

# NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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



2009  
July/August/September

*"All right, they're on our left, they're on our right, they're in front of us, they're behind us...they can't get away this time."*—Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC

Volume 28,  
Issue 4

## Allan E. Davenport Department Commander



With our state Convention in Buffalo behind us, I want to thank all the comrades for electing me to the high office of State Commander.

I have made some changes, hopefully most of them will work. I am a sixty-three-year-old Vietnam veteran with dreams of getting back to the basic things for which our organization was formed. Fighting for our rights and benefits, while fighting for

the soldiers coming home from our present, and future wars.

This year our Legislative team will be taking a different approach. We plan on meeting with our state legislators at least five times this year, instead of the way we have been meeting. Most of all we are going to make sure they are in town, and in their office to talk to us. Our Veterans service team has always done a good job for us and I believe they will do even better working with the Legislative team.

Membership has fallen off in the past decade, therefore we must do better and make it grow again as we did for so many years in the past. I have a very good team, three young women, and two well-informed Vietnam Veterans to share their talents, and embrace the new way we need to attract the veterans today. All this goes back to my main idea to work with our legislators – we need growth to make them listen – remember 'strength in numbers.' I am very familiar with all the different types of members we have. We have active ones, ones that only make it to meetings a few times, and the biggest numbers of those who can't, or don't want to be, anything but a member. All types of members are important. The non-active member is the most prominent, but we need them to keep our numbers strong, so we can again have the strength to meet with our legislators on your behalf. I promise to do my best to lead, represent and give dignity to our organization.

My special project is Parson's Child and Family Center. It's a campaign to help children have a better life. I'm sure my chairman will inform you in his plea for help in this issue.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the largest combat organization in the world; let's keep it that way. All of you must know someone, or will meet someone who has served somewhere in a combat area. Just ask, they are waiting for you to do that. Believe me, I meet at least 10 or more every year.

Thank you, I will do my best, but I need everyone's help to get back to what we started this Veterans organization for, over a hundred years ago.

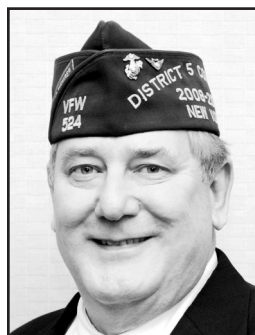
Congratulations to Commander Jack Haight and his officers; some of which are still here and some not elected or appointed again this term. I will miss them, as they have given so much of themselves to our organization. I hope to see all of you in my travels.

## 2009-2010 Top Department Officers



*Pictured above are the newly elected officers of the Department of New York. Pictured, L-R: Sr. Vice Commander Jack Veazy, State Commander Allan E. Davenport and Jr. Vice Commander Harold Leavor.*

## Dan Meholczo Commander's Special Project Chairman



Commander Allan Davenport has chosen as his special project "Parsons Child and Family Center" located on Academy Road in Albany, N.Y.

It first opened its doors December 2, 1829, as the "Society for the Relief of Orphan and Destitute Children of the

City of Albany," later called "Albany Orphan Asylum," then "Albany Home for Children."

In the beginning it was to get children off the streets, that were orphaned or homeless

because their parents couldn't afford to feed and house them, and there was no one else to care for them.

Since that time, the definition of "orphaned and destitute children" has changed. So, too, has Parsons changed – adapting it's services to now serve children who are emotionally disturbed, have experienced trauma, are behaviorally troubled, have learning disabilities or are in need of a home, including short-term crisis reprieve care.

Parsons is a not-for-profit home for children. It receives no government funding. It relies on donations and endowments from corporations and people who are willing to donate money to keep the

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



**Editor:**  
  
**Arnie Anderson**

**INSIDE  
this  
NYSOV**



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## New York State Overseas Veteran

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### \*\* POLICY

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\*\* **Editor** is looking for VFW-oriented newsworthy articles from all levels 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.

\*\* **PLEASE e-mail your short news articles in MS Word and attach a picture to the e-mail as a separate attachment (if available) in .jpg picture format.** The picture you send can be fully captioned with names and description of event, at the top of your MS Word article. **Please include with the article: The name and phone number of the person sending the news article, in case there are questions.**

\*\* **Editor: reserves the right to edit any article for length or grammar and to reject any article which may be deemed not to meet current editorial needs.**

\*\* **ALL ARTICLES AND PICTURES SHOULD BE E-MAILED TO: ATAnderson@fairpoint.net** (the above e-mail address is for Overseas Veteran Newspaper information ONLY!) **E-mail subject line should have:** Post number - or - Overseas Veteran Article

\*\* **Mail - Post, Council and District Newsletters to:** NYS Overseas Veteran, Editor Arnie Anderson, 94 Rothvoss Road, Ancramdale, NY 12503 (518) 329-7554

\*\* The firm and final article submission deadlines for the next newspaper will be posted in a highlighted box within this newspaper.

\*\* **Graphic Design & Layout:** American Graphics & Design, Inc. - [www.agad.com](http://www.agad.com)  
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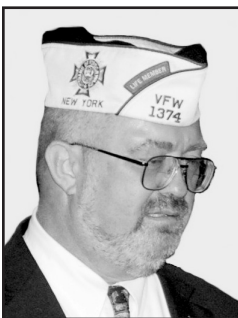
## Jack Veazy Sr. Vice Commander



Having returned from State Convention and being elected Sr. Vice Commander, I would like to thank you for having the confidence that I will carry on the duties of this position. I will be attending the National Convention in Phoenix in August. When I return, we have a great deal of work that has to be done. But with great team effort, we can move bridges.

Many Comrades have great ideas. Please step up to the plate and let's talk about your issues. Remember - you put your life on the line while you served in the military, and now we have a wonderful Veterans Organization.

## Karl Rohde Department Quartermaster



You may or may not know it, but the State of New York has a new Quartermaster. That new Quartermaster is me, Karl R. Rohde, PSC. The assumption of this venture comes with both pride and a dose of humbleness. It is without a doubt a daunting job, but one I am eager to take on. In my campaign letter seeking this position I stated, "this is not a job I sought." That should not translate into meaning that I am not capable of being the Quartermaster of this great Department.

Upon joining the VFW, I told the Post Senior Vice Commander (the man who recruited me), not to ask me to hold any position in the VFW. Well, we all know that commitment did not last very long. Every position that I have held in the VFW, at every level, I have done to the very best of my ability and gave 100%. Each of you can expect no less from me as your State Quartermaster.

There is little for me to put in this issue. My new e-mail as Quartermaster is: [QMNY@rocketmail.com](mailto:QMNY@rocketmail.com). This is the beginning of a new VFW year and everyone is eager to get off to a great start. That great start may include an invitation to the State Commander to visit your Post, County Council or District. All invitations must go through State Headquarters. The Commander decides on all assignments. This aids in keeping it clear as to who may receive a voucher for travel to an assignment. So please send all invitations to State Headquarters.

If there are any questions that you have, do not hesitate to contact me. The best way is via e-mail. If I do not know the answer, I will get an answer for you. We are all comrades, and we all have a say in how our VFW should operate.

## Priority Group 8 Enrollment Relaxation Changes

VA eligibility rules changed on June 15, 2009, making it easier for more Veterans to enroll in VA's health care system. Under this new regulation, VA relaxed income restrictions on enrollment for health benefits. While this new provision does not remove consideration of income, it does increase income thresholds.

A Web-based calculator is available for Veterans to enter their income information, dependents and zip code to assess if their income would fall within the proposed income threshold adjustments. Veterans are encouraged to contact VA's Health Resource Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit the VA health eligibility Web site for more information.

## MASH BASH - Fundraiser

Sponsored by and held at: VFW Post 4927  
31 Horseblock Road, Centereach, NY  
All proceeds go to: "HONOR FLIGHT LONG ISLAND"  
Date: Saturday, September 26, 2009  
Time: 8:00 p.m.  
Price: \$40.00 per person  
Includes: Buffet, beer, wine and soda  
Dress Code: Dress in character or casual  
For more information, call: 631-585-7390  
**PLEASE ATTEND & SUPPORT A GOOD CAUSE!**

## Harold Leavor Jr. Vice Commander



I'd like to thank all the delegates that voted at the 90th VFW Department Convention in Buffalo, along with all the County Councils and Districts across our Great Department of New York, for electing me to the high office of Junior Vice Commander. Thank You, Comrades.

We'll all be there to support our State Commander Allan Davenport in all his endeavors across the Department of New York. Now is the time to get out to your various Posts, and start working on your inspections and community activity reports. There are still quite a few Posts that have to get back to basics and work on all their programs. Read your commanders' booklets, so you do not miss the deadline on many of your programs along with Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, teachers, trustee reports, etc.

We all need to work on membership and bring the Department of New York back to where it was in the membership standings across the country. Not too many years ago, our Department had over 100,000 members. Let's get out there and recruit new members, along with reinstating former members. We all have a job to do.

Congratulations to Commander Jack Haight along with all his line officers and chairmen. Hope to see many of you in my travels across the Department this year.

## Verl Ringgenberg Department Boy Scout Chairman

Eagle Scouts, Venture Silver Award recipients or Sea Scout Quartermasters, who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the exceptional qualities of that rank, are eligible for a \$5,000.00 1st Place, a \$3,000 2nd Place or a \$1,000 3rd Place Scholarship to be awarded by National VFW. In addition, the Department of New York VFW will award the state winner \$250.00, an Eagle jacket and an invitation to the Department Convention in June.

Details, eligibility requirements, entry forms and instructions may be found on the National VFW Web site [www.vfw.com](http://www.vfw.com), and listed in the 2009-2010 Program Guide CD, pages 33 through 35, which your Quartermaster received in the membership package.

It is imperative that the Posts are aware of the program and are ready to answer all questions when approached by the Scout or his parents. This is a great Community Service project and chance to publicize the VFW programs and image.

Please note that a Post can only submit one entry. Multiple entries are to be judged by the Post and only one entry forwarded to me. Ensure that all required material is included with the entry and conforms exactly to the application instructions, parts A through D. Use binders, page protectors, news clippings and articles, and a photo of the Scout in full dress uniform showing all badges, pins and awards, must be included. Description of the Eagle Project is vital. Any corrections must be made at the Post level, as time constraints prohibit any corrections after submission to the Department Chairman.

**Posts are to submit all entries directly to me to arrive prior to the April 1, 2010 Deadline. DO NOT SUBMIT ENTRIES TO DEPARTMENT.**

My address and phone number are listed below.

Verl Ringgenberg  
NY State Boy Scout Chairman  
P.O. Box 33  
Hortonville, NY 12745  
Phone: 845-887-3025  
E-mail: [vringgenberg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:vringgenberg@hvc.rr.com)

## VFW Post 672, Brewster, NY

Post Commander Harry Sherblom informed the Post members that they had been invited by the JFK Elementary School to participate in their Flag Day Ceremony on June 12th. The invitation was also extended to any other veteran who may want to attend.

## Ron Sakonyi

### National Military Service Programs Report

I thank all the Posts/Auxiliaries for your support and hard work for the NMS programs during this past year. Since September of 2008, donations to the NMS programs were \$1,810,571.91. Of this amount, \$55,208.34 were contributed by Posts/Auxiliaries, and other individuals, corporations and institutions within our state. During the March to June period, 685,168 military members and their families were supported through your hard work and donations to the NMS programs.

The UNMET Needs Program for September through June period provided 326 families with grants totaling \$509,761.08. Of the amount, three families in our Department received grants totaling \$3,482.30.

Under the Military Assistance Program, \$342,547.23 was provided nationwide toward 210 events held for our service members. We held one event at Windham Mountain in January under the Wounded Warriors Weekend Program and received a grant of \$6,000 for this event.

Donations from Department of NY to NMS programs from August 2008 to June 2009 were \$45,476.01. Mrs. Lichtenstein 5th grade students from Public School 35 located in Hollis, Queens contributed to this Program through their Penny Harvest Grant Program whereby students collected pennies for our overseas veterans. A check for \$280 was presented to Commander Jim Blount, Queens County Council, for Operation Uplink. I agree wholeheartedly with Jim when he said, "What a great bunch of 5th graders!"

During the months of April and May, Department of NY Service members made 4,720 calls on Mother's Day and 2,790 calls on Memorial Day. Father's Day accounted for 3,175 calls with 36,290 minutes of talk time. Total calls to date from NY service members amount to 46,187 calls accounting for 566,139 minutes. Total calls to date, nationwide, were 1,341,066 calls accounting for 16,474,639 minutes of talk time. Your donations contribute to making this an outstanding program for our service member's use.

The free call dates for the remainder of the year are: August 16th, September 29th, October 18th, November 26th and December 25th. Please communicate these dates to any of our service members whom you have contact with.

Additionally, if a service member from your area is killed in action, don't forget to request a Memorial Commendation from the NMS office. I will close with an e-mail I received from Queens County Council Commander James Blount, Jr.:

*"The Memorial Commendation for Lance Cpl. Alberto Francesconi was presented to Mr. Albert and Minerva Francesconi (parents) and Mrs. Cynthia Francesconi (widow) in the presence of his older brother Robert Rivera at their home today, June 22, 2009. Alberto's four-month-old son (Alberto), whom he never saw, was also present.*

*This was truly an experience for T.J. Throp SV Gorden Post 5298, Michael Tack C.O. Post 9352 and myself. One we will never forget. The family greeted us royally, with tears in their eyes. They were appreciative for the Memorial Commendation.*

*Thank you, Jim, for carrying out this solemn duty."*

If you need to contact me or have questions on any of the National Military Service Programs, my e-mail is: [resakonyi@yahoo.com](mailto:resakonyi@yahoo.com)

## District 2

### VFW Day at Castle Point VA Hospital Sunday, September 13

Join us as we march in, hold a brief ceremony overlooking the Hudson River and visit with the hospitalized veterans.

## Dennis Sullivan

### Citizenship Education Community Service Chairman

I would like to congratulate all the Posts for doing an outstanding job this past year in volunteering so many dollars and hours for the good of our communities.

For the Department of New York, the end of the year numbers for **Community Service Year-End Report**, May 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009, are as follows:

- Total posts participating in the Department of New York was **309** posts out of **573**
- Total spending \$1,278,898.00
- Total hours 263,308

As a reminder, now is the time for Posts to start promoting teachers to sign up for the VFW Teacher Award Program.

#### Teacher Award Qualifications for District Entries are as follows:

- After judging takes place at Post, entries are to go to District for judging. Each District is to **pick only one teacher in each category, K to 5, 6 to 9 and 10**

**to 12** and submit to me by **December 15, 2009**. The three teacher entries from each District should have the following information attached.

- Original entry form showing nominated teacher, person submitting them, and it is important for the Post to list their Post Number.
- Essay of 350 words or less.
- Official Post Teacher entry form with signature from both the Post level and District level (**Very Important**).
- One page resume (no more than two sides).
- Up to five pages (both sides count) of additional documents (i.e. news articles, supervisor's recommendations).
- Good quality head and shoulders photograph (color copies or low-grade computer printouts will not be accepted).

Please don't hesitate to contact me at [dmsullivan9@optimum.net](mailto:dmsullivan9@optimum.net) if you have any questions.

## Dan Meholczo

### Commander's Special Project Chairman

*Continued from page 1*

programs going.

The object of the home is to help place children into homes that are willing to help a child that is in need, to help a child that was abused by their parents, have been in trouble and need someone to care for them in a family setting and give them love.

Parsons priority is to find the best, most innovative ways to allow families to stay intact and find the resources they need to maintain permanent relationships. When children cannot remain with their families, Parsons strive to build strong connections with parental figures in many levels of care, to include a short-term residential unit.

Commander Davenport and I visited Parsons Child and Family Center, to see for ourselves, what the program entails. We were very impressed with the residential homes and the campus. They showed us the entire program they have, and it was most impressive. If you would like to see more information on the home, please go to their Web page: <https://www.parsonscenter.org/index.asp>

We ask that every Post, County Council and District give the most that they can give to help maintain a good, safe and caring environment for these children to live in. Life, so far, has not been good to them. With our help, we can make a difference for some of them.

Please send all donations to:

**VFW Dept. of NY**  
**1044 Broadway**  
**Albany, NY 12204**

Earmark your donation for: Commanders Special Project or you can personally give a check at the Fall Conference. I will be happy to answer any questions. You can contact me by phone or e-mail as listed below:

**Dan Meholczo**  
**Phone: 607-733-3628**  
**E-mail: [mttopinn@aol.com](mailto:mttopinn@aol.com)**

The Commanders Project is to help children. Let's have our membership show that we take care of our own.

*A Needy Child is Everyone's Child*

## Crisis at the VA as Benefits Claims Backlog Nearly Tops One Million

This article highlights why so many veterans are angry, frustrated and do not trust the VA and the government. The backlog of claims gets bigger and bigger and those who have served this nation wait. While they are waiting many lose their homes, their families, their jobs and businesses, their dignity and self-respect. They self-medicate; get into trouble with the law; commit suicide while they are WAITING for the government that sent them to war to care for them and their loved ones.

Our members of Congress must understand that the cost of war goes beyond bullets and bombs and they must ENFORCE ACTION NOW to care for those who have suffered the mental and physical wounds of war.

**Our government is rescuing banks, automobile companies and others within days or weeks of the need, yet AMERICAN VETERANS have to wait months and years for our government to come to**

**their assistance.**

I plead with everyone who gets this message to call your Congressperson and Senators and demand that the injustice perpetrated upon our nation's veterans stop NOW. Not in the years to come but NOW, because our young people have earned the right to proper care. **This is not a Republican issue, this is not a Democrat issue; THIS IS AN AMERICAN ISSUE.**

Thank you,  
**Patrick W. Welch, PhD**  
**Director**  
**Erie County Veterans Services Agency**  
**Rath Building, Suite 1254**  
**95 Franklin Street**  
**Buffalo, NY 14202**  
**PH: 716-858-6349 Fax: 716-858-6191**  
**E-mail: [patrick.welch@erie.gov](mailto:patrick.welch@erie.gov)**  
**<http://www.erie.gov/veterans/>**

## VFW Post 2670, Geneva, NY

VFW Post 2670, Geneva, NY will be hosting their VFW Early Bird Dinner on Monday, December 7th at 6:00 p.m. Post Commander Allan Fox states that any of their Post annual members

who pay their annual dues on or before that night, will be invited to attend and receive a free steak dinner. All Life Members are encouraged to sign up early for the dinner at the Post.

## Eagle Scouts x Three Makes History

VFW Post 8647 Proudly Sponsors  
Boy Scout Troop 126



Pictured above, (L-R) front row, Alexander, Benjamin and Christopher Snyder from Sherman, NY after receiving their Eagle Scout awards at a Court of Honor ceremony.

On June 7, 2009, Boy Scout history was made when Alexander, Benjamin and Christopher Snyder – who are identical triplets – simultaneously achieved the rank of Eagle Scout during their Court of Honor Ceremony held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mayville.

There have been other triplets who have earned the rank of Eagle Scout but they weren't identical triplets.

Alexander, Benjamin and Christopher have always been "A, B, C," says their mother, though it wasn't by design. The boys joined Cub Scouts together in 1999, at the age of 6, with Pack 124 in Sherman. Their mom, Christina Deering, says the boys started in Cub scouting in first grade as Tiger Cubs. As the den leader, Mrs. Deering proudly explains that 13 boys in her pack worked to earn the rank of Arrow of Light. That is the highest rank a Cub Scout can achieve. She also added, the Arrow of Light badge is the only Cub Scout badge that can be worn on the Boy Scout uniform.

Alex, Ben and Chris joined Boy Scout Troop 126 in Mayville because they liked the enthusiasm of Scout Leader, Andy Cesarz.

According to Scout Leader Cesarz, the triplets joined when they were in sixth grade. Each has earned 37 merit badges; 36 are identical; the 37th is different for each of the triplets. The 37th was earned by Alex in rifle shooting; Ben in fingerprinting; and Chris in bugling. Their mom, Christina, says it's now easy to identify whose sash is whose.

In order to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, one must complete their own project. Interested in Chautauqua Rails-to-Trails, they each met with Trail Manager, Jim Fincher, who discussed the trail needs. Each found something that they were interested in.

Alex received community help to build an 8-foot x 6-foot kiosk. Built during a November blizzard, it now stands at the Titus Road trailhead. Alex volunteered 334-1/2 hours.

Ben wanted to do more than just trail clean up. He did trail maintenance that included the repair of a bridge, the installation of interpretive signs, replaced drain pipe and erected a safety fence. Ben volunteered 340-1/4 hours.

Chris engaged some volunteer help to design and implement a beaver-baffler system that allows water to flow under the trail while disallowing blockage from beavers. Chris volunteered 250 hours.

The boys recruited 74 community members to assist them in their efforts and received donations from local businesses, family and friends. Mr. Fincher reported that they are the 10th, 11th and 12th Eagle Scouts to have completed their projects on Chautauqua Rails to Trails.

Post Commander Paul Holthouse, Don Skellie and Leonard Neckers recently presented Alex, Ben and Chris with Leatherman tools. Their uncle, Frank Werren, is a member of the Post's Men's Auxiliary.

The Web pages listed here give plenty of history about the triplets from children to Eagle Scouts:

<http://post-journal.com/page/content.detail/id/526819.html?nav=5018>

<http://www.chaurtt.org/Trackin-Winter08.pdf>

## Secretary Shinseki Moves to Simplify PTSD Compensation Rules

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to assist Veterans seeking compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"The hidden wounds of war are being addressed vigorously and comprehensively by this administration as we move VA forward in its transformation to the 21st century," said Secretary Shinseki.

The VA is publishing a proposed regulation today in the Federal Register to make it easier for a Veteran to claim service connection for PTSD by reducing the evidence needed if the stressor claimed by a Veteran is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

Under the new rule, VA would not require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor.

Previously, claims adjudicators were required to corroborate that a non-combat Veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity. This rule would simplify the development that is required for these cases.

PTSD is a recognized anxiety disorder that can follow seeing or experiencing an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to which a person responds with intense fear, helplessness or horror, and is not uncommon in war.

Feelings of fear, confusion or anger often subside, but if the feelings don't go away or get worse, a Veteran may have PTSD.

VA is bolstering its mental health capacity to serve combat Veterans, adding thousands of new professionals to its rolls in the last four years. The Department also has established a suicide prevention helpline (1-800-273-TALK) and Web site available for online chat in the evenings at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans)

## VFW Post 2064, Maybrook, NY

From their Post newsletter: The Post is collecting Campbell's Soup and other Campbell's product labels for the VFW National Home for Children. The labels will help the home purchase a new van for transportation of the children. If you use any Campbell's products, peel off the labels and bring them to the Post.

The Post is collecting non-perishable food item donations for the new Orange County Veteran Service Agency food pantry to assist less fortunate veterans and their families. See Post Commander for more details.

**Editor's Note:** Collecting Campbell's labels would be a good project for all VFW Posts in our state. Ask your Commander to set up a Chairman to handle the labels.

## VFW Post 7955, Ancram & Copake, NY

VFW Post 7955, Ancram & Copake, NY, sponsored the 1st annual Poker Run as a benefit to the Post building fund. A couple of the riders traveled from Long Island to ride in the event. The Post members thank all those who participated in the 4-hour, 110-mile ride.

The Post will be hosting the 6th annual Veterans Day Roast Beef Dinner and Candlelight Vigil on Wednesday, November 11, 2009.

## Department Convention



Newly elected Commander Allan E. Davenport takes the oath of office from Past Commander-in-Chief George J. Lisicki.



Past Commander-in-Chief Lisicki presents Commander Davenport with his Department Commander's plaque from our VFW National Organization.

## VFW Post 433 Sayville, NY

VFW Post 433, Sayville, NY is proud to announce Megan Jahnke, Sayville High School class of 2009, the winner of its annual "Is Freedom Free?" essay contest. Open to all Sayville High School Seniors, the winner is awarded a \$500 scholarship to defray the costs of college. Commander Joe White presented Megan with her award.

Megan's essay recognized the contributions of the men and women in our armed forces, dating back to George Washington and the Continental Army, in securing our freedom and preserving our way of life. Their willingness to go into harm's way, sometimes sacrificing their own lives in the process, is the true cost of freedom and we should be grateful for their service and sacrifice.

She will be attending Oswego State University this fall, majoring in Education.



Pictured, L-R: James Jahnke, Commander Joe White, Megan Jahnke, (not named) and Carol Jahnke.

## Department of New York 2008-09 All-State Awards

Post Number	Commander	Quartermaster
16	Michael Skowronski	Hyman Goldman
26	Mike Hayse	Douglas Morgan
44	Francis Day	Paul Graves
153	Michael Coyne	Wayne Brown
313	Ralph Borealis	John MacArthur
358	Robert Starks	George Farnum
361	Isaiah Reid	Donnie Stevenson
369	Paul Gorman	Donald Babcock
375		
395	Frank Todaro	Dominic Ercolano
400	William Mahoney	James Marin
420	Eugene Ratiglino	Edward Freberger
502	Bruce Williams	Carl Dennis, Sr.
672	Harry Sherblom	Louis Gasparini
1371	William H. Daniel, Jr.	David Bensley, Sr.
1418	Earl Robinson	Robert Dumas
1479	Daniel Lennon	George Osborne
1498	John Dahoda	Arthur DeVoe, Jr.
1545	Ronald DeLong	Christopher Mattiace
1611	August Zurenda	John Zurenda
1896	James Dixon	Bernard Thomson
2064	James Demilo	Fred Cratz
2250	Daniel Ahern	Martin Pernesky
2476	Eugene McSherry	Robert Quick
2721	Terry Perry	Joel Vanik
2936	Lester Duvall, Jr.	Floyd Crack, Jr.
2937	Joseph Themann	Norman Dittmier
4660	Lawrence Zeglan	Robert Bishop
4927	Dennis Sullivan	Edward Hill
5005	Dennis Staley	Richard Pratt
5218	Jim Bauter	Dennis Ambrose
5260	F. John Pitillo	Larry Snyder
5491	Charles Monte	Anthony Delduco
5540	Richard Madden	John Halstead
5942	Joseph Varrone	James Watters
6249	Robert Ward	Joseph Cognitore
6338	Michael Webster	Robert Fuller
6396	Eugene Bryant	Herbert Moultrie
7172	Henry Sininna	Gustav Grecsek, Jr.
7227	Patrick Kenny	Harmond Dingman
7289	Albert Rodriguez	Leroy Bowen, Jr.
7290	George Kanasolla	Paul Dyer
7336	Isreal Rivera	Thomas Mazza
7414	John Ambrose	Jim Durkin
7763	Richard Begandy	Stephen Piller
8160	John Sanford, Jr.	Robert Johnson
8495	Richard Gough	Jerry Gopp
8734	Stanley Board	Kenneth Farmham
9132	Gene Polak	James Wilson
9218	Dave Dunn	Bruce Mullenax
9249	Raymond Briggs	Richard Lozo
9263	Fredrick Amore, Jr.	Eugene Orlandi
9352	James Blount, Jr.	Vernon Ghilmore
9593	Robert Proniske	Wally Zincio
10547	Charles Johnson	Clifford Elliot

## Wilber Gray Chairman 2009 Bowling Tournament

The Department of New York, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 4th annual mixed tournament was held at Falcon Lanes in Auburn, NY. The events were hosted by Auburn VFW Post 1975 and its Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries.

Participating in the events we had:

**32 Team Events – 59 Doubles Events – 111 Singles Events – 104 All Events**

I would like to thank the host Post and its Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries for a job well done!

## 2009 VFW Department of New York Bowling Tournament Award List

TROPHY	TEAM	BOWLERS	POST
Team Scratch	Lowville #2 Lewis County Memorial Post 6912	William Tuttle George Ingersol Lorraine Woolswager Jeff Norton	
Team Handicap	Mixed Nuts Alburn Post 1975	Dolores Felice Anita DelloStritto Barb Griffin Tom Griffin	
Doubles Scratch		Joe Schuler Dave Johnson	Hamburg Fairport
Doubles Handicap		Faye Terwilliger Justine Weller	Cuba
Singles Scratch		Jeff Norton	Lowville
Singles Handicap		Tom Rafferty	Ovid
All Events Scratch		Jeff Norton	Lowville
All Events Handicap		Tom Rafferty	Ovid

*Trophies were awarded at the State Convention, June 2009*

## Michael Spellman Patriot's Pen Contest Chairman

**To:** ALL Posts, Auxiliaries, County Councils and Districts

**Subject:** 2009-10 Patriot's Pen Contest

I want to thank Department Commander Allan Davenport 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.

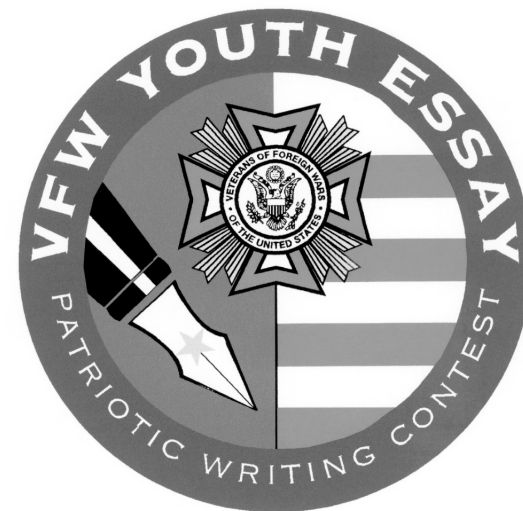
This year, the VFW National Organization sent to each Post Quartermaster two CDs called, "VFW Leadership Reference Guide," which contains the VFW Programs and Chairman's Guide. Included in the CD are all the forms and information you will need to run the Patriot's Pen Contest or you can go online to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

Post Chairmen need to copy and provide each student with a Patriot's Pen brochures/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 2009-2010 Patriot's Pen theme is:**

**"When is the Right Time to Honor Our Military Heroes?"**

All student entries are due at the Post level by November 1, 2009. Your Post judging should be done by November 15, 2009 and you need to pass your winners to your District Chairman. The District judging should be completed by December 3, 2009, after which time the winning District entry will be submitted to the Department chairman. The Department judging will be held at the Malsan-Jones VFW Post 7393 during the week of December 14, 2009.

**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!

**Melvin Garrett**  
*Department Judge Advocate*

I would like to take this moment to thank the delegates and members of the Department of New York for your confidence and support on my behalf as your re-elected Department Judge Advocate.

You have given me the opportunity to provide assistance to the leadership and our organization for another year. My congratulations to the newly elected officers, chairmen, vice chairmen, and committee members as you assume office and take on this awesome responsibility.

As I have said in previous publications, the road to a successful year is the familiarity of the provisions of the congressional charter pertaining to your particular office. Referring to the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and the Ritual is a sure way of staying out of trouble and making the right decisions.

The last fiscal year and the beginning of this year have shown how important it is to study and use the congressional charter in the performance of your duties. You, along with your officers, are the elected leaders; the presiding officer is not the "commanding officer."

Here are a few examples: (1) Remember the oath you took as a new member. (2) Remember the obligation given to you as an elected officer and to an appointed office under your jurisdiction. (3) Review and familiarize yourself with your duties (Article II, Sec. 218) Manual of Procedure. Rules of Order, Article X, Sec. 1001 states all other appointments not listed will be at the direction of the Commander on all levels.

As members of our organization we should always be reminded of the presiding officer's opening words, "Do not let petty jealousies or trivial personalities influence our deliberations." With that being said, it should set the tone of the meeting on any occasion.

We are spending a lot of quality time and energy fixing problems that occur because of the lack of knowledge available, or making decisions that are contrary to the congressional charter. Before a rash decision is made and you are not sure, seek the advice of someone who can give you the right or appropriate answer.

To better serve you, the line of authority is: Post, County Council (New York still has County Councils), District, Department and Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration. So when using this method, if necessary, you will be able to avoid long, drawn-out results.

And finally, don't forget to attend your district OTI, if and when it is held in your area. You will gain much from this source of information.

**REMEMBER OUR MOTTO:**

**"To honor the dead by helping the living"**

**Best Wishes and Good Luck  
for a Successful Year!!!!**

**James Durkin**  
*Department Inspector*

Please insure ALL inspections this year are completed on the new inspection forms (which can be downloaded from the State Web site). Also insure that each Inspector you appoint within your District has a copy of the instructions for completing the inspection report and fully understands what is being asked for each item on the report. This can also be downloaded from the State Web site.

All inspections done on the older forms will not be counted as complete and will need to be redone.

I will also be doing spot inspections on Posts where I have received completed inspection forms from your District. These spot inspections will be a mini-audit of the inspectors within your Districts. These Audits are just to confirm that we all are conducting our inspections with the same integrity across this great Department.

All completed inspection reports will be sent to me for review and approval. Any questions, please contact me; see contact information below. Let's have a great year.

**James Durkin**  
**248 North Bloomfield Road**  
**Canandaigua, NY 14424-1058**

**Sgt. Robert Arnold –  
WWII Veteran  
Receives  
High School Diploma**

In 1943, Robert Arnold was attending Canastota High School and in February he was drafted to serve in WWII. He didn't receive his high school diploma until June this year. He has been quoted as saying, "I have always wanted it and now they are finally going to give it to me."



During his service in the Marines, Arnold received 10 awards, which include two Bronze Stars.

He traveled extensively during his time in the military. He obtained the rank of Sergeant and he said at the end of the war, he was called in to see his captain. Sgt. Robert Arnold said he was offered a position which would help him earn additional stripes, but Arnold declined stating that he had a 19-year-old bride at home waiting for him.

Arnold smiled as he remembered being reunited with his wife on March 29, 1946, and claimed that day as the happiest day of his life...adding that he is still very grateful for his service to his country.

Robert Arnold is a Life Member of VFW Post 600 in Canastota.

**VFW Post 5491**

VFW Post 5491 jointly sponsored a Loyalty Day event at the Veterans Memorial Park located in Putnam County with the Veterans Council and Putnam County Commander Anthony Delduco.



*Pictured, L-R, 1st Row: Nick Mucciarone, Ray Callinan, Jim Zupan, Jim Joslin and Commander Charles Monte. 2nd Row: Brennan Mahoney, Fred Wennberg (Captain of the Color Guard) and Brandon Kjartansson.*

**VFW Post 4785, Brooklyn, NY**

VFW Post 4785, Brooklyn, NY were surprised recently when some USO Ladies stopped by their Post to dance with the veterans. Some WWII veterans were present to enjoy the afternoon dancing with the USO.

The Rankin-Healey Post is located at 9312 4th Avenue and its members represent veterans from all major conflicts including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and our most recent veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.



**House Approves Advanced Appropriations for VA**

**VFW Urges Senate to Follow Suit**

WASHINGTON (July 10, 2009) – A top priority for America's largest organization of combat veterans moved closer to becoming reality today when the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved H.R. 3082, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, by a vote of 414-3. The fiscal year 2010 funding package includes advanced appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for FY 2011, which means Congress is serious about ending years of late funding for the federal government's second largest agency.

"This is a huge step forward for disabled veterans, and the historic funding increases the House provides will dramatically improve the healthcare programs our nation delivers to her defenders," said Glen M. Gardner, Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock,

Texas, who is the National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

"We have to thank House leadership from both sides of the aisle for making this happen, especially Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Chet Edwards (D-Texas) for spearheading the legislation," he said.

The VFW has been championing advanced appropriations after years of late funding for the VA. Records show that the VA received only three on-time budgets in the past 20 years – in 1994, 1996 and 2008 – with the average delay being 54 days after the federal government began its new fiscal year Oct. 1. Twice the VA would be funded in February – 135 and 140 days late, respectively.

According to Gardner, the track record of funding the VA almost two months into a new fiscal year is no way for any business to run efficiently, much less the

one federal agency that is tasked with caring for America's heroes. He said late funding impacts everything from research and planning to equipment and facility upgrades, as well as medical professional hiring programs.

"The advanced appropriations issue has always been about doing what's right to properly care for our nation's defenders," he said. "The Senate knows this, and the VFW is hopeful that they will follow suit and adopt the advanced funding requirement and budget increases in their own MilCon/VA funding package."

Gardner is now asking his entire membership of almost 2.2 million VFW and Auxiliary members to contact their senators and urge them to vote for S. 1407. To contact a member of the U.S. Senate, go to: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/dbq/officials>

The following poem was submitted to the *Overseas Veteran* for publication by author George Dawson of Wantagh, NY.

In the note that accompanied the poem, Mr. Dawson acknowledges that he is a WWII and Korean War Veteran. He served in the United States Navy as a Radioman First Class. He said he wrote this poem with D-Day in mind, but it could apply to many other war zones.

**One Thousand Every Day**  
By George Dawson

One thousand vets are dying,  
So the prayers say;  
One thousand tired heroes,  
Each and every day.

They served on blood-soaked beaches  
Where children now play,  
And those of us still living  
Have a debt to pay.

Enjoy your many freedoms,  
But bow your head and pray  
For one thousand ancient warriors  
Who will die this very day.

**VFW Post 2813  
and BSA Troop 390  
Celebrate Memorial Day**



*Pictured, L-R: Bliss Post Commander Joe Petite, Commander Elect William Kennedy, Wallace Post Commander Joe Klein, Queens County Commander Elect Marvin R. Jeffcoat, Commander John Bak, Officer of the Day Ritchie Pando and members of Troop 390. Commander Jerry Sisco (not in photo) presided over the ceremony at the John V. Daniels, Jr. Park in Woodside, NY.*

**VFW Post 5942,  
Plainview, NY**

VFW Post 5942, Plainview, NY raised money, thanks to the generosity of the Plainview Old Bethpage community during the annual "VFW Buddy Poppy" campaign.

Commander Joseph Varrone presented a check for \$2,000.00 to Mr. Fred Sganga, Executive Director of the State Veteran's Home at Stony Brook, Long Island.

Also pictured (on the right) are some of the VFW members holding some of the 52 lap robes that were donated by the "Moms With Busy Needles" – a voluntary group who knit lap robes for veterans. To date, they have donated – and the VFW Post 5942 have distributed – more than 400 lap robes to various veteran's hospitals and veteran's homes.



*Pictured, L-R: Tim McDermott, Dennis Cudahy, Cliff Doering, Pat Astegher, Executive Director Fred Sganga, Commander Joe Varrone, Artie Anderson, Rocky Figalora, Dan Barber and Pete McCann.*

**Fred Schwally**  
Department  
Buddy Poppy Chairman

The Department of New York missed the 2008 total of Buddy Poppies by 11,000. In 2009, only 523,000 poppies were purchased by Posts.

We all know the economy is failing, but we need to distribute Buddy Poppies to help our Post Relief Funds, so we can assist our veterans when they need it.

Even though we didn't meet our goal this past year, let's move forward and try to meet the 2010 goal of 600,000 poppies.

Always  
&  
Forever



**VFW Post 2883, Newark, NY**

A Chapter of the VFW Riders Motorcycle Club was organized by the Post, which they say is the first in New York. Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month. They have a number of support positions available and you don't have to ride a motorcycle to join. For more information, ask for Todd.

**VFW Post 7763,  
Massapequa Park, NY**

VFW Post 7763, Massapequa Park, NY promoted Buddy Poppies in May 2009. Past Commander Steve Piller and Commander Richard Begandy set up a table in a busy location and offered Buddy Poppies to those passing by.

**VFW Post 1545,  
Windham, NY**

VFW Post 1545, Windham, NY conducted Memorial Day ceremonies at the Pleasant Valley Cemetery (Grave of Sgt. Carty), Windham Cemetery and the Hensonville Veterans Memorial on Saturday, May 30, 2009. Ceremonies concluded at the Veterans Memorial located at the WAJ Central School. The ceremonies were well attended by the public. VFW Post 1545 has placed new American flags at all veteran's graves in the local cemeteries.

**Arnie Anderson**  
Editor



I want to thank Commander Davenport for appointing me as his newspaper editor. Once again, I will do my best to cover all the news and events around the state.

During the past year, I have received a number of phone calls and letters requesting me to change a member's address. Any change of address has to be submitted to our VFW National Headquarters by one of two ways:

Members can notify their Post Quartermaster of the change of address and the Quartermaster can submit the change of address form to the national organization; or, the individual member can use the form below, which is strategically placed on the page behind the mailing label of the newspaper you are reading now.

The company who publishes our *Overseas Veteran* newspaper receives the mailing list for our state from our VFW National Headquarters, and that is what they use when they address and mail out the newspaper.

If you look at the mailing address label on the bottom of page 8, you will see a number directly above the name. That number is the member's VFW membership number and should be used in all communication with our national organization for change of address. Please mail your address change to the address listed at the bottom of the form.

**Thomas J. Todaro**  
Department Service Officer  
Veterans Affairs Data Theft Litigation

On January 27, 2009, VA agreed to pay \$20 million to settle a class action lawsuit, filed after a computer containing personal information on over 26 million veterans and family members was stolen from the home of a VA employee. The money, less costs and attorneys fees, will be used to pay claims from veterans who can show that they suffered harm as a result of the theft.

Although VA eventually recovered the computer, and the FBI stated that the confidential information had not been compromised, thousands of veterans purchased data security monitoring services; still others suffered emotional distress as a result of the theft.

The settlement was approved by the Federal Judge assigned to the lawsuit on February 10, 2009. The attorneys for the plaintiffs (VA) have stated that they will publish public notices describing the claims process. The ruling stipulates that payments will range from \$75 to \$1,500 for veterans who incurred expenses for credit monitoring or physical symptoms of emotional distress.

More information concerning the settlement may be found at [www.VeteransClass.com](http://www.VeteransClass.com) or by calling toll-free 1-888-288-9624 or by writing to VA Settlement, P.O. Box 6727, Portland, OR 97228-6727.

**VFW Change of Address Form**

(Please Print)

Member Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Data Entry  
406 West 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111**

## Sayville VFW Post 433 Hosts BBQ for Hospitalized Veterans

In July, the Sayville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 433 welcomed over 60 veterans and staff from the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook, the Northport Veterans Affairs Hospital and the Suffolk County United Veterans Homeless Program to their Lakeland Avenue Post for its annual BBQ.

The veteran guests arrived on vans from their respective facilities, and were greeted by Post 433 members who escorted each veteran into the hall. Senior Vice Commander Marc Gilbert greeted our guests and Post Chaplain Ron Bergmann led everyone in an opening prayer. Post 433 members served their guest hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled chicken, pulled barbecue pork sandwiches, and an array of side dishes including potato salad, macaroni salad and baked beans.

DJ Margie and the Wednesday Nite Line Dancers entertained the attendees during lunch and Don Valenti, a member of Post 433, provided post lunch entertainment. Don played his guitar and sang a variety of songs that spanned every genre from country western to classic rock, and included a few he wrote himself. Don ended his set with a group sing along



Pictured above, L-R: Peter Ellison, Guy Galant, George McEwen and John Skidmore III.

that included old favorites like *Lucille*, *Bye Bye Blackbird* and *You Are My Sunshine*.

The party ended on a high note with everyone in the crowd: veterans, volunteers, Post 433 members, hospital staff and other guests, holding hands and singing along with a Lee Greenwood rendition of *I'm Proud to be an American*. There were more than a few tears in the eyes of all of us as we sang this song in recognition of the service of our men and women in uniform, who sacrificed so much in order to secure the freedoms under which we live.

As their vans left the parking lot, Post 433 members lined up outside the hall and presented a hand salute to their departing guests, proud to be Americans and grateful for the opportunity to demonstrate their gratitude to these special veterans.

## Tusten-Highland Post 6427

Post Commander Paul Zimmerman (left) presented Eagle Scout Brian Corcoran (center) with a check while Verl Ringgenberg (right) presented Brian with a certificate from the Department of New York. Verl Ringgenberg serves as the Department Boy Scout Chairman.

Eagle Scout Corcoran also received awards from Governor Patterson, the County Legislature and the Town Council.

Post 6427 sponsored the presentation and, after the ceremony, provided refreshments to Scout Troop 1102, friends and neighbors.



### PLEASE REMEMBER

Article Deadline for Next Issue:

**OCTOBER 25, 2009**

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.

## Department of New York State Commander Allan E. Davenport



Pictured above, Commander Davenport's daughter, Allison, presents him with his State Commander's cap. Commander Davenport's wife, Sandra, passed away in 2002.



Pictured here are New York recipients of the 2009 National Community Service Awards, which were awarded at the National Convention in Phoenix, AZ. In the front row, on right, is Anthony Ferrarese; second row, fourth from right is Frank Nicolazzo; and third row, second from the right is Ben Thompson.



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