

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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



July/August/September 2008

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

Volume 27, Issue 4

89TH VFW DEPARTMENT CONVENTION, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Jack Haight Commander

One of the proudest moments of my life was when I was elected as your Department Commander. I am indeed proud to obtain the title and will do my best to honorably represent you in all functions. As I have said before, you are my family.

I want to thank Ben Thompson (PSC) for the fantastic nomination speech, and Karl Rohde (PSC) and Allan Fox (PDC) for the second. I believe that this shows that the Department of New York can work together beyond the District and Upstate/Downstate Lines. Ben and Karl have given me a lot of encouragement when I need assistance. I have also received encouragement from many other Past Department Commanders (Tony Ferrarese, Harry Wurth, Bob Seagrave, Hal, Art and others). District and County Council Commanders and the general membership also helped me through the many rough times. There are just too many comrades to mention here. I thank you all.

I personally want to thank Bob Wasieczko for his many years of service as the Department Sgt.-at-Arms. You did a fantastic job and I will miss giving you a hard time as I did whenever we lined up to march in at the formal dinners.

Our motto this year is "teamwork is our goal." If we want a successful year, we must work together. I know that you have heard this many times, but "There is no 'I' in team." Membership and programs is what we need to work on and personalities must not stand in the way. We need to work on this. We will succeed as a team!!!

George Osborn, our Membership Chairman, has put in a lot of effort on this year's program and I would like to thank him for this. There are new goals and the way awards are handed out. Please read this book in its entirety.

My special project is the Fisher House. I believe that our military overseas have enough to worry about with their situation, especially those in harm's way. We can help with the family crisis back here. My Chairman for this project is Lloyd Creely.

Sampson State Cemetery, according to State Senator Mike Nozzolio, is almost a done deal. We have been working on this for over 10 years. Cindy Campbell, the Department Auxiliary President, and I have committed to raising funds for the flagpole, lighting system and plaque (which will state that it is donated by the Department VFW and its Auxiliary) The

2008-2009 Top Department Officers



Newly elected Department Officers, L to R: Sr. Vice Commander Allan Davenport, Commander Jack Haight and Jr. Vice Commander Jack Veazy join hands to demonstrate their unity as a "TEAM" to match the "TEAMWORK" theme Commander Haight chose for the Department of New York during 2008-09.

estimated cost is \$4,500. This project chairman is Dennis Sullivan.

As for the OTI, National requires all Districts to have one this year. Please Contact the Department HQ to get one set up. There is a team that will come to your District to present the program. Mel Garrett is the Chairman for this.

I, after conferring with the Sr. and Jr. Department Commanders, Al and Jack, have asked Jr. Past

Department Commander Bob Barnhart to continue assisting the Department with his expertise in insurance and as a political liaison. This is not meant to detract from the Legislative team job.

There are some changes coming to the Legislative Service Officer Conference. There will be more information on that at a later time. Our fall Conference will be in Liverpool and I hope to see you there.

Photographer:

John Brunato



Editor:

Arnie Anderson

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2008-2009 State Officers

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

POLICY

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The views expressed herein are those of the writers and, unless otherwise stated, do not reflect the positions of NYSOV or its staff.

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

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Allan Davenport Sr. Vice Commander

First I'd like to say that I had a good year serving you, and only hope this year will be as good, or even better. I thank everyone that has supported me thus far, especially my Post 1019, and its Auxiliary.

I don't want to get into anything that Commander Haight might say, but I do know that some things are going to be different; and we need to support him in that.

I am already planning for next year to enhance one of the changes, and make our future program even better. Membership program may be different but nothing has changed; we need to recruit new members, as we still want to be strong when we fight for our benefits.

Remember to support the VFW, and do what needs to be done to keep us strong. Just as a reminder, if your Post has not paid at least one member registration to the National Convention, do so. There are some Posts that haven't sent in an election report yet – they need to do it now.

I would like to congratulate Past Commander Barnhart through his leadership in trying to stop the declining membership and coming real close to reaching his goal. I am looking forward to meeting more of you this year in my travels around the state.



Jack G. Veazy Jr. Vice Commander

Thank you for electing me as your State Jr. Vice Commander. Now that the 89th Annual Department Convention is behind us, we can start working towards unity.

We need to support our State Commander Jack Haight on all of his programs. Our programs are well supported, but we must keep them on track.

At this time I would like to congratulate Bob Barnhart and all of his officers for a job well done.

Membership is everyone's responsibility, so let us all work with the Membership Team. Our State Commander's Special Project is the "Fisher House." Let's give this project our utmost as it enables family members to be close to their loved ones at stressful times.

Please forward me a copy of your District Meeting dates as I look forward to attending one of your meetings to get to know your District Commanders and members.

The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do!

The only reason people get lost in thought is because it's unfamiliar territory!

2008-2009 Membership



Membership recruiting event of the National Guard at the Adams Mark Hotel in Buffalo, NY on July 12, 2008 where 25 new VFW members were signed up. Pictured L to R: State membership Chairman George Osborne, National Recruiters Dave Czarnecki, Bing C. Reeves, Sr., Dan Kell and new VFW member Two Star General Thomas Sabo signing up.

George Osborne Membership Chairman

Membership is a 24-hour a day job. That does not mean to work every minute on it; but it does mean to keep vigilant and make sure you have membership applications with you to use at a moment's notice.

When you see a young man or woman in a store, in a club or bar or on the street that looks like a possible veteran, ask that person. Don't be afraid to ask, "Are you a veteran and where did you serve?"

Most important, if the person is a veteran, thank them for their service to our country. And then hopefully you can say, "in honor of your service to our country, our VFW Post would like to offer you a free year of membership in the VFW." If you sign up a veteran now, they will get approximately a year and a half out of their free membership.

For every five new members you sign up for the VFW, you will get a State Commander's pin and tie bar. For every 10 members you sign up, you will be entered in a \$100.00 drawing. For every 20 members you sign up, you will get a State Commander's watch.

Post Commanders, Quartermasters and Membership Chairmen: watch the newspapers for returning veterans as a source for new members. Also watch the engagement and marriage columns in your local newspaper for hints that one or the other, possibly both, may be veterans. Also keep an eye open for pictures of military members hung in the local diners and restaurants. Keep your ears open for conversation pertaining to family members who are "over there." Please take a few minutes to interview the people in the conversation and ask if that military member is serving in a combat area and if so, get the parents or spouse to sign that person up for your Post.

Remember, "TEAMWORK IS OUR GOAL!" Let's all work together on returning the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York to a driving force for veteran rights and benefits.

VA Announces Online Claims Applications

WASHINGTON (July 16, 2008) – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that online applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, VA will now process applications received through its online application Web site (VONAPP) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP (www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm) is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans,

survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost and time delays in mail delivery.

VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The online application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

For more information about VA benefits, go to VA's Web site at www.va.gov or call our toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000.



Lloyd H. Creeley

Chairman - Commander's Special Project

It was a great honor for me to be named the Chairman of The Commander's Special Project at the State Convention.

Commander Jack has again selected The Fisher House for the Special Project for the year 2008-2009. There is hope that more Fisher Houses can be opened in New York State and with the number of troops in the Hospital increasing at a very fast pace, the need for this type of facility is very large. I hope everyone will consider giving to this cause.

Between conferences, please mail your Fisher House contribution directly to **VFW State Headquarters, 1044 Broadway, Albany, NY 12204. Make checks payable to the Commanders Special Project.**

The article below is a little information about Zachary Fisher who created The Fisher House. I will be having more information on this in the next issue.

If you have any questions please contact me by phone at: 315-776-8018 or by e-mail at: lloydandcindy@tds.net

Zachary Fisher

Source: http://www.fisherhouse.org/inTheNews/DoingTheirPart_08_16_HC.shtml

Zachary Fisher was born with a heart for the U.S. Armed Forces – a passion that ultimately defined his life. The fruits of Fisher's labor and love bear his name at the Fisher Houses, where family members can stay while attending wounded military members recuperating in hospitals – located on military medical facilities across the nation.

"If he didn't have a penny in his pocket he still would have gone around and done good deeds for the men and women of armed forces," said Fisher House Vice-President of Communications James Weiskopf.

Fisher's wealth and support of the military (which he was unable to join due to health issues) led to the 1990 upstart of the Fisher House, which provided a "home away from home" for families of battle-wounded soldiers and recovering military personnel. Fisher donated more than \$20 million to the construction of these homes, each located within walking distance of every major military hospital facility in America. Because soldiers must report to different hospitals according to specific injury, families must often travel long distances to be with their loved ones.

Weiskopf, retired from the Army as a senior public affairs officer, discovered Fisher House in 1996. He wanted to stay involved with the military and is now in his 11th year. "This is what I want to do until I decide to start drawing social security," he told HUMAN EVENTS.

There are currently 38 Fisher Houses, ranging in size from eight to 21 rooms, and constructed specifically to reflect a "home" experience rather than a hotel. Families share a common dining room and living room area and the homes are maintained by a house manager as well as volunteer staff.

Wendy Gade and her five-year-old daughter Anna Grace lived in a Fisher House for almost a year in 2005 when her husband, Army Captain Daniel Gade, was severely injured in a blast in Ramadi, Iraq.

The Gades were referred to Fisher House by the Army and immediately pursued the opportunity for support when they were uprooted to Washington D.C. where Daniel

would undergo treatment at Walter Reed Hospital.

"It took such an enormous weight off our shoulders," said Wendy Gade. "We didn't have to book flights, we didn't have to call airlines – all we really had to do was pack our bags, get on planes and they took care of the entire thing, including the bill, and really eased our burden."

The cozy atmosphere and mutual support of other families living in the home provided strength for enduring the difficult time in a new place.

"Some days life is really busy but the nice thing about Fisher House is that you don't have to spend a ton of time together because you have a common experience and that's just really powerful because you're there because you want to see your loved one get better," Gade said.

Weiskopf said the strength of the program is the interaction of the families. "They can range from an 18-year-old spouse of a Private to a 65- or 70-year-old spouse of a retired general and everything in between," he said. "Whether it be veterans or retired or still serving, they all have something in common – a loved one in the hospital undergoing treatment for illness, injury or combat wounds."

Daniel Gade, who eventually had his right leg amputated at the hip, now "walks beautifully," according to his wife, using a leg that is powered so it helps propel his leg forward. "He's a very determined person."

Wendy Gade now speaks frequently on behalf of Fisher House. (Her husband has made a strong recovery and is currently working at The White House on behalf of disability policy.)

"Fisher House has done so much and enabled us to have an environment where we could get better," said Wendy Gade. "They gave to us so generously and without question and so lavishly."

The homes boast a 90-100% occupancy rate throughout the year and several are in the process of construction. Families stay for free and the organization stays afloat with donations, fundraisers and trust funds. This year, Fisher House is sponsoring a 199-member team to run the 2007 Marine Corps marathon in D.C. Participants must raise a minimum of \$500 to run, which will go towards the finest homes Fisher can build.

The Fisher House organization has an agreement to build and donate fully-furnished homes if the government agrees they will always use the house for the original purpose. The demand for more homes is consistent and Weiskopf said they will continue building so long as the need is there.

Before Zachary Fisher died in 1999, even in the midst of health decline, he used to call one of the Fisher Houses every day. "We used to put together a schedule and he used to call and talk with the managers and have them put the guest families on so he could chat with them," said Weiskopf.

According to the Web site, Fisher was honored separately by Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Bill Clinton, as well as Margaret Thatcher for his support of charitable organizations. The Fisher House organization also does significant work with partner organizations and recently took over Operation Hero Miles to help generate free plane tickets and other services that may be a financial burden on families.

Harold "Mick" Leavor

State Inspector



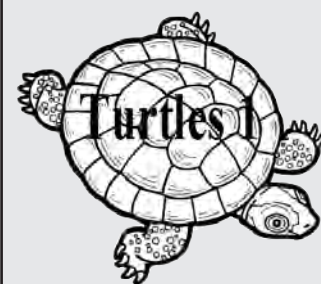
Comrades, the 2008-2009 year has begun and your Inspections should get off to a quick start to avoid the weather in the middle of winter. Bylaws and Manual of Procedure Article VII Sec. 710 require that all Districts, County Councils and Posts be inspected at least once per year. This is also a requirement for all Post Commanders and Quartermasters to receive their white hats from Department at the June 2009 Convention. Some things to keep in mind are: All Post, County, and District Quartermasters must be bonded in the proper amount which should be sufficient enough to include all investments, BONDS, CDs, SAVINGS, ETC.

Also under the National Bylaws you must register at least one Delegate from your Post to the National Convention every year, and this is also mentioned on the

Inspection Form. As mentioned at the Department Convention this year, National Headquarters are not going to let Posts go this year and are going to pull the Post Charter and you will not get it back. All Posts must file a form 990 starting this year no matter how big or small your Post is. If you do not file the Form 990, the IRS can pull your tax-exempt status altogether. You may have to be advised by a tax consultant the first year. To All Deputy Inspectors: Mail ALL COPIES of completed Inspection Reports To: State Inspector, Harold "Mick" Leavor, 2027 Cemetery Hill Road, Franklinville, New York 14737. You may call me with any questions at 716-676-2400.

Thanks,
Mick

Turtle Pond



SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Michael Spellman
 Chairman
 Patriot's Pen Contest

To: ALL Posts, Auxiliaries, County Councils and Districts

Subject: 2008-09 Patriot's Pen Contest

Dear Comrades and Sisters,

I want to thank Department Commander Jack Haight for the re-assignment as this year's Department Chairman of the Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest. I encourage ALL Post and District chairmen to please coordinate your efforts with your Ladies Auxiliary counterpart.

This year the VFW National Organization sent to each Post Quartermaster 2 CDs called VFW Leadership Reference Guide, which contains the VFW Programs and Chairman's Guide. Included in the CD are all the forms and information you will need to run the Patriot's Pen Contest or you can go online to www.VFW.org for the same information.

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, their essay and a clear head and shoulder photograph. **This year's 2008-2009 Patriot's Pen theme is: "Why America's Veterans Should Be Honored"**

All student entries are due at the Post level by November 1, 2008. Your Post judging should be done by November 15, 2008 and you need to pass your winners to your District chairman. The District judging should be completed by December 3, 2008 after which time the winning District entry will be submitted to the Department chairman. The Department judging will be held at the Mal-san-Jones VFW Post 7393 during the week of December 15, 2008.

District Chairmen: The District winner's 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 your district winner's information and the district report form to: **Michael Spellman, 18 Seventh Street, Yorkville, NY 13495**

If you have any questions in regards to this contest, please feel free to call me, or leave a message at **315-736-2456**. Thank you for your support and your participation in the contest. Good luck to all Posts and Auxiliaries. To all the chairmen, please make your deadlines on time, especially at the Department level.

******District Commanders****** Please send me the names, addresses and telephone numbers of your District chairmen. Thank you!

Summit Brings Renewed VA Drive for Women Veterans

Peake: Reinventing to be "Women-Centric"

WASHINGTON (July 11, 2008) – An aggressive push to ensure women veterans receive the highest quality of care in VA medical facilities was pledged by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake at a recent VA National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues.

Although VA already has services for women patients equal to those men receive, Peake told the audience of more than 400 women-veteran advocates, "We are reinventing ourselves by expanding our women-centric focus to initiate new programs that meet the needs of women veterans."

Citing the demographic shift that brings increasing numbers of women to VA for care and the need for changes, Peake announced formation of a work group to focus on women's needs in prosthetics and rehabilitation, hiring women's advocates in VA medical centers, developing quality measurements specifically for women patients, purchasing more state-of-the-art, specialized women's health care equipment, and expanding medical education in women's health for VA care providers.

Summit attendees also learned that VA recently established a work group whose goal is to ensure every female veteran enrolled in VA care has a women's health primary care provider, especially to meet gender-specific needs.

The June 20-22 conference in Washington focused on how to ensure VA meets women-specific health needs and how to inform more women veterans of their VA benefits. It was the fourth women's summit, which VA holds every four years.

Summit co-sponsors included the American Legion Auxiliary, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Other assisting veterans groups included the Blinded Veterans Association, Military Officers Association of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America and TriWest.

Member Benefits: VFW Sponsored VetJobs

Now that you have served your country, let VetJobs serve you! VetJobs will help you and your family members organize a job search, write a resume and prepare for your interviews. They have job opportunities with over 7,000 companies in the United States. This award-winning job site, owned and operated by veterans, provides its services at no charge. Visit the web page: <http://www.vetjobs.com>.

President Signs New GI Bill Into Law

10-year VFW lobbying effort comes to fruition

KANSAS CITY, MO, June 30, 2008 – President Bush's signature today on a new GI Bill for the 21st Century is being hailed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. as a tremendous victory for a new generation of military servicemen and women who have been at war for almost seven years.

"This is a tremendous victory for America's veterans, military and their families," exclaimed VFW national commander George Lisicki, a Vietnam combat veteran from Carteret, NJ.

"I salute Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) for his determination to get this bill passed, the president for his strong support of our military, and the entire VFW membership for their untiring effort to get their congressional delegations to cosponsor S. 22 or its companion bill in the House, H.R. 5740."

The new 21st Century GI Bill will pay the highest in-state public tuition rate, and provide for books, fees, and a living stipend. It eliminates the \$1,200 enrollment fee, extends the use-or-lose benefit requirement from 10 to 15 years, and greatly enhances the amount paid to Guard and Reserve members. The new GI Bill automatically adjusts itself as tuitions increase, and provides a dollar-for-dollar tuition match for private colleges and universities who choose to participate in the program. A new provision added to the bill also allows reenlisting service members to transfer their educational benefit to their spouse and/or children.

The VFW fought doggedly for more than a decade to bring an expanded GI Bill into reality. Lisicki said the long-awaited victory would not have been possible without strong bipartisan support in Congress, the dedicated staff work and grassroots lobbying efforts of the VFW Washington Office, VFW Legislative Committee members, VFW Action Corps, and the entire VFW and Auxiliary membership of 2.3 million.

In 1944, the VFW also played a leading role to shape and bring to fruition the original World War II GI Bill, which is widely regarded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation enacted in the last century. Almost half of the 16 million men and women who served in World War II took advantage of the education benefit, and they returned to federal coffers \$7 for every \$1 dollar spent on their education in the form of higher taxes paid on the higher wages earned.

"Now, 64 years later, the VFW is proud to once again play a key role in the development and passage of a new GI Bill," said Lisicki, "because it's just one more shining example of the VFW fulfilling its mandate of service to others by backing the right piece of legislation that will have the most significant impact."

"Our voices – united toward a common cause – urged America's leaders to reward the gift of education to the men and women who protect our great country," he said. "This is why the VFW is just as relevant today as we were 109 years ago when we were founded. We make a difference."



On Sunday, May 25, 2008 VFW members and their families from the Rankin-Healey VFW Post 4785 gather at the Fort Hamilton Triangle Park where they laid a wreath at the World War I Memorial.



Pictured left to right are two members of the 2007-08 New York membership team Tom Tadaro and Marlene Roll standing with Past Commander-In-Chief Paul Spera and National Recruiter Dave Czarnecki.

Allan Fox

Chairman – Voice of Democracy Contest

To: ALL Posts, Auxiliaries, County Councils and Districts

Subject: 2008-09 Voice of Democracy

Dear Comrades and Sisters,

My name is Allan Fox and I have been a member of the VFW since 1977 and have been involved with the Voice of Democracy Essay Contest as a Post, County Council and District Chairman. I truly believe this program is one of the best things we have going to show our youth what we, as veterans, have done and believe in.

By now each Post Commander should have received a packet from the VFW National Organization with information brochures on the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher Awards. The information was sent a couple of months ago so if you are a new Commander, you might want to ask last year's Commander for the material if you don't have it.

Also, the VFW National Organization sent to each Post quartermaster two CDs called VFW Leadership Reference Guide, which contains the VFW Programs and Chairman's Guide. Included in the CD are all the forms and information you will need to run the Voice of Democracy Contest or you can go online to www.VFW.org for the same information.

Please remember, you do not have to wait until September to start your program. If you know some eligible students, they can start now. The new 2008-09 VFW National Voice of Democracy Theme is:

“Service and Sacrifice by America's Veterans Benefit Today's Youth By...”

Post Chairmen need to provide each student or the teacher who you work with, a copy of the Voice of Democracy brochure/entry form. To participate in the Voice of Democracy Contest, a student needs to submit a completed entry form, their tape of CD, their essay and a clear head and shoulder photograph.

Remember all entries must be at least three minutes long but not longer than five minutes. Check the time of the tape or CD before you mail so your entry isn't disqualified.

All student entries are due at the Post level by November 1, 2008. Your Post judging should be done by November 15, 2008 and you need to pass your winners to your District chairman. **The District judging should be completed in early December and the District winner mailed to me no later than December 10, 2008.**

District Chairmen: Below is a list of the material that needs be forwarded to the Department Chairman:

- District winner's completed official entry form
- Tape/CD of winner's entry (three minutes to five minutes in length)
- District winner's typed essay
- District winner's photograph (clear, close-up head and shoulders picture)

Please send your district winner's information and the district report form to:
Allan L. Fox, 3536 Rt. 89, Seneca Falls, NY 13148.

If you have any questions in regards to this contest, please feel free to call me at **585-295-3847**. Thank you for your support and your participation in the contest. Good luck to all Posts and Auxiliaries.

District Commanders – Please send me the names, addresses and telephone numbers of your District Chairmen. Thank you!



New Editor – Overseas Veteran

Arnie Anderson

I want to thank Commander Haight for the appointment as the Editor of the *Overseas Veteran*. I am positive that **with your help, we** can have a **great newspaper** which will be **loaded with interesting news from all over the state.**

By way of introducing myself to all of you, I am Arnie Anderson and currently serving as a four-time Post Commander of VFW Post 7955 which represents the Towns of Ancram and Copake, NY in southern Columbia County. I am a member of Rip Van Winkle Counties Council where I have served as chairman on many committees and served as Commander in 1996-97. At the District level, I have held a few chairmanships as I advanced through the chairs to be elected District 3 Commander serving during 2007-08. I have served on a couple state and national committees.

My experience as an editor/publisher started with my own Post newsletter named the “SALUTE.” Like other Post newsletters, most of the news is about our Post events and other related veteran articles, helpful to our Post members. Our Post newsletter has won a few awards over the years.

Also over the past few years I have been the editor/publisher of District 3's newsletter named “Notes and Quotes” for which I recently received a 1st Place award from our National VFW Organization.

With the approval from Commander Haight, the first thing I did as the *Overseas Veteran* Editor was change the frequency of the newspaper for three reasons.

- The first and most important was the timing of the first issue which I would have been responsible for. With the ending of the Department Convention on June 29, 2008, I would have had to compile all the articles and send them to the publisher in Milwaukee, WI by July 7th. That would have only given me eight days which was not impossible but all of you deserve a paper that is well-planned and not hurried.
- The second reason I felt the change was necessary was the publication dates will be more in tune with the events and meetings of the Department of New York.
- Finally, the publication and mailing of the newspaper will avoid the holiday rush in December. The new publication months will be July/August, October/November, January/February and April/May.

The look of the paper is going to change over the next couple of years but one of the first changes you will notice will be the front page. It's always been my belief that only the Department Commander's article and other important news should be printed on the front page. The Sr. and Jr. Vice Department Commander's articles will be on pages two and three respectively, while the other Department officers will have their articles spread out amongst the other pages.

One of the columns that I think has been the most beneficial is the local Post news articles. It is great to read the about the events and news from various Posts around the state. The best part about this column is the small and large Posts are encouraged to submit newsworthy information. We want to know what you are doing, and we will let everyone else know by printing it. Don't be shy; however, discretion is advised due to the limited space there is available. I will have an additional article in this newspaper describing how and what you should submit for publication.

I am encouraging all Department Committee Chairmen to submit an article so the members who haven't attended meetings outside their Post or Council or District will know what is happening and why. This newspaper is for everyone to gain some helpful information.

There are many Post, Council and District newsletter editors around the state, and I would like to read your newsletters and newspapers. I know what it is like to be a newsletter editor and be recognized for the work that goes into compiling and organizing information then publishing the final version of the newsletter. I am going to restart the annual publication awards at least at the Post level. I will have to wait and see what happens at the County and District levels. Locally, I have a couple of editors who are willing to volunteer their time to read and judge newsletters.

In this day and age of electronics, some Post editors use .pdf files as a format to send their newsletters however that isn't practical for judging purposes. If you are an editor and you send .pdf files to your members, please print a hard copy and send it to me in regular mail. That way when I hold the publication award judging, the judges will be able to pass your newsletter around. Please send the hard copy of your newsletter to the address listed below.

Dept. of New York – Overseas Veteran Newspaper
Editor Arnie Anderson
94 Rothvoss Road
Ancramdale, NY 12503

Phone: 518-329-7554

E-mail: ATAnderson@fairpoint.net

(The above e-mail address is for *Overseas Veteran* newspaper articles and information ONLY!)

Calling All Bachelor Posts!!

Have you thought of forming a Ladies Auxiliary in your Post?

There are many advantages when a Post votes to allow a Ladies Auxiliary to be formed. Besides the fact that numbers do count when fighting for Veterans' entitlements, a Ladies Auxiliary can offer a helping hand to a Post in many ways.

If interested, please get in touch with me so the process can be started.

Irene Rohde, Chief of Staff
Department of NY Ladies Auxiliary
E-mail: IMallard3@yahoo.com
Phone: 1-845-221-9194



State Sgt.-At-Arms Robert Wasiczko Retires



Pictured L to R: State Sgt.-at-Arms Robert G. Wasiczko, Commander and Robert Barnhart

For his retirement, Sgt.-at-Arms Robert (Bob) Wasiczko was presented with this clock/plaque combination by Commander Robert Barnhart, at the Department Convention in Binghamton, June 26, 2008, for his faithful service to the Department of New York.

Bob joined the United States Marine Corp. on March 9, 1946 at the age of 17. He qualified for the Veterans of Foreign Wars while serving in the Asiatic Pacific.

He has been married to the former Peggy Philpin since 1954. They have three children and four grandchildren. Bob worked in the automobile industry until he retired in 1989.

Bob joined Empire VFW Post 375 in May of 1965 and served as Post Commander from 1968-1969. He has been serving at Post Quartermaster for the past 30 years during which 13 years he was awarded ALL-STATE Post Quartermaster honors.

Being active in both his Council and District, Bob advanced through the chairs of Westchester County Council, and served as Council Commander in 1973-74. In 1980-81, he was elected to serve as District 2 Commander receiving a Distinguished Service Pin for obtaining 100% membership as District Commander.

Also active at the Department level of our organization, Bob has served in many capacities including State Loyalty Day Chairman 1984-85, Speak Up For Democracy Chairman 1988-89, Housing Chairman for OTI, State Assistant Sgt.-at-Arms 1989-1992 and State Sgt.-at-Arms from 1992 to 2008.

He has served as a National Aide-De-Camp two times during 1975-76 and again during 1997-98.

I asked Bob why he was stepping aside and he said at his age, his legs get tired standing for long periods of time. He said it is time to step aside and relax a little. His quiet, yet firm voice has quelled many of the comrade's private discussions during meetings. Sgt.-at-Arms Wasiczko has served the Department of New York well and he will be missed.



Pictured L to R: Newly elected Department of New York Commander Jack Haight and Past National Commander-In-Chief Paul Spera.

Arnie Anderson Receives National VFW Publication Award



L to R: Commander Robert Barnhart and District 3 Commander Arnie Anderson.

The award plaque reads: **FIRST PLACE – 2008 VFW National Publications Contest – District Publications (Medium) – NOTES AND QUOTES – DISTRICT 3 – Arnold Anderson, Editor – Department of New York, VFW**

Anderson has served as the Editor for the District 3 Notes and Quotes Newsletter for the past few years. At the District level, Anderson was not only the editor but the publisher as well. He said that the job was made easier by all the articles that District 3 VFW Officers, Ladies Auxiliary Officers and Chairmen from both organizations provided for the newspaper.

5th District Toasts Commanders



Pictured L to R: Fifth District Commander Dan Maholczko, Dept. Sr. Vice Commander Allan Davenport, Charlotte Haight, Dept. Commander Jack Haight, Dept. Jr. Vice Commander Jack Veazy, Dept. Inspector Harold "Mick" Leavor, Marvin Graham and Wayne Felsheim.

Some members of the 5th District invited the top Department officers to their hospitality room for a toast to celebrate their election.

Past National Commander Paul Spera presents Commander Jack Haight with a plaque from Glen Gardner who will be elected to the high office of National Commander-In-Chief on August 21, 2008 at the VFW National Convention.

The plaque reads: In the Name and by Authority of the National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Whereas, Jack L. Haight, has been duly elected, Commander, Department of New York.

Therefore, Know Ye, that under authority of the National Bylaws of said Organization in such case made and provided, I, the undersigned Commander-In-Chief, do hereby commission said Comrade to rank as



VFW Dept. of New York Historian Rodger Klindt made a presentation at the State Convention to Commander Barnhart. Some of the photo albums he filled with photos and mementoes gathered during Commander Barnhart's year as Department Commander.

Vice Commander of VFW Post 2813 Marvin Jeffcoat, Jr. receives Post 2813's National Military Services Certificate of Recognition from Sr. Vice Commander Jack Haight at the Department Convention in June.



Pictured L to R: Past National Commander-In-Chief Paul Spera (1995-96), Department Commander Robert Barnhart, Past All-American Department of New York Commander Domenick Volpe (1977-78) and Department Life Membership Chairman George Osborne.

With the assistance of George Osborne, Domenick Volpe stepped up on the dais at the Department Convention in June. He walked gingerly to the microphone and began speaking about his favorite subject – VFW Membership! For the next five minutes, Past Commander Volpe owned the microphone as his sometimes shaky voice boomed out the message that every member of the VFW needs to get more proactive and ask the old and new veterans to join our organization. He said we need them to become VFW members so we can continue the fight for our declining veteran rights.

Past Commander Volpe wasn't just saying some words of encouragement, he was talking about a subject that he was very familiar with. During his term of office as New York's Department Commander, Volpe was able to encourage membership recruitment so strongly that 34 out of 35 County Council Commanders were on the ALL-STATE TEAM at the end of his year. That accomplishment has never been duplicated by any other Department Commander since.

such from the twenty-ninth day of June, two thousand and eight. Said Comrade is therefore to discharge faithfully and diligently the duties of said office by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. This commission is to continue in force from day aforesaid from the period of service prescribed by the Bylaws of the Organization unless otherwise lawfully determined and revoked.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the National Organization at National Headquarters, this twenty-first day of August, 2008. It is signed by Glen M. Gardner, Jr., Commander-In-Chief and Adjutant General Allan "Gunner" Kent.

The 89th Department of New York Convention



Joint Opening Ceremony – President Gagnon, Commander Barnhart and Sgt.-at-Arms Wasiczko.



Joint Opening Ceremony – State Color Guard, Rome Post 2246.



Joint Opening Ceremony – Participating with their colors are the District Officers, County Councils and Posts.



Commander Barnhart speaking during Testimonial Dinner on Thursday night.



Commander Barnhart presenting award to Lloyd Creeley, Dennis Sullivan Community Service Chairman.



Sr. Vice Commander Jack Haight and Commander Robert Barnhart.



Newly elected Department Commander Jack Haight receives his Commander's hat from his wife, Charlotte Haight.



Newly elected Department Commander Jack Haight being escorted for swearing-in ceremony.



Newly elected Department Commander Jack Haight takes the Oath of Office with all other Department and District Officers.



Department Commander Jack Haight stands with his family in front of the Binghamton Regency Hotel.



Commander and President's Reception. Pictured L to R: Wayne and Cindy Campbell, Charlotte and Jack Haight.



Line up to do the electric slide at the Commander and President's reception Saturday evening.



Hal Burke, Jr. Department Quartermaster

I would like to thank the members of the Department for your support and the confidence you have placed in me by re-electing me to the office of State Quartermaster. I congratulate Commander Jack Haight and the newly elected Department, District, County Council and Post Officers. I will do my best to support all of you this year. Congratulations to PSC Robert Barnhart and the officers who served with him on an outstanding year.

The membership of the Department continues declining. We all realize that loss of membership has a direct bearing on the Department's revenue stream. The members of the Department worked very hard last year on recruiting new comrades and retaining our current comrades. With all of the effort that was placed in our membership program, unfortunately we experienced a loss of membership. The key to all of our programs is membership; the grass roots are what our organization was built on. We must all make recruiting and retention of membership our number one priority in 2008-09. This year's membership team is under the leadership of George Osborne. I am sure that he and his team will work very hard to be successful in changing the direction of our membership. My challenge to each of the comrades of the Department of New York is to recruit one new active member this year. If that occurs, we can double our membership this year and exceed the 150,000 member mark.

The Department of New York currently is benefiting from financial stability. We have completed the 2007-08 year within budget overall. The Department Officers and members of the Department Council of Administration continue to receive bimonthly and quarterly financial reports. This information is for their review and so that they can disseminate this information to their District, Council and Post membership.

The Internal Revenue Service is coming. The presentation made by the I.R.S. at the February 2008 Conference was very well received and provided many of our comrades and Auxiliary members with very valuable information on filing requirements for non-profit organizations. The final filing date for this year's 990 is November 15, 2008 (for most Posts). We have arranged to have a similar seminar at this year's Fall Conference. Tentatively we are planning to hold the seminar on Friday afternoon beginning at 2:00 p.m. and concluding at 4:30 p.m. This seminar will be open to all VFW, Ladies and Men's Auxiliary members. Details will be included in the Conference mailing. The information should be mailed out early August 2008.

I value the support I have received from the Department Line Officers, the Council of Administration, the Past State Commanders and Comrades of the Department of New York during my tenure as State Quartermaster. I pledge my continued service to the officers and members of the Department of New York as I have for the past 36 months. Once again, thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as the Department Quartermaster.

If I can ever be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am at headquarters on Tuesdays and Fridays at 518-463-7427.

2008 FALL CONFERENCE

The only information available at this time is that the Fall Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool, NY on October 17-19, 2008. The more detailed information will be mailed at a later date.

Melvin Garrett State Judge Advocate

Congratulations, comrades for your election to office. One of the first things you should do is to acquaint yourself thoroughly with your duties as an officer.

The congressional charter which contains the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and the Ritual will help you to better understand your responsibilities. (Make sure you purchase the latest updated copy from the VFW store.)

Article: 4 Sec. 406 Manuel of Procedure, Mandates that: Districts shall hold at least one (1) regular meeting each year for the purpose of promoting schools of instruction for Post officers and for discussion of problems affecting the welfare of members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other matters as may be appropriate to the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

To further strengthen your leadership role, you should take advantage of the Officers Training Institute (OTI) in your district. The OTI will make your year easier to manage.

Problems in most of the Post generates over a long time because members fail to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the congressional charter.

Attending meetings of the county council, district, department conferences, department and national Conventions will certainly improve your knowledge of our organization.

As the presiding officer you will be expected to render some tough and difficult decisions. So make sure you carefully research the information in order to decide on the right course of action.

We are experiencing a lot of non-compliance activity because many of our Posts are not adhering to the Bylaws and the Ritual. Another noticeable concern is eligibility.

It is extremely important that you check the DD214s or any other document very carefully. If not, this could be embarrassing to both the member and the organization.

When in doubt, seek the help of someone with thorough knowledge of the VFW.

"Have a successful and productive year."

Vaness-Strollo VFW Post 1602 Host Ham Dinner



Standing (L-R): VFW Auxiliary VAVS Rep. Vida Martaus, Post 1602 Ladies Auxiliary Treasurer JoAnn Patari, Post Commander Wilbur Gray, Auxiliary Dinner Chairman Bernie Johnson and Henry Bauner.

Vaness-Strollo VFW Post 1602 in Batavia hosted a ham dinner with all the trimmings for about 20 patients from the Batavia VAMC.

William Schmitz Department Surgeon

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all that supported me for my reelection for the second year in a row to Dept. Surgeon, and for endorsing me as the Dept. of NY candidate to run for National Surgeon General. It is an honor to serve you and yours, and a pleasure to be a member of this outstanding veterans organization. A special congratulation to all elected officers, and appointed comrades on all levels of our VFW.

In excess of seven teen thousand miles traveled as surgeon, visiting all the VA hospitals in VISN #2, several clinics, and vet centers. NYS consists of two V VISNS #2 and #3, #3 also covers New Jersey, and there are a total of twenty two VISNS. In my travels I found that there are what they refer to as MAC meetings, basically that's upper VA management meetings, and we are lacking representation in those meetings, that was quickly taken care of by PSC Barnhart. Each VA hospital has some form of periodic meeting which VSO's (veteran service organizations) are invited to attend, several are lacking in VFW attendance, and I'm working on that and will appraise Cmdr. Haight of my findings. VFW attendance in these meetings results in a better understanding of what is going on in OUR VA'S. I have consulted with comrades in VISN #3 (down state), and plan my next set of tours in that area.

One of our functions as a VSO is to respect the VA's chain of command, augment there functions, support them in caring for veterans and there families, bring concerns to them in a respectful manner, and never refuse to sit down and talk with them. To be comfortable in our own authority, which rests in our organization and not in there. They have been charged in taking care of us, and need to ask as if. We are charged in assisting them and not dictating to them, we need to act as if. The strength of our organization rests in our numbers and there unity, when we speak on issues with that strength, mountains can move and things that can't, won't and never will be, can become a reality.

I look forward to working with you this year, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Fred Schwally 2007-08 Buddy Poppy Chairman

In 2007, the Buddy Poppies purchased through the Department of New York exceeded the quota for the first time in the 21st century. Unfortunately, we were not able to repeat that again this year.

Posts in the Department of New York purchased 534,500 Buddy Poppies in 2008 and our goal was 650,000 Poppies. We missed our goal by 115,500 Poppies.

Even though we didn't make our goal in 2008, we need to move on and the new goal to reach for 2009 will be 700,000 Buddy Poppies.

Your Post will be receiving a Buddy Poppy order form soon. Please get your orders in right away so your Post can have Buddy Poppies for Veterans Day.

PLEASE REMEMBER Article Deadline For Next Issue: OCTOBER 15, 2008

You don't have to wait until the deadline to send your article. I will be setting up the paper as I receive the information from officers, chairmen and Posts.

All-State Awards Post Commanders and Quartermasters

POST	COMMANDER	QUARTERMASTER
44	Francis Day	Paul Graves
170	Mike Burke	Tony Strzynieri
202	Daniel LaBarge	William Sipech
369	James Forkhamer	Donald Babcock
375	Joseph Porcelli	Robert Wasiczko
400	Sidney Lynn	James Martin
439	Peter Parente	Frank Hoffman
455	Thomas Bennet	Richard Gales
524	Alexander Meholezo	Richard Teets
672	Arthur Hanley III	Louis Gasparini
686	Bruce Ronk	Robert E. Barnhart
962	William West	Terrance Taylor
982	Frank Northup	Robert Thomas
1019	David Stephany	Allan Davenport
1161	Donald Ruckdeschel	Steve Fanizzi
1314	Dean Melino	Randy Staats
1323	Richard Tift	Thomas Durling
1369	Howard Clarkson	John Mave
1418	Earl Robinson	William Martin, Jr.
1449	William Baker	James Tarantino
1470	Daniel Lennon	George Osborne
1545	Ronald DeLong	Christopher Mattiace
1611	August Zurenda	John Zurenda
1708	Ralph Astarita	James Bruno
2064	James Demilo	Fred Kratz
2285	Robert Foster	Anthony Cuzhea
2475	Martin Floyd	Carl Fosco
2670	Gilbert Coutlele	Philip Smith
2674	Bobby Estes	Mike Lisowski
2721	Terry Perry	Jokl Vanik
2837	Bernard Stutman	Ronald Hallinan
3220	Greg Muller	Eugene Krein
3350	Joseph McCarthy	Robert Jacoby
4927	Dennis Sullivan	Donald Doell
5034	Joe Fisco	Clarence Gardner
5088	Donald Mackey	William Cary
5218	David Robling	Dennis Ambrose
5260	Joseph Lightcap	Larry Snyder
5808	Eric Nystrom	William Lazarus
6001	Sean McGuirl	Steve Rys
6338	Mike Webster	James Reilly
6396	Eugene Bryant	Herbert Moultrie
6433	Wayne Campbell	Barbara Calarco
7062	Cliff Lockwood	Art Stanton
7227	Randall Goehan	Hamond Dingman
7291	Ronald Thomas	Mike Paschel
7336	Israel Rivera	Thomas Mazza
7338	John Clark	Harry Fisher
7393	Ken Hunter	Mike Spellman
7414	John Ambrose	Francis Mooney
7466	Merritt Cropsey	
7765	William Moore	James Brennan
7955	Arnold Anderson	Richard Clark
8104	Mike Hughes	Ellen Prinzi
8158	Fredrick Gentz	William Randall
8213	Joseph Zeni	Sal Cafiero
8645	Terry Meyer	William Mertes
8691	Dom De Lura	Harold Williams
8692	Robert LaDuke	Robert Clingerman
8726	William Quinn	Rodney LeFrois
8734	Stanley Board	Kenneth Farnham
8961	Joseph Little	Donald Thompson
9218	David Dunn	Bruce Mullenax
9251	George Whitfield	Vern Warfield
9263	Fred Amore	Eugene Orlandi
9314	Thanddeus Siminski	James Tille
9486	Richard Lutz	Andres Veiga
9595	Frank Stanley	James Wilson
11118	Jeffery Mason	Irwin Brodell

2007-2008 All-State Award County Council Commanders

POST **Captain of All-State County Commanders**
6200 John Gister
Fingerlakes County Council

All-State Team

6776 Rich Battibulli
Albany County Council

391 Robert Ulrich
Putnam County Council

170 Sakima A. G. Brown
Dutchess County Council

Wilbur Gray 2007-08 Bowling Chairman

Post 2670 in Geneva, NY hosted the 3rd Annual VFW Department of New York and its Ladies Auxiliary mixed bowling tournament.

This year's tournament had a total of:

28 Team Events

50 Doubles Events

100 Single Events

91 All Events

Below is a list of the winners.

1st Place TEAM HDCP

Cuba Post 2721 – Team #2

Carol Schaffer

Patricia Kunz

Becky Murphy

Elise Kunz

1st Place TEAM SCRATCH

Perinton Post 8495 – Team #3

Jerry Grupp

Dave Crawford

Don McLean

William Coene

1st Place DBLS HDCP

Ovid Post 6200

B. Licak

B. Gerlack

1st Place DBLS SCRATCH

Dansville Post 6780

S. Folts

B. McKeown

1st Place SINGLES HDCP

Cuba Post 2721

Penny Boser

1st Place SINGLES SCRATCH

Hamburg Post 517

Joe Schuler

1st Place ALL EVENTS HDCP

Ovid Post 6200

Bob Gerlach

1st Place SINGLES SCRATCH

Hamburg Post 517

Joe Schuler

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Post Tournament Director Al Fox, Post 2670 and its Ladies Auxiliary for their hospitality and a job well done.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wilbur Gray

Honoring of United States Flag

H.R. 4986: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, signed into law 28 Jan 2008.

SEC. 594. CONDUCT BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS OUT OF UNIFORM DURING HOISTING, LOWERING, OR PASSING OF UNITED STATES FLAG.

Section 9 of title 4, United States Code, is amended by striking 'all persons present' and all that follows through the end of the section and inserting the following: 'all persons present in uniform should render the military salute.

Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.'

Submitted by:

Gary Flaherty

Ret. Command Sergeant Major

Post 8266



Contact Info for Your Elected Representatives in Washington

Senator Hillary Clinton

P.O. Box 47

Nyack, NY 10960

845-613-0076

Fax: 845-613-0110

Senator Charles Schumer

One Park Place, Suite 100

Peekskill, NY 10566

914-734-1532

Fax: 914-734-1673

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2008-2009

Overseas Veteran

Information for Newspaper Article Submissions and Deadlines

The *Overseas Veteran* will be published four times a year during the months of July/August/September, October/November/December, January/February/March and April/May/June. Below is the list of the publication months followed by the **last day** for submission of articles. Please submit your articles **before the dates** listed below:

- July/August/September Newspaper – **July 15, 2008**
- October/November/December Newspaper – **October 15, 2008**
- January/February/March Newspaper – **January 15, 2008**
- April/May/June Newspaper – **April 15, 2008**

To encourage more participation from Posts, Councils and Districts around the state, I have developed some guidelines for submission of news articles. Please review and follow them when sending your news.

- Looking for VFW-oriented newsworthy articles from each level of our VFW Organization which would be of interest to our members. Examples include: VFW sponsored functions, VFW individuals receiving or presenting awards, VFW community service projects, VFW youth activity awards, etc.
- **Keep it simple** – is best! I have set up a special e-mail address to receive only the articles for the *Overseas Veteran*. I prefer that news articles be e-mailed with any pictures of the event(s) attached to the e-mail so everything comes at once.
- Please don't e-mail your article for publication in .pdf format. Please refer to the next two items below.
- Please submit a "short" written article due to space limitations in the paper. All articles may be subject to editing. Please e-mail your **MS Word** article to the e-mail address below.
- When sending a picture with your article, please make sure the picture is in .jpg picture format and add it to the e-mail as a separate attachment. Do not include the picture in your MS Word document. The picture you send can be fully captioned with names and description of event, at the top of the MS Word document or in the e-mail.
- Finally, it would be helpful if the person sending the news article provided their name and a phone number in case there are any questions. It would be great to have all the correct information before the article is published.

All articles and pictures should be e-mailed to:

Arnie Anderson

Subject line should have:

Post number – or – Overseas Veteran Article

E-mail: ATAnderson@fairpoint.net

(the above e-mail address is for Overseas Veteran Newspaper information ONLY!)

Membership Recruiting at County Fairs

I would like to remind all Membership Team Members, National Recruiters, District Commanders, Council Commanders and Membership Chairmen that they should plan to set up a VFW Membership Recruiting Booth at your local county fair. This is a great place to get a lot of exposure and meet and sign up new members and possibly pick up some re-instated members.

George Osborne
Membership Chairman

Soldiers and Their Service Dogs

Sue Downes and Service Dog Lila

Sue, a military police officer, became disabled when an IED exploded while she was on a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan. Her Service Dog Lila, who was raised in the JJ Moran Correctional Facility, provides the balance she needs when she walks with her two prosthetic legs. In the evening when Sue removes her legs and becomes sedentary, Lila retrieves articles for her. Because both Sue and Lila are blondes, the veterans at Walter Reed who have seen this dynamic team have nicknamed them "Blonde on Blonde." Sue is the first woman veteran in the country to receive a Service Dog.

Source: http://www.neads.org/services_new/military_dog.shtml



Pictured L-R: Sue Downes, Lila, Ruthie and Chris.

Christopher Strickland and Service Dog Ruthie

"The war took away the sight in one of my eyes, my arm and the mobility in my legs but when I got my Service Dog Ruthie I felt like a soldier again."

These words so eloquently spoken by 22-year-old retired Sergeant Christopher Strickland describe the close bond between him and his Service Dog Ruthie.

Chris was injured in Iraq when an IED exploded. His mom and young wife rushed to his side at Walter Reed Medical Center and cared for his daily needs. Used to being very independent, he decided to apply for a Service Dog to help him. When "Ruthie" arrived he was able to send his mom and wife back home and move back into the barracks.

"Ruthie" was there to pick up anything he dropped and act as a "walking cane" helping him get around. She helped in other ways, too. When having a bad day and not wanting to get out of bed, Ruthie would bring a toy to his bedside and "make" him get up.

Chris retired from the army in January and moved back to Connecticut where he lives with his wife and infant son, Bradley. Chris takes care of Bradley and exclaims that "Ruthie is another parent." When Chris is holding his son, he sends Ruthie to the refrigerator to get a bottle for him. Ruthie does so and even closes the refrigerator door. Chris can be quoted as saying "Ruthie is more valuable to me than my prosthetic arm."

With over 35,000 wounded veterans, Service Dogs like Ruthie will be in great demand. This new



population of disabled veterans is young, athletic and spirited. They do not want canes and crutches or the "typical" assistance devices. They would rather have Service Dogs.

For more information about the NEADS Canine for Combat Veterans Program contact Sheila O'Brien at sobrien@neads.org or 978-422-9064, ext. 11. (Author: Sheila O'Brien)

40th Bomb Group Association – U.S. Air Force

The 40th Bomb Group Association (XX Air Force) will hold its 29th and final Annual Reunion in St. Louis, Missouri on October 16-20, 2008.

40th members from the Caribbean, U.S., CBI or Pacific are encouraged to attend at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel, 141 Westport Plaza, St. Louis.

There will be a Memorial Service and there will be socializing, tours of the Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, Gateway Arch and other entertainment.

For more details, please contact:
Ms. Jean Suitt
10336 Brangus Drive
Crowley, TX 76036
Phone: 1-800-959-2582
E-mail address is: jsuitt@crescent.com

Cletus M. Nelson, Secretary
40th Bomb Group Association
5822 Constitution Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533
Phone: 707-426-2991

VFW Demands Accountability Over Chantix Issue

WASHINGTON, July 8, 2008 – “Enough is enough,” said George J. Lisicki, the national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., in response to today’s *Washington Times* article that provides additional information about the potential lethal effect a prescribed drug is having on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder-diagnosed veterans who volunteered for a Department of Veterans Affairs smoking cessation program.

“Those in the VA who failed to properly notify America’s veterans that their medication could produce fatal side effects must resign their positions,” said Lisicki, a Vietnam combat veteran from Carteret, NJ. “If not, then the VA secretary must take decisive action to terminate their employment.”

The VA’s smoking cessation research program uses the drug Chantix, which Food and Drug Administration officials say helps people to stop smoking. But according to a June 17 *Washington Times/ABC News* investigative report, Chantix has also been linked nationally to almost 40 suicides and more than 400 incidents of suicidal behavior. The drug’s manufacturer and the FDA have recently cautioned healthcare providers about adverse side effects that could produce changes in behavior ranging from anxiety and depression to suicide.

As reported last month, all 940 veterans enrolled in the VA’s smoking cessation program have PTSD. A test group of 143 was selected to receive Chantix, also known as Varenicline. However, as the *Washington Times* revealed this morning, the VA actually had 241 veterans participating in the Chantix test group – 68 percent more than they originally acknowledged – and 75 of them had reported 114 serious adverse side effects, to include 22 psychiatric events.

In addition to the 241 PTSD-diagnosed veterans in the smoking cessation program, the VA had also prescribed Chantix to 32,000 other eligible veterans. The *Washington Times* reported that an internal VA review – that began last October and concluded in mid-March – found that 27 veterans were admitted to VA hospitals for psychiatric problems, 11 had attempted suicide, one attempted homicide, nine had suicidal thoughts, and six were suffering from hallucinations.

Lisicki questions why VA clinicians, who knew of Chantix’s hazardous side effects, would allow any patient to continue taking it. “Professional ethics and common sense just dictates that clinicians would stop their patients from taking the drug just to err on the side of safety for the veterans and their families,” he said.

On May 21, the Federal Aviation Administration banned the use of Chantix by airline pilots and air traffic controllers. On May 30, the VA issued a bulletin to warn against operating heavy machinery while using Chantix because of the potential for impairing side effects ranging from loss of consciousness and seizures to hallucinations. On June 18, the VA updated its guidelines to doctors for prescribing Chantix, and on June 19, almost nine months after the VA first began collecting data on the potential side effects of Chantix, the VA issued a letter to warn its 32,000 patients of possible suicidal side effects.

The VFW national commander also questions the leadership ability of those who oversee these types of medical research programs, asks why the VA doesn’t have a solid handle on the correct number of patients it prescribes medications to under medical research conditions, and wonders what other information has yet to be uncovered. Aside from Chantix, other drugs reportedly used to treat veterans with PTSD are the anticonvulsant Divalproex, and the antidepressants Paroxetine, Mirtazapine and Citalopram, all of which carry warnings of potential suicidal side effects.

“The VA is known for quality healthcare that is delivered by highly trained and educated medical professionals and staff, but in recent months, the American public has read stories accusing the department of not properly taking care of veterans with mental health problems, to include veterans attempting suicide under VA care. These stories, to include the well-documented veterans’ claims backlog, are having a negative cumulative effect on the overall image of the VA,” said Lisicki.

“This Chantix issue thrown into the mix indicates to me that it is time for massive changes within the VA, because there is ample evidence of a serious lack of leadership, management and accountability within the organization,” he said.

Lisicki said this problem is not new, nor is it political, because elected leaders from both sides of the aisle have called for accountability; they just have not seen it coming from VA leadership.

“VA Secretary James Peake is an honorable professional who has only been at VA for seven months, but it is obvious that those he has entrusted to help him carry out VA’s mission are not doing their jobs,” he said.

“The VFW and I, and probably most Americans, firmly believe that veterans have earned the right to better care than what was provided by the VA program managers and clinicians in this smoking cessation research program. These people knew for months that the use of Chantix could produce potentially lethal side effects in veterans diagnosed with PTSD, yet they did nothing to warn their patients. They must be terminated because they failed to do the right thing for veterans.”

Lisicki also wants Congress to more aggressively exercise their oversight role of the VA, and to hold VA officials accountable when they do not receive full and timely answers to their questions. He said Congress should also look into the FDA’s notification procedures for alerts and product recalls, with hopes of ensuring that patients, as well as clinicians, are notified when alerts are published.

“Those who are entrusted to care for America’s heroes must be held to a much higher standard than others,” said Lisicki. “It is painfully obvious that many in VA leadership positions are not capable of that standard. America’s veterans of all wars deserve better.”

Source: <http://www.vfw.org/index.cfm?fa=news.newsDtl&did=4627>

2007-08 State Color Guard



The State Color Guard stand waiting and ready to advance the Colors at the testimonial dinner of the Department Convention held in Binghampton during June. The State Color Guard are members of VFW Post 2246 located in Rome, New York.

Fully Paid Outward Bound Wilderness Excursions for OEF/OIF Veterans

The Sierra Club and The Sierra Club Foundation, are offering a tremendous opportunity for adventure and self-discovery to our veterans of combat operations in Afghanistan OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) and Southwest Asia OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom).

Outward Bound, an international nonprofit outdoor education program, is offering fully funded outdoor adventure excursions to all OEF/OIF veterans. It doesn’t matter what your current military status is (active, inactive, discharged, retired) – you’re eligible to attend as long as you deployed in support of OEF/OIF combat operations while in the military.

These five-day excursions offer adventure activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, canyoneering, canoeing and dog sledding in beautiful wilderness areas in Maine, Texas, Colorado, California and Minnesota. Scheduled courses from Sep 08-Feb 09 are listed below, and future courses will be scheduled soon. All expedition costs for lodging, equipment, food and instruction are completely funded by a multi-million dollar Sierra Club grant, including the participants’ round-trip transportation between home and the wilderness site. The excursion is offered at no cost to the participant.

To sign up for one of the prescheduled courses, please contact Doug Hayward at 1-866-669-2362, ext. 8387, or simply e-mail him at obvets@outwardbound.org.

To learn more about the OEF/OIF program, visit the Web site at www.outwardboundwilderness.org/veterans.html. You can also contact two of our retired Judge Advocates, Joe and Amy Frisk, who are working for Outward Bound on this incredible program at vetsor@outwardbound.org, or at 303-968-4420.

OPEN ENROLLMENT COURSES FOR 2008/2009 OUTWARD BOUND OEF/OIF WAR VETERANS EXPEDITIONS

September 3-7, 2008

October 4-8, 2008

Leadville, Colorado: Backpacking and Rock Climbing in the Colorado Rockies

October 7-11, 2008

October 19-23, 2008

Newry, Maine: Backpacking and Canoeing

November 2-6, 2008

November 15-19, 2008

Big Bend, Texas: Backpacking and Canyoneering

December 3-7, 2008

December 14-18, 2008

Joshua Tree National Monument, California: Backpacking and Rock Climbing

February 3-7, 2009

Ely, Minnesota: Dog Sledding

“Reverent” Ben Thompson, PSC



L-R: PSC Ben Thompson, Commander Robert Barnhart.

“Can you give me an Amen?” asked Ben Thompson of the members present at the Department Convention during his nomination and endorsement of Father R. P. Kane.

In his most “reverent” manner, Past State Commander Thompson proceeded to call upon all in attendance to support and endorse Father Kane for his advancement to the high office of National Chaplain. There was a resounding roar of “AMEN” from the comrades.

Ben didn’t stop there. He went on to state only part of Father Kane’s contributions to his God and country. If PSC Thompson had tried to cover all of Father Kane’s accomplishments and contributions, we would still be sitting there today listening!

When the vote was taken for the Department of New York to endorse and support Father R. P. Kane for advancement to the high office of VFW National Chaplain, there was a resounding – “YES!”

Post 1545 – Celebrating the 4th of July



Post 1545 members recently participated in a dedication of a WWII Memorial in Coxsackie, NY.

Carthage VFW Post 7227 Gone Fishin’ With Veterans



L-R: SSgt. Brian T. Wood (served in Iraq 2005-06, was wounded in action December 13, 2005, Purple Heart Recipient) and Dakota Wood, age 10.



Dexter – Lake Ontario: L-R is PFC Justin C. Taylor, F Co. 2/10th Aviation and PV2 Michael A. Wilson, F Co. 2/10th Aviation.

Members of VFW Post 7227 take veterans from their surrounding area and from Fort Drum out fishing each weekend to give them some rest and relaxation.

Both the Dodge Durango and the boat are painted with the Post number and the VFW logo to set it apart from any other vehicle. The Post has a Power Point presentation of veterans fishing from the boat which they proudly e-mailed to show how the boat is well used.

One more way a local VFW Post is taking care of our veterans’ needs.

State Commander Haight’s Car 2008 Pontiac Torrent



Commander and President’s Homecoming



L-R: Skip and Cindy Campbell, NYS Assemblyman Robert Oaks and Jack and Charlotte Haight.



L-R: New York Senator Michael Nozzolio, Jack and Charlotte Haight, Cindy Campbell and Assemblyman Robert Oaks.

ROTC Candidates Get Send Off



Post 2813 – On Saturday July 12, 2008 incoming freshman of the NU class of 2012 began their journey to the “Hill” and “Corps of Cadets” during the Annual NYC NU Club’s “Freshman Send-off” and BBQ. The John V. Daniels Jr. VFW Post No. 2813 in

Woodside, NY hosted the event. Alumni Dave Fielding ’07, ’88 Director of Alumni and Family Relations Bill Passalacqua, Mike Wilhelm ’98, Ed Whitley ’58, VFW members William (Caudal Canal Bill) Clausman PPC, Aide to State Senator Maltese Gene Burch, Marvin R. Jeffcoat ’04 and Jim McBride were on hand to provide their future alumni and comrades refreshments, music and their common experience. As each incoming freshman described their intended course of instruction, ROTC program parents, alumni and VFW members applauded them as they prepare to enter the Corps of Cadets and service to our great Nation.



PDC Luther Reid received the Certificate of Recognition on behalf of his Post 1653 for their participation in the VFW National Military Services Program.

Dedicated to Serving Our United States Military and Our Veterans!

In God We Trust! God Bless America!