of the Bylaws. If you are not sure of a Bylaw or it has been a long time since a specific issue has been addressed, call someone and get a second opinion.

I hope that you find this article informative and it has provided some guidance in these areas.

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 518-598-3923

**Happy Holidays to you and yours. May you enjoy your family time during this Holiday Season and have a happy and prosperous New Year.**

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

## 2012-2013 Membership

The National Membership Department has made some changes in the way we request membership supplies. There are some charges for materials and ALL requests for supplies are to go through our New York Department now. If you need supplies, you will need to send the correct form to the department for processing.

If you have been reviewing the department's membership numbers over the last few months, you may have drawn the same conclusion; they are not very encouraging, to say the least. Our numbers are on a downhill slide to which we must begin to reverse this trend. Recently, an application was sent to a Post in the state, only to have it returned with a note written on it, "We are not an Active Post" and this

was signed by the Post Commander. My question to the commander was: "When is your Post closing?" The response was not very encouraging and the matter has been referred to Commander Durkin. The point is, this isn't the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (a non-active Post).

During October and November there were three Yellow Ribbon events at which we had the potential for over 600 members. I asked the District Commanders in the respective areas for assistance from the District Membership Chairman and team; some were helpful and some were not so responsive. The NCRs and the Department Membership Team cannot possibly be the only recruiters in the Department. At these Yellow Ribbon events, all attendees have recently returned

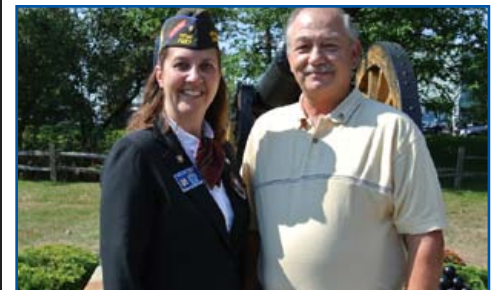
from deployment where recruiters obtain applications. We explain to the Veteran that their application will be forwarded to a Post they have chosen for processing. The Post will contact the Veteran for their DD214 or other proof of eligibility and explain the Post's dues structure.

After the event, the names of these applicants are entered into a data bank. We then forward these applications to a Post near the Veteran's home. Instructions to the Posts receiving the applications are: (1) Contact the veteran to introduce yourselves; (2) Invite the Veteran to your Post to present his DD-214 or other proof of eligibility. Explain your Post's dues structure; (3) Do not change the recruiter's name on the form. You did not recruit the Veteran; the membership team recruited a member for your Post. If there are any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

As I said at the Fall Conference, every member of the VFW is a RECRUITER and we should be replacing ourselves...One Member at a time!

Thank you,  
**Dan McMahon**

## Fallen Female Soldier's Father



This picture is of me with Mr. Gasiewicz. He is the father of fallen soldier Cari Anne Gasiewicz who was killed in action on December 4, 2004 driving in a convoy. She was 28 years old and was from Cheektowaga, New York.

I met her father at the 1812 Ceremony during Fleet Week in Buffalo. He is so proud of his daughter and her service to our country. She loved what she was doing in the military and her comrades loved her. She was noted for "taking care" of them.

Her father and I had quite the chat after the ceremony and he was very happy about the new Post we had started with female veterans, Dorothy Kubik/Cathrine Galloway #12097. He was quite sure that Cari would have joined as a member.

**Marlene Roll**  
**State Inspector**

## Gurtler Brothers VFW Post 420 Inaugurates “Wall of Valor” on Veterans Day, November 11, 2012



*Jim Hartman shows the audience a photograph of Union soldier George Ferrell.*

Veterans Day, November 11, 2012 was a special one for Gurtler Brothers VFW Post 420 in Saratoga Springs, New York when Post members unveiled for those in attendance at the Post home over 200 photographs of veterans from the surrounding Counties in a “Gallery of Valor” display that was inaugurated to commemorate the commitment of local veterans to military service to their country.

The 200 photographs that comprised the memorial were of veterans of wars from throughout the nation’s history going back to the Spanish-American War. The photos were provided by relatives, friends and students of the men and women who served.

Post member Jim Hartman came up with the idea for the gallery when he discovered that nine out of ten American families had a relative who served, or is serving in, or during a period of conflict. He said the members of Gurtler Brothers Post 420 wanted to find a

way to incorporate all veterans into its Veterans Day observance, including those who took part in a war, but were not necessarily involved in active combat.

The display contained a myriad of memorabilia, including a startling letter written by Joseph Witt who was aboard *LST 673* on August 6, 1945 when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

One special photograph was also part of the display, that of Union soldier George Ferrell, a distant relative of George and William Gurtler, for whom the Post is named.

The display was so well received by the community that the Post hopes to continue the “Gallery of Valor” project for years to come and make it a permanent part of its Veterans Day observance.



*Post member and Korean War Veteran Ralph San Felice points to a photo in the gallery of photos.*

## Presentation to St. Peter's Hospital

Due to the *AMAZING* efforts of the Sisters of the Department of New York Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Cancer Aid and Research Chairman Darlene Stanton and President Jane Reape, the Department of New York raised \$112,247.75 for the Cancer Aid and Research Program for the 2011-2012 year.

President Jane Reape presented the donation in honor of MaryAnn Hendrickson, Darlene Stanton’s mother who is battling Stage Three Cancer. As a result of all the sisters in the Department of New York caring enough to make a difference and stepping up to leave no veterans’ loved

ones behind for their outstanding efforts, the Department of New York placed 1st in our membership group at the National Convention held in Reno, Nevada, July 20-26, 2012.

Along with this award comes the honor of selecting a local Cancer Aid and Research facility to bestow with a grant for research. President Jane Reape of Carthage, New York and Chairman Darlene Stanton of Clarksville, New York have chosen St. Peter’s Hospital to receive the grant of \$28,061.94. The very well-attended presentation was held on September 7, 2012 at St. Peter’s Hospital.



*Pictured, L-R: Steven Boyle, CEO St. Peter's Health Partners; Jane Reape, Department of New York President; Darlene Stanton, Cancer Aid and Research Chairman; MaryAnn Hendrickson, Darlene's mother; Wayne Holman, Director of St. Peter's Cancer Care Center; Belle Bruse, District 3 President; and Peter Semenza, VP St. Peter's Foundation.*

## Chestertown Memorial Dedication



On Saturday, July 7, District 3 Commander Donald Thorne, Jr. and Gene Ratigliano, Hudson Mohawk Counties Council Commander and District 3 Sr. Vice Commander, were part of a contingent of over 400 local citizens, veterans and visitors, along with Post Commander and Iraq combat veteran Tracy Evans, Quartermaster Harry D. Smith, Jr. and other Post officers and members who attended the dedication of the Veterans Memorial built by the generous donations of the many in Chestertown, New York. The memorial is located in front of the Town Hall, which is next door to Glendale VFW Post 5513 of

*DEDICATION, continued on page 5*

DEDICATION, continued from page 4



Warren County which is co-located with the town's American Legion Post.

The memorial sits in front of the Chestertown Town Hall where a semi-circle of flags from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard are represented with the American flag,

the center point of the semi-circle. Around this same semi-circle were four pairs of granite slabs engraved with the names of the men and women from the towns of Chester and Pottersville who had served in the military during America's wars beginning with the Revolution. The slabs represented those who had fought in the nation's battles including the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the First Iraq War, the Second Iraq War and finally, the War in Afghanistan.

World War II veteran, Harry Bollback, presided over the dedication ceremony and was in charge of coordinating the project of erecting the

memorial plaza, as well as the four massive granite slabs, the flagpoles and a tribute sculpture to fallen soldiers. Post Commander Evans was given the distinct honor during the tribute of placing his own dog tags on the statue in honor of the fallen heroes.

The dedication included many speakers and included State Veterans Affairs Acting Director William Kraus, State Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward and Congresswoman Betty Little. The event concluded with the singing of our National Anthem, America the Beautiful, God Bless the USA, and Let Freedom Ring with a closing flyover by a military bi-plane from the 20s and a P-34 from the 30s, both with bright white stars on the underside of their wings. Acting Veterans Director Kraus summed up the event by saying, "Chester citizens, you deserve to be proud. You are the embodiment of America. This monument will stand forever. There is no finer tribute than this."



## VFW Fall Conference – Corning, New York Homeless Veterans Report

**No one does more for Veterans.** That's what you'll see everywhere within the VFW – on clothing, in emails and correspondences – everywhere. Last year Homeless Veterans was a special project of our Dept.; it should be a special project each and every year. Not in the Dept. but in our Districts, County Councils and Posts. I wonder how many of you have a Homeless Vets Chairman.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary, Eric Shinseki, made a commitment to end homelessness among Veterans by 2015. Great gains have been achieved. Halfway through his 15-year plan, the veteran's spending the night on a friend's couch, in a car, at a shelter or on the streets, has decreased and housing and treatment of our comrades has increased. In January of 2010 over 76,300 Veterans in this country were homeless. On a night in January of 2011, 67,495 Veterans were reported homeless. That's a drop of nearly 12% – proof that the VA program and efforts are working. That makes you feel good, doesn't it? How about this statistic: in the last 5 years it's been estimated that at some point,

20,000 Iraq and Afghan Veterans have been homeless and these are the very same Veterans we want to recruit to become members of the VFW. With our help, maybe we can reach these comrades.

So, what can we do? Start by educating ourselves. A couple websites to look at are [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless) and [www.visn2.gov](http://www.visn2.gov), which are both filled with information. Try a search and see what might work for you. There are some downloadable posters and brochures to distribute in our communities, to make places like Police Departments and emergency rooms aware that there is help and how to find it. A national hotline is set up for quick response to someone in need by calling 1-877-424-3848. Also, the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans in New York State needs assistance, either financially or in donations such as bedding, kitchen utensils, furniture, the things needed to fill a house, start a home, start a new beginning for a fellow comrade. Remember, not all needs are met by the Federal Government Programs.

With the help of comrade Don Mackey, CIT Coordinator and Department Commander

Durkin, we will start a site on the Department's webpage to keep you informed. I have reached out to the HCHV in Buffalo and have been offered the opportunity to attend staff meetings with a chance to attend other seminars.

No homeless Veterans by 2015! Quite a bold statement, but as Director Shinseki said: "I learned long ago that there are never any absolutes in life and a zero homeless veteran sure sounds like an absolute; but

unless we set ambitious targets for ourselves, we would not be giving this our best efforts. No one who has served this nation as a veteran should ever be living on the streets," and as Commander Durkin quotes: "It's better to aim high and miss than to aim too low and make it." **No one does more for Veterans.**

Thank You,  
**Joel Vanik**  
Homeless Veteran Chairman

### Elect

## James Durkin

### National Council of Administration Member

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**NY State Commander 2012-2013**  
**NYS Endorsed Candidate for 2017**  
**Jr. Vice Commander in Chief**

## VFW Post 6249 Golf Outing to Support The Wounded Warrior Project

*By Patrick Mitchell, Sons of AMVETS Post 48*

On September 24th, VFW Post 6249 based in Rocky Point, New York, held their 5th Annual Golf Outing to help support the Wounded Warrior Project. This VFW Post decided to support the Wounded Warriors because they gave so much of themselves in service to our great country. Scholarships have been established in memory of Sgt. Jonathan Keller and Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Venetz, who made the ultimate sacrifice.

VFW Post 6249 was established in 1953 and has a long history of supporting Veterans' causes and worthwhile community organizations. Fundraising efforts have included shipping goods to Veterans and their families, support of local Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops, annual scholarships to Rocky Point High School Seniors, Shoreham Wading River High School, Sgt. Jonathan Keller Memorial Scholarship and the Post's annual golf outing supporting the Wounded Warriors Homes to returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

This active Post participates annually in ceremonies and parades including Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Day and the Rocky Point St. Patrick's Day Parade and provides services for deceased Veterans at local funeral homes, as well as providing transportation to Post members for doctor and therapy visits. If interested in more information about VFW Post 6249 and/or the Wounded Warrior Project, please contact Post Commander Joe Cognitore at 631-873-8272.



*Pictured, L-R, are members of the VFW 6249 Golf Committee: Rich Acritelli, Tom Connell, Mike Mauro, John Nickl, Joe Cognitore, Linda Teppel and Kevin Lyle.*

## Voice of Democracy

Comrades and Sisters,

Our Department's Voice of Democracy Essay Contest is entering its final stages. Even though Super Storm Sandy caused much destruction and loss of life in our Department's Districts One and Two, I only received two calls from citizens telling me they were having difficulties submitting essay entries because of the storm. Thanks to Comrades Willie Burks in District 1 and William (Bill) Moore in District 2, these issues were addressed and taken care of. Post judging has been completed and District judging was held at the District's VOD Chairmen's discretion and was completed by December 6th.

I'd like to remind District Chairmen that you may have received more than one entry from your participating Posts, but you may only advance 1 (one) declared winner from

your District to me for the Department Judging December 29th that will be held at Columbia/Greene Community College. District Chairman, please include a head and shoulders photo of your District's declared winner in the package mailed or delivered to me at my home address: 9 Imperial Lane, Stuyvesant, NY 12173.

In closing, I thank Commander Durkin for this opportunity to serve this great Department of New York. I've had the opportunity to chat with many resourceful students and parents throughout the state and even one from Texas.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season and I hope to see you at the Spring Conference.

Yours in Comradeship,  
**Wally Zincio**  
Department VOD Chairman

## Veterans Welcome Home Parade

The 3rd Annual Veterans Welcome Home Parade in Buffalo, New York was held on Saturday, November 10th. Marlene Roll and Councilman Pridgeon were named Grand Marshals for the parade.

Marlene stated, "I have been working on this event the three years it has been in existence. This year was bigger and better than the past two."



*Marlene Roll with Councilman Pridgeon and Senator Grisantiat.*

## VA Announces New Grants to Help End Veterans Homelessness

*Initiative Targets 42,000 Homeless and At-Risk Vets and Families*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly \$100 million in grants that will help approximately 42,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants are going to 151 community agencies in 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"We are committed to ending Veteran homelessness in America," said Shinseki. "These grants will help VA and community organizations reach out and prevent at-risk Veterans from losing their homes."

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, VA is awarding grants to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in – or transitioning to – permanent housing. Those community organizations provide a range of services that promote housing stability among eligible very low-income Veteran families.

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NEW GRANTS, continued from page 6

Under the grants, homeless providers will offer Veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in getting other public benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

This is the program's second year. Last year, VA provided about \$60 million to assist 22,000 Veterans and family members.

In 2009, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government's goal to end Veteran homelessness by 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2011 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, homelessness among Veterans has declined 12 percent since January 2010.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed \$800 million in FY 2011 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, housing, job training and education.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available on the Internet at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at [www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp)

## Yonkers Veteran Turns 100



*World War II Veteran Vito Prisciantelli is seated in front of two family members, Deputy Mayor Sue Gerry and Yonkers Veterans Affairs Director Al Ramsey, who all joined in to wish him a happy 100th.*

On August 15, World War II Veteran Vito Prisciantelli celebrated his 100th birthday. Prisciantelli was surrounded by friends, family and his brothers from the Empire VFW Post 375 as they joined him in celebrating this milestone. Deputy Mayor Sue Gerry was on hand to present

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 13, 2012

### VA-HUD Team Honored for Progress to End Veterans Homelessness — Cited for “Significant Contribution to the Nation”

WASHINGTON – Employees from the Department of Veterans Affairs were members of a unique federal team that won the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Citizens Service Medal for the Administration's efforts to end homelessness that resulted in a 12 percent reduction in homeless Veterans in 2011.

“These dedicated VA and HUD employees are committed to make a positive difference in the lives of our homeless Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “They have been implementing a strategy, based on prevention and rescue, that has been effective and moves us closer to our goal of eliminating homelessness among Veterans by 2015.”

The awards, known as the “Sammies”, are sponsored annually by the Partnership for Public Service to honor outstanding federal employees whose contributions are critical to the health, safety and well-being of Americans.

Leading the VA section of the team was Susan A. Angell, Ph.D., Executive Director of VA's homeless Veterans initiative. Other VA team members were Lisa Pape, National Director, Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) homeless programs, Pete Dougherty, associate executive director of VA's homeless Veteran initiative and Vincent

Kane, National Director, VHA national center on homelessness. The HUD team was led by Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Johnston and included Laure Rawson and Ann Oliva.

The two departments were cited for a program that combines HUD vouchers for Veterans to rent privately-owned housing, with VA case management services that include health care, mental health treatment, vocational assistance and job development. Since 2009, more than 47,000 Veterans have benefited from the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program.

Under another major program, VA awarded in July \$100 million in grants to 151 community agencies across the nation to help about 42,000 at-risk Veterans keep their current housing.

According to the 2011 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, homelessness among Veterans declined by nearly 12 percent from 2010.

In 2009, Secretary Shinseki committed VA, which provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless Veterans, to end Veteran homelessness by 2015. The program puts new emphasis upon preventing homelessness by targeting at-risk Veterans for mental health care, substance abuse intervention and employment assistance.

Prisciantelli with a proclamation from Mayor Mike Spano naming August 15, 2012, Vito Prisciantelli Day.

A member of the Greatest Generation, Prisciantelli served in the United States Army, where he was a member of the Sixth Armored Division, 128th Armored Ordinance Battalion 8 and was an integral part of the historic D-Day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge.

After his honorable discharge, Prisciantelli returned to the home front, working for General Motors. He later became the proprietor of a gas station and Studebaker Dealership.

Loving husband to Rachel, devoted father to six children, doting grandfather to seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, Prisciantelli, throughout his lifetime, has created a legacy of love, compassion and respect and has been

endeared by so many for his loving spirit and his willingness to help others.

An avid golfer, Prisciantelli competed in a number of golf competitions throughout Westchester County and, throughout his lifetime, has always enjoyed the company of his friends at the Coyne Park Senior Center, Scotti Senior Center and numerous events sponsored by the Empire VFW Post.

The recipient of numerous awards and recognitions for his military service, Prisciantelli is a Lifetime Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and received a Certificate of Service and official membership.

For the past 10 decades, Prisciantelli has exhibited a steadfast commitment to life, serving as a quintessential role model for all to follow and as living proof that good will and kindness reap great rewards.

*Published in Yonkers Rising, August 24, 2012*

## Dennis Sullivan

### State Surgeon



Comrades, I barely had time to thank everyone for your vote of confidence and electing me to this high position of State Surgeon before I had to jump in, head first, and get working.

It is one month since Hurricane Sandy, now called Super Storm Sandy, hit the eastern shores of New York. Governor Cuomo declared this storm worse than the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in some ways. New York needs \$42 billion to recover from damages received and prevent future catastrophe, including protecting power grids and cell phone networks. This super storm was more damaging, extensive and widespread. The VFW, Department of New York, is concerned for our veterans. We want to help in any way possible.

I reached out to VFW National Headquarters to make them aware of the situation here in New York and, being gracious, they gave us funds to disburse to our comrades who suffered from this Super Storm. The guidelines I am working with is: \$500 to a VFW Member in good standing if a comrade loses their home to fire or their home is off their foundation; \$300 for those comrades in good standing who had flood damages. It is just a little something to help get through this terrible ordeal with living and food expenses.

In the very beginning, we started with the opening of "Soup Kitchens". We had "Soup Kitchens" in each area to help feed and keep our VFW families and the community warm. I would like to thank the Commanders and members of the participating Posts for their hard work and dedication. They are:

- Post 2348 Astoria  
Commander Edgar Carhuappna
- Post 5253 Albertson  
PSC Harry Wurth
- Post 4927 Centereach  
Commander Ray Farrell
- Post 107 Gerritsen Beach, Brooklyn  
Commander Jim Markson
- Post 6431 in Brentwood  
Commander Sabrina Lacey
- Post 7279 in Lindenhurst  
Commander Chris Geackel

I have traveled to Staten Island, Breezy Point, Long Beach, Oceanside, Lindenhurst,

Broad Channel and Mastic/Shirley and could hardly believe the destruction. I've met many comrades and heard so many heartbreaking stories and seen so many unbelievable sights. I've seen homes consumed by fire, homes tilted off their foundations, homes on top of homes and cars and boats on top of each other. I have witnessed people looking for their belongings through the rubble and their joy when a photo or a special memento is found. I felt privileged to be able to help people find photos and pieces of their lives in the rubble. I was as excited as they were. As one veteran told me, "You can replace your cars, your home, your clothes and your job, but you can't replace those precious photographs and precious memories." It's good to know there are organizations that can help restore pictures damaged by salt water or even by fire. I've heard others say, "We might be bruised and battered, but we are not broken."

I've seen the Red Cross and the National Guard working and helping the people standing in lines to get water, food and necessities. I've seen other organizations in action, helping others like FEMA, Red Cross, United Way, Humane Society and Fed Ex donating \$1.00 for each package shipped through December 2nd. We had fellow veterans from Ohio deliver two truckloads full of necessary items. In my area, we had Suffolk County Legislature Tom Muratore donate blankets, clothes and food for those still without power. PSC Don Doell drove 7-1/2 hours to Long Island from Hornell with a car full of supplies, all donated from his Post. Brian DeMerritt from the Corning Post, organized a collection drive in his Post and had comrades drive over 7 hours to deliver to areas in need.

In Long Island alone, 90% of the population was without power for a minimum of seven days and as much as three weeks. Unfortunately, some are still without power.

To add insult to injury, we all had to deal with gas shortage. There were some lucky enough to have a generator, but getting gas was not an easy task. If a gas station was open for business, most likely they were running on a generator, but the delivery of fuel was miserable. People would wait in lines for 4 hours or more, including myself, waiting for a gas delivery and hoping it would not run out before you got to the pump. Then you had separate lines for people standing

in the freezing cold for hours, with gas cans, hoping to get gas to feed their generators.

We did have police assisting with directing traffic and with crowd control. With so many people hungry and cold and wanting to take care of their families, sometimes it got ugly and police intervention was needed.

When gas became more assessable, I was able to get around and travel to the most troubled areas. I met with the Commanders and members of the Posts and as State Surgeon, working on behalf of the VFW Department of New York; we were offering them assistance and informing them of the VFW Emergency Relief Programs and the Super Storm Sandy relief fund.

The telephone calls looking for assistance started pouring in. As I passed on the names of needy comrades to our Quartermaster for Department of New York relief checks, we were fast depleting the \$50,000 from National Headquarters.

A special thanks to Hal Burke and Bob Barnhart for their hard work and dedication to assist our veterans. They made sure the checks were issued promptly to get to our comrades as quickly as possible.

We just received additional funds from VFW National which I am sure will run out very quickly. It is one month since the storm and there are parts of New York just getting power back. I anticipate many more comrades will come forward because they are just learning and hearing of the relief assistance programs.

I continue to reach out to you; I implore you, to donate funds to Department of New York "Emergency Relief Fund". I would like to thank all of you who have already donated, from the bottom of my heart, for your generosity and your desire to help those less fortunate who suffered from the storm.

Please send your donations to: Department of New York, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205 and put a memo that it is for the fund. More than ever, we need your help.

Besides the funds, we need you! We are in desperate need of skilled workers. We need carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters and sheet rock experts; anyone who will be able to donate their time. There are many Posts that were destroyed or severely damaged. Without flood insurance, these Posts will not be repaired without our help. If you would like to help, please contact me and I will put you in contact with the



Commander of the Post nearest to you. My e-mail is: [dmsullivan9@optimum.net](mailto:dmsullivan9@optimum.net) or call me at 631-848-3486.

After a month, construction equipment and piles of debris are still a common sight on the streets of Long Island, the Rockaways, Queens and Staten Island. Ruined appliances remain piled in yards and parts of the beach areas are being used as a landfill for debris. A section in Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, a former Army base, is being used to incinerate debris. There are enough trees and branches to fill several football fields.

Now health and environmental issues are arising. Talking to veterans, they are concerned about coughing, wheezing and asthma attacks. The Rockaways and Breezy Point residents are already concerned about mold and air quality. The city has installed eleven air monitors in surrounding areas and feels this is safe.

People are warned not to use the wood in their fireplaces for heat. The trees are not weathered and the wood from decks and walks are treated and stained and would cause dangerous toxic fumes.

I am sure you all join me in wishing our comrades and sisters good health and the endurance and the will to get through this trying time. Our prayers are with them.

It has been some time since the hurricane, but our comrades are still suffering through the cleanup and rebuilding and they will for quite awhile.

**REMEMBER...WE NEED YOU!!!!**

## BREEZY POINT



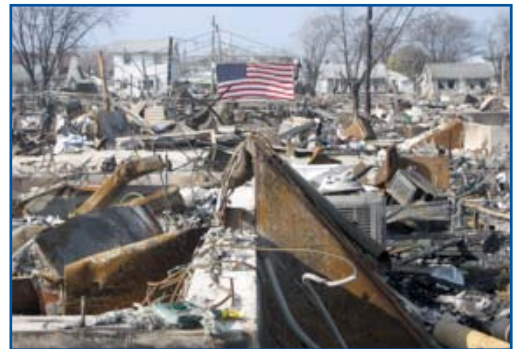
*Houses destroyed by fire.*



*Post 8540.*



*Siding melting off a house.*



*...and the Flag still flies.*



*The famous "Sugar Shack" dining and gathering place for residents and visitors – all that is left is the roof.*



*National Guard Troops help with clean up.*



SANDY PICS, continued from page 9



### FAR ROCKAWAY



Commander James Durkin presenting relief check to Commander Matt Conklin of Post 260.

Commander Durkin, Surgeon Dennis Sullivan and Commander Matt Conklin in the Post 260 food pantry.

Post 250 food pantry is stocked to help those in need.



Commander Durkin helps unload a delivery from Ohio.

John Mauro, PCC and State Surgeon Dennis Sullivan help unload a truck from Ohio.

SANDY PICS, continued on page 11



SANDY PICS, continued from page 10

## OCEANSIDE



Oceanside Post 5199.



State Surgeon Dennis Sullivan and Commander James Durkin present a relief check to Ladies Auxiliary Madam President Deborah Heide.



Interior of Post 5199.

## STATEN ISLAND-Kissam Street

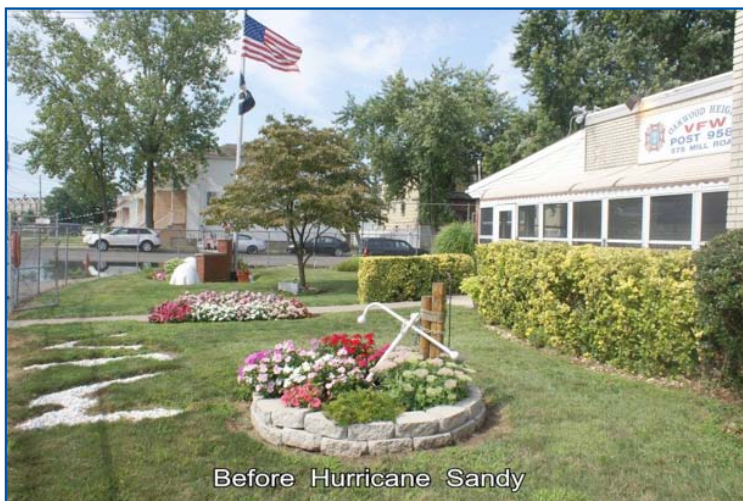
These are photos of some of the lost houses on Kissam Street in Staten Island.



SANDY PICS, continued from page 11



## STATEN ISLAND-Post 9587



Before Hurricane Sandy



After Hurricane Sandy

Oakwood Heights Post 9587 before Hurricane Sandy.

SANDY PICS, continued from page 12

*Here are photos of Post 9587 after Hurricane Sandy.*



## Fort Totten – Bronx, New York



*State Surgeon Dennis Sullivan, Commander James Durkin and John Mauro with three soldiers receiving relief checks from the Unmet Needs Program.*



*The soldiers reciprocated by presenting Dennis Sullivan, John Mauro and Commander James Durkin with medals.*



### The Language of Men: A Memoir

Hudson Whitman/Excelsior College Press is proud to announce the release of its second book, *The Language of Men: A Memoir* by Anthony D'Aries.

An incisively written father-son memoir, D'Aries looks at his father, a Vietnam Veteran and realizes he wants to know more about him. Traveling with his wife, Vanessa, to Vietnam to retrace his father's tour, and discovering uncomfortable similarities between his father and himself, Anthony returns home to look for answers in his own past. Described by Tom Perrotta (*The Leftovers*) as "...a brutally honest and darkly funny meditation on masculinity, violence, and sexuality," *The Language of Men* transports readers to the crossroads of gender and history, then leads them through the unsettled terrain that creates fathers, sons, brothers and husbands.

D'Aries won the 2010 PEN/New England Discovery Award in Nonfiction and teaches literacy in the Massachusetts correctional system. At 29 year old, D'Aries has a variety of readings and talks scheduled. Check his website at [anthonydaries.com](http://anthonydaries.com) for dates.

### Mentorship for Veterans Returning to College

Every year veterans make the decision to return to college to complete the degree they started years earlier or to begin for the first time. Either way, it can be both exhilarating and unsettling. Exhilarating at the thought of 'being back in school' with the goal to complete your degree just in sight and unsettling at the prospect of needing to 'brush up' on your writing skills and possibly being the only student in class who didn't graduate from high school the year before!

Excelsior College's mentorship program, available within the Online Veterans' Center, is available for veteran students returning to college. Nothing is more important for online college success than becoming acclimated to distance learning and knowledge of where the tools they need are located. Excelsior's mentorship program offers new veteran students a veteran mentor to help navigate the online classroom environment and provide assistance in locating support and resources. In addition, your mentor can help ease your transition, provide encouragement and tips on being successful.

Excelsior College, a regionally accredited, non-profit, and has been successfully serving working adults with their educational needs for more than 40 years. There are many resources available to students to assist them in brushing up their writing such as the Online Writing Lab at [excelsior.edu/owl](http://excelsior.edu/owl), which is available to the public. And, by the way, the average age of an Excelsior student is 39 years old.

The College has an education partnership with the Department of NY, VFW providing reduced tuition and fees for associate and bachelor degrees for employees, members and their spouses or domestic partners. For more information on the partnership, go to: <http://www.excelsior.edu/nyvfw> or contact Judy Reed at [jreed@excelsior.edu](mailto:jreed@excelsior.edu) or call 518-464-8678 for assistance.

## Dedication of Wishing Well



*The Dedication of the Department of New York Veterans Wishing Well was held on November 12, 2012. Pictured, L-R: Donald Thorne, Commander District 3; Hal Burke, Jr., PSC, State Judge*

*Advocate; and Catharine Steven, General Manager of the Marriott Hotel, Wolf Road, Albany, New York. All proceeds from the Wishing Well will be used to benefit members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.*

## County Clerk Indy Jaycox Launches Schoharie County Veterans Discount Program

**SCVDP: Also Known around New York State as "Return the Favor"**

The Schoharie County Clerk's Office, the County's Veterans Service Agency and the Schoharie Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce we have teamed up with Schoharie County Businesses to offer discounts and other benefits to our honorably discharged veterans. This program, known also as "Return the Favor", is being widely implemented by Counties across New York State.

Ms. Jaycox said, "This initiative benefits everyone by providing a well-deserved discount to those who have given so much for home and country, while also, hopefully, increasing store traffic and sales for merchants."

Not only does this program offer a tangible benefit in the form of discounts, but it also encourages veterans to record their original military discharge document (DD214) in a secure place.

The Schoharie County Veterans Discount Program rules and conditions are:

- Veterans must bring in their original DD214 military discharge document indicating an honorable discharge to receive a photo ID card.
- The cardholder must present their photo ID card to receive a discount from merchants.
- The discounts are only available to the cardholder.
- Discounts may change or cease at any time at the discretion of the participating merchant; some discounts have exclusions and/or limitations to purchases or services.
- A booklet of participating merchants will be available at the Clerk's Office, the Veterans Service Office and the Chamber of Commerce, and is expected to be available online on their websites. Booklets will be updated on an as-needed basis.

In order to accommodate all our veterans without long delays, we are requesting that veterans appear at the County Clerk's office based on their last name. We will begin processing photo ID cards on Monday, December 3, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. They need to follow the



The Department of New York Service Officer Raffle Committee is once again sponsoring a CASH raffle to benefit our Service Officers. Our generous donors have provided over \$3,000 to be awarded to our lucky prize winners – but you must have a ticket to win! There will be one (1) \$200.00 prize and twenty-eight (28) \$100.00 prizes given away to the lucky winners.

Our Department Service Officers have done an outstanding job this year in providing counseling and administrative services to our veterans. The efforts of Tom Todaro and Connie Williams in Buffalo, as well as Santo Valerio and Mary Serkanic in New York City have enabled our veterans to be awarded over \$82 million in VA benefits in 2011-12. Let's make sure they are able to continue doing this great work for our veterans.

Each Post Commander, Ladies Auxiliary and Men's Auxiliary has been mailed two raffle ticket sheets. Please help support our fund drive this year by urging your Post to buy at least one, if not both, ticket sheets. \$25.00 or \$50.00 will not break any Post or Auxiliary treasury and your support will go a long way in helping our veterans in need. For those wishing to purchase tickets, they are \$5.00 each or 6 for \$25.00. You do not need to be present to win. If your Post has run out of tickets, or anyone is interested in selling more tickets, give me a call at 518-885-9666 or send me an e-mail at [mcpo4@nycap.rr.com](mailto:mcpo4@nycap.rr.com) and I will get them out to you. Tickets are available from Department Headquarters, as well.

The Service Officer Committee will also be publishing a Service Officer Ad Book which will be given out at the Department Convention in June. Make sure your Post or Auxiliary is represented. An ad book order form has been included in the mailing to each Post and Auxiliary. Our Department Service Officers are totally funded by the Department of New York and from the proceeds of our raffle and ad book.

Let's make this a successful fund drive this year and that we mean it when we say, "VFW – NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS". Please make your checks or money order payable to: Department of New York VFW and mail your ticket stubs, payment and ad book order form to: Department of New York VFW, 69 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205.

**Gene Ratigliano**  
**Service Officer**  
**Raffle and Ad Book Chairman**

schedule below, on an ongoing basis:

Last names beginning with:

**A-F on Mondays**

**G-K on Tuesdays**

**L-P on Wednesdays**

**Q-U on Thursdays**

**V-Z on Fridays**

The Schoharie County Clerk's Office is located at 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill, across from the Fairgrounds.

For more information on the Schoharie County Veteran's Discount Program (SCVDP), please contact 518-295-8316.



**Now you can support veterans with everyday household purchases.**



Sign up for the VFW or Ladies Auxiliary VFW USAA Rewards™ World MasterCard® and take advantage of:

- **No annual fee\***
- **Purchase APR** as low as **10.9%**
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In addition, USAA Bank will make a contribution to the VFW or the Ladies Auxiliary VFW when you open the account and each time you make an eligible purchase with the card.

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\*Offer subject to approval. As of 12/1/2012, regular APRs on purchases, cash advances and balance transfers are 10.9% to 25.9%, depending on your credit history and other factors. APRs will vary with the market based on the Prime Rate. There is a transaction fee of 3% on cash advances (\$200 maximum on balance transfers and convenience checks) and 1% on foreign transactions. Rates and fees subject to change. Please contact us for the most current information. If your credit history and other factors qualify you for a credit limit under \$5,000, you will receive a USAA Platinum MasterCard with the same rates and fees. Rewards points terminate if account is closed, delinquent or program ends. Earn 1 point for every \$1 in credit card purchases. Other restrictions apply. USAA Rewards Program terms and conditions will be provided with your card. Use of the term "member" or "membership" does not convey any legal, eligibility or ownership rights. Availability restrictions apply. Purchase of a bank product does not establish eligibility for, or membership in, USAA property and casualty insurance companies. Credit cards provided by USAA Savings Bank, Member FDIC. The VFW and Ladies Auxiliary VFW receive financial support from USAA for these sponsorships. © 2013 USAA. 142276-0113