

# NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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## William "Doc" Schmitz

State Commander



"Happy Holidays"

I would like to take this opportunity to say Happy Holidays to all and thank each and every one for their support of our Department, its officers, and myself. We

ponder sometimes how well we have it, and sometimes wish we had it better. We have all sacrificed our freedoms in the military to insure that others in our nation and the world could enjoy their freedom. We, as individuals, and as an organization, strive

and seek to help others; this I have witnessed first-hand. Posts that have Post buildings have remained open during the holidays to provide a place to gather and meals for those that have no family or they live far away. Posts that have no buildings donate to local families that are in need often joining with other organizations to help others. The VFW, on all levels, does great things for our respective communities and country. Our Department 'Trees for Troops' program as for its first year was a great success.

I had the pleasure of awarding a National VFW Gold Medal to Mrs. Kenney on Long

—STATE COMMANDER, continued on page 3

## Marlene Roll

Sr. Vice Commander



Comrades,

I am not sure everyone understands the alarming situation the VFW is in from the post level to the national level. While National is trying to shift gears

to reflect the times we are in, we cannot wait for it to trickle down to the posts. The VFW is most visible at the post level in our respective communities. I know you have been told over and over about the declining membership, and while that is true we have also been declining in other areas as well... areas like passion, enthusiasm and pride. I for one, happen to believe that the Veterans of Foreign Wars is the best organization going because it is made up of the very individuals that left this land to defend ours and other countries from enemies that threaten what we believe in. This organization is made up of people like you, people I have enjoyed getting to know and work with.

Like anything in life, you get out of it what you put into it. There are many who have invested themselves into the VFW and I thank them because they made it an organization we all wanted to join or we wouldn't be members today. That took passion, enthusiasm and conviction over many years and many members to make that happen. We stand on those prideful shoulders

—SR. VICE, continued on page 6

## Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr.

State Judge Advocate



### WHY WAS MY POST COMMANDER REMOVED?

Comrades,

At the risk of becoming the focal point for those who exist in this organization to dwell on the adverse and get pleasure by taunting our

leadership, my opinion is as follows:

It is apparent that the Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars has strayed from the stated purpose of the organization as annotated in our National By-Laws (Section 203102).

Section 230102 of the National By-Laws

which reads: The purposes of the corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational, and are: 1. To preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; 3. To perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; 4. To maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; 5. To foster true patriotism; 6. To maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and, 7. To preserve and defend the United States from all enemies.

So how did we arrive at the juncture of today

—JUDGE ADVOCATE, continued on page 3

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Don Mackey

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## New York State Overseas Veteran

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### \*\* ARTICLES:

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

### \*\* SUBMISSION & FORMAT:

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

### \*\* EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

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### \*\* DEADLINE:

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

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

### \*\* GRAPHIC DESIGN



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## Santa and the Gunner

It seems so long ago yet still like yesterday, my first Christmas in Nam flying around in circles, landing in LZ's or bogs, picking up wounded, prisoners or mail, whichever came first or was the most important. Funny how our memories mess with our heads, making years evaporate into days and those days stretch into forever.



One mission after another jammed into two sleepless days and nights holding onto an M60, cramming blue teams into the chopper and striking out to another LZ or maybe even base camp. It's cold up there in that blackness at night flying around with the doors open watching for other aircraft, tracers or signal lights. Still it had to be done and there weren't many complaints unless a mission was scrapped in mid-flight or we had to go back and forth for what seems like forever for absolutely nothing. You know... "The Army Way!"

Well that was the Air Cav over picturesque Vietnam on Christmas Eve 1966. When the dust settled after touching down at base camp we tied down the main rotor, secured the chopper and headed for the rack. Even though it was late afternoon we were beat and hadn't slept for over 36 hours, it was time to rest. As we dragged our tired carcasses to the hooch a jeep rolled up in a cloud of dust to drag us back to the airfield, we were on another mission.

Somewhere out there were a few blues that didn't get a ride home so we were their taxi. The hum of the turbine and the constant chop, chop, chop of the rotor could almost lull you to sleep if it wasn't for the cold and the smell of exhaust blowing through the open doors. Then there were the tracers sliding so effortlessly toward us, almost like Christmas lights on a very long string but they floated off arching down into the blackness like sparks from a fire.

Our escorts strafed the area surrounding the pickup zone so we could touch down. Five blues scrambled on board as our M60's punched holes in the darkness and we were off the ground jamming forward as fast as the W2 could throttle that Huey.

They just stared ahead like zombies shivering uncontrollably, the Blues were in their own world shutting out everything. We touched down at a fuel station to refuel and

check out the chopper for damage. Found a couple holes that looked like a batch of termites had a field day but nothing too bad. With some duct tape and chewing gum to seal up the new ventilation system we powered up and blew out of the Avgas Holiday Inn.

We finally touched down on that PSP at base camp. As we were shutting down a duce and a half pulled up to haul us all to HQ. When we jumped off the truck we found ourselves in front of the mess tent and were escorted to the front of a long line of GI's. We put the blues up front and watched as they were handed trays of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce and coffee. There might have been some eggnog there too but who cares at that point.

As we stared at all this and just couldn't believe what was happening someone yelled Merry Christmas. Here we were in the middle of a stinking war and it was Christmas Day. We found a place to sit and low and behold in walked Santa Claus. He walked around greeting everyone, wishing us a Merry Christmas and passing out "Care Packages." There was a tree all lit up in the corner and a bunch of guys dressed up like elves and even a paper reindeer standing off to the side.

One of the blues told the pilot we were like Santa and his sleigh when we dropped out of the sky to pick them up. They didn't think anyone would make it out there for them and then they heard that chopper churning up the jungle towards their position.

That wasn't my last Christmas in the God forsaken place but I can't remember one much better. After a long shower, 3 minutes or less and a long night in the sack I woke up wondering if it really happened. So much of that time was like a fog, a distant dream or rather a nightmare that it felt almost unreal.

If I had any doubts about Santa, they vanished that Christmas. When I woke up there were a bunch of letters from home stuffed in my helmet. Hmmm, Santa looked so much like Top that day, quite the resemblance. Or was that just another nightmare?

Pray for our people out there in their own nightmare sloshing through sand instead of snow.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All!**





—*JUDGE ADVOCATE, continued from page 1*

by removing so many Post Commanders for failure to perform their required duties? In 1999, when the Department of New York had 99,217 members, attendance at a District Meeting did not appear to be an issue to the Department Leadership. So they concentrated on the issues of the day. As the organization evolved, our membership dwindled to the 51,300 members we have today and participation at all levels became a more apparent issue.

Why were the Post Commanders removed now? They were removed for their failure to comply with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure which they promised to uphold when they were installed and obligated as the Post Commander and when initiated and sworn in as a Post member. Unfortunately, many in this organization think they know the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure because they have always done it that way. In many instances, this philosophy is not factual and what they think are By-Laws are rules that have been made up over the years.

If the State Commanders and officers in past years had looked at the issue of quorums at District Meetings and enforced the respective By-Law, perhaps we would not have the exponentially high number of Post Commanders being removed today. As a Past State Commander, I believe that we all need to accept responsibility for not looking at this issue during our respective tenure. Had we taken action in past years to address this issue, it may not have surfaced as it did and the number of Post Commanders removed would have been significantly less, or none at all.

The many negative narratives and editorials that have been posted on a variety of social media to include e-mails and Facebook, etc. about the recent Post Commander removals have one fact correct: Post Commanders have been removed from office for the remainder of this VFW year. The remainder of the dialogue provided in these narratives and editorials are based on emotion, personal interpretations, and contain no factual information. The Post Commanders are obligated under section 218(a)(1)k of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure to assure that he/she or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable). Those who failed to meet this obligation were removed from office (fact).

Statements were circulated that Post Commanders received no warning. In fact, Post Commanders were sent (to the address indicated on the Post election report)

Department Special Order No. 10 which, in essence, stated the National By-Law requirement and the consequence of not having a Post representative present at the stated District Meetings. Further, the Districts and many of the County Councils announced this information using the protocols established in their By-Laws. Adequate advance notice was provided to each Post Commander. Those Post Commanders who were removed this year chose their own fate.

The National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure are no mystery. If one takes the opportunity to read and understand them they will find that every aspect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars operation is addressed. These By-Laws have been in existence for over 115 years and have been changed a number of times by the membership at National Conventions. These By-Laws have served the members of this organization for the past 115 years and will continue to provide the guidance and instructions for our organization to endure so that we may complete our stated purpose. Please note: the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure may be changed by the membership at any National Convention.

Unlike the statement in one editorial that Post Commanders were removed because the Department is bullying them into following old By-Laws, there is no truth in that statement. The Post Commanders were removed after multiple notices and their failure to fulfill their obligation.

Or the statement that a Post Commander who fulfills 99% of their duties is doing the best he can. While commendable, he/she still falls short of their obligation by not attending the District Meetings and representing the members of their Post.

If one thinks that the By-Laws are arcane, instead of complaining about them, offer changes or amendments to them. Propose those changes at your District Meeting so that they can be forwarded to the Department Convention. The By-Laws may be changed at a National Convention, which is open to any member of this organization.

The VFW is a National Membership organization comprised of Departments, Districts, and in our case County Councils and Posts. Unlike a claim that the Post is the only unit of importance, the work done at the Post level is carried over to the County Councils, District, Department and National and vice versa. As a membership organization you have the right to ask questions and make recommendations at every level by following the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. You as a member have the right

—*JUDGE ADVOCATE, continued on page 5*

—*STATE COMMANDER, continued from page 1*

Island for her great work in sending care packages to our troops overseas. I finally got to see one of the places our veterans assemble Poppies, Long Island, VA; Thanks John. I also toured the NYS Veterans Home on Long Island; the best place to go if you need to. Another event was the Eagles Nest for a Sullivan County Council Gathering had a great time. I have visited many areas of our great Department and have been humbled and astounded at the great things our Posts and members do and have done. I know a lot of times we don't want the credit for all the good things we do, we don't want to brag, and we just want to help, but we must overcome that urge to remain in the shadows and begin to share with others how great we and our VFW truly is. For example: our Community Service Reports, we compile all levels of good things we do at the Post levels, put it all together as a Department and Nationally, WOWWWW we do great stuff and lots of it.

When submitting articles to our Editor of our on-line Newspaper, please send pictures. WE NEED TO ADVERTISE ALL THE GREAT THINGS WE DO!!! Please help with this!

In closing, it's a pleasure to serve fellow veterans, their families, our community and our Nation.

Yours in Comradeship,  
**William "DOC" Schmitz**  
 NYS Department Commander 2014-15  
 Past VFW Department of NY Surgeon  
 2007-2012  
 VFW National Surgeon General  
 2010-2011

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*Commander Doc Schmitz giving Doreen Jacobs the National Medal of Merit.*



*PSC Michael Pascal, Director of Stony Brook Nursing Home Fred Sganga, State Commander Doc Schmitz, Jr. Vice Commander Dennis Sullivan and State Poppy Chairman John Mauro*



*District 7 Commander Art Scheuneman, Ladies Auxiliary Legislature Chairman Karen Scheuneman, Senator Elect Robert Ortt, District 7 President Charlene Favata and Jr. Vice Commander Dennis Sullivan.*



*Commander Doc Schmitz, Sr. Vice Commander Marlene Rolls and Jr. Vice Commander Dennis Sullivan.*



*National C of A Jim McNally, PSC Jim Longendyke, Commander Doc Schmitz, Sr. Vice Commander Marlene Roll, Adjutant Hal Burke, Jr. and Jr. Vice Commander Dennis Sullivan.*



—*JUDGE ADVOCATE, continued from page 3*

to know and vote on issues at all levels of this organization.

During the tenure of Michael Pascal, State Commander 2013–2014, a District in the Department failed to follow the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Department By-Laws. As a result, under the authority of the State Commander, the District's Charter was suspended. The District was placed under an Administrative Committee and was monitored by the Committee for a period of approximately 12 months. In May 2014, at the District Convention they tried to elect officers and failed because they could not assemble a quorum. Two subsequent special meetings were conducted and finally at the second meeting (the end of June 2014) a quorum was assembled and officers elected. Following the election of officers the Charter of this District was returned to good working order.

This nearly terminal event generated a significant concern and dialogue by the current State Commander, Senior Vice Commander and Junior Vice Commander. The discussion of this event was continued at the June 2014 Council of Administration (C of A). Those present determined the cause and corrective action to be taken in this matter. The Department Line Officers were present and seven of the eight District Commanders were present. The District under the control of the Administrative Committee had not elected officers and was not represented at the State Convention. The current Junior Past State Commander questioned how the Post Commanders were to be notified. After a discussion of those present it was agreed by all present that the District and Department would send notices to each Post Commander to forewarn them of the consequences of not attending District meetings and that would be adequate warning.

The Department Commander took the notice one step further and a Special Order was issued and disseminated to each Post Commander via US mail stating the requirements of Section 218 By-Laws and Manual of Procedure (a) Officers (1)(k) "Assure that he or his representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings..." Each District Commander was to notify Post Commanders of the next District meeting of the consequence of their Post not being represented at attending meetings. For whatever reasons a number of post commanders did not attend nor were they represented at the first meeting of their district this year. As a result, those post commanders who did not attend or were not represented were relieved of duty for the remainder of this 2014-15 VFW year. Those Post Commanders that

were removed from office may run for an open office in the 2015-16 VFW year if they so desire.

To be very clear, this decision was not made in a vacuum nor was it made by one or two individuals. It was discussed at length at the June 2014 Council of Administration meeting. All of those present (the Department Line Officers and 7 District Commanders) supported enforcement of the By-Law requiring the Post Commander or their Designee attend District Meetings and Conventions with the exception of one individual, the Junior Past State Commander.

It is true that this is a volunteer organization but be reminded of a portion of your obligation as a member and officer, "I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter – By-Laws and Ritual of this order and I will always be loyal thereto." As a member and elected officer you swore of your own free will to uphold the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure for this organization. As a member organization, you the members of your post elect your Post Commander. As a Post Member you are supposed to support the Post Commander in his/her endeavors to carry out the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is not the Post Commander's sole responsibility to perform each and every action that must be done in the post. For example, is your Post Commander expected to perform the janitors' duties? Is the Post Commander expected to be the building manager? Or is the Post Commander expected to be the lawn maintenance person? We all know that in a post, many members are involved in its operation and therefore should all be involved to ensure that they are represented at every level of this organization, County Council, the District, State and even at the National level. As one of the narratives explained, the VFW is nothing at the State, the District and County levels without the post, which leads one to believe that the post is the VFW.

Further, for those who take this issue or any other VFW issue outside of the VFW Organization i.e. the newspaper, television, etc. remember that you may be subjected to actions as prescribed in Article IX of the By-Laws.

We have all heard of the Boston Tea Party. We all know why this historic event occurred. It was because the citizens were tired of being taxed by the government without representation. So many times we hear that the different levels of the organization this happened, that happened and they took my rights away. If your Post Commander is not ensuring that your Post is represented at

the District level, then you have no voice in how the organization is being operated and your rights are being taken away by not being represented.

One example: I recently received a call at Department Headquarters from a Post Quartermaster complaining that "you guys took away my right as Quartermaster to collect dues and manage my post membership." By his own admission, the Quartermaster stated his Post has not been represented at a District meeting for many years. When asked if his Post had voiced their opinion at the District Meeting when this topic was going to be voted on at the National Convention, his response was, "my Post does not do District meetings." Just one of many examples of the conversations that have occurred.

As the result of some of the Post Commanders being removed other issues have been brought out. For example: one lady called the office and stated that her husband would be very proud to be the Commander of the Post, unfortunately, he died in 2011 but was listed as the current Sr. Vice Commander. Similarly, a call from a World War II veteran who did not understand how he became the Commander since he had not been to a meeting of the Post in over 10 years and thought his post was closed. There were many such stories that occurred. Sad, but very true.

So my questions are: How can this happen? Who is overseeing this Post? What is the membership doing? Where are the District Inspectors?

I am sure this editorial will provide ample opportunity for those who would like to manipulate words and phrases for their own purpose. Equally for those who enjoy dwelling on the negative and get pleasure provoking those in leadership positions who are trying to right the inadequacies of past years and whose sole purpose is to be counterproductive and disruptive in advancing the VFW, this article has given them plenty of material to react to; many opportunities to provide negative feedback and outlandish remarks.

I would like to challenge each of you to focus your energy and to be positive in trying to resolve these issues and return the VFW back to its primary purpose.

**Do not be a part of the problem, step up and be a part of the solution.**

Sincerely,

**Hal**

**Harold "Hal" Burke, Jr.**

**PSC/PSQM/PNJAG**

**State Judge Advocate**

## Gene Ratigliano

### Department Inspector

Posts are inspected each year to ensure that Posts are following the guidelines outlined in the Congressional Charter By-Laws Manual of Procedure & Ritual and are following other rules and regulations established by Federal, State and local governments. This is particularly important if a Post has a Canteen, runs Bingo, sells Bell Jar tickets or runs other games of chance.

Unfortunately, not all posts prepare themselves the way they should for the Post inspection. The inspection form itself is an excellent source which can be used to prepare for the inspection. Reviewing the questions and having the items identified on the inspection form will ensure the Post inspection is completed efficiently and expeditiously. The last thing the inspector wants to see is a Post Commander, Quartermaster or Adjutant scrambling for reports, check ledgers, insurance forms etc., wasting time and lending an air of disorganization.

What can you do to prepare for a successful inspection? Firstly, review the inspection report for the previous year and use it as a guide for the current years' inspection. Secondly, ensure that items identified as deficiencies the previous year were corrected. If identified deficiencies have not been corrected, be ready to provide a reason why they are still uncorrected. Thirdly, have the necessary documentation the Inspector will be reviewing ready for him or her prior to their arrival such as, documentation verifying elected officers eligibility, Community Activity and Quarterly Trustee Reports, copy of the IRS 990 or e-mail certification from the IRS of its acceptance, checkbook & checkbook registers, ledgers, bank statements, Bell Jar Quarterly Reports, CD & savings account statements etc. Most importantly, ensure you have available documentation of your Post's Employer Identification Number (EIN).

Of the Post Inspections received to date, a number continue to having missing or deficient information. A number of Posts are still struggling to file their IRS 990 and in some cases do not have copies available for the Inspector for attachment to the inspection form. At the Department C of A and at the Fall Conference, District Commanders were provided with information to assist you if needed. Some posts continue to be underbonded and many fail to transfer their Dues Reserve Fund to the General Fund on 1 July

*SR. VICE COMMANDER, continued from page 1—*

and I would like to think we are as strong as those before us. I would bet that many of us learned of the VFW because of a local post in our community and were invited in because of a family member, friend or local community acquaintance. Maybe you knew you wanted to join that post because you saw them in the community doing parades, Poppy drives, supporting the little leagues or helping out veterans or families who really needed help and felt that was something you could get behind. For most of us, our first impression of the VFW comes from the first post we walked into. We stayed because of what was happening there, maybe because of the people you knew in it, or the community support they were doing or even the camaraderie you felt just being there. The post had something to offer, much like a favorite store you might go to because you know when there is something you need you will probably find it there.

Stores need to advertise to attract customers and live up to what they advertise in order to succeed. When you go there, they are open, they have the items you were looking for and you liked the service you received. In the business world this is called GOOD WILL and it has a value. Let me ask you...How many times do you go back to a store that is closed every time you want to go there? How many times are you willing to go back when you receive bad service or no service at all or the items you were looking for are never there? How willing are you to bad mouth that store, after a bad experience, when it is brought up in conversation? We all know that it is easier to bad mouth than share good experiences. Those stores usually don't last too long because they are advertising that they are inaccessible, unfriendly and provide you with nothing but a bad opinion of them, and if it is a chain store you perceive that they are all like that.

Our posts are no different than a store. Everything a post does or doesn't do is

as required by Sec. 717 of the By-Laws. Also, some Posts are failing to maintain a Relief Fund as required by Sec. 704. These items are basic to Post Operations and should be known to all Quartermasters. After consultation with the Department Commander, the memstats will now only reflect inspections that have no issues or have been closed because deficient items have been corrected. If a Post has been inspected and it is not indicated in the memstats, it means the post still needs to be inspected or has open items that need to be attended to.

If you are concerned about your Post inspection or have questions, do not hesitate to contact your Council or District Commander for assistance. They are there to help and provide the corporate knowledge if needed.

**Post Inspectors:** Please ensure all your completed Post inspections are forwarded to your District Commander for review. The District Commander will in turn review the completed inspection forms and forward them to me at Department Headquarters.

advertising; it is projecting an image of what the VFW is as a whole. So I am asking you, if your post is not open regular hours (meeting date and time), you are not doing your programs or meeting the responsibilities you swore to take on; if you are not accepting new members because you "like it the way it is" or don't welcome a new face than you are the ones I am talking to. You are the ones that need to change your advertising!!! The VFW is in competition with groups like the Wounded Warriors and Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). They are in step with the times and are attracting the new veterans (customers) in droves. The VFW needs all of its posts to be visible, functioning and welcoming just to start to be competitive, because if we don't we will be closing our doors.

If your post is one that you can't get enough members to come to meetings to even fill the officer's chairs, or you have one person doing everything...You Are In Trouble and should be reaching out to your County or District Commanders for assistance to get your post back on track.

To the posts that are active doing programs and getting new members, please share some of the things you have learned that work with other posts that may be struggling, for we are in this together. District meetings are a good time to talk and exchange ideas.

My responsibility, our responsibility as lucky Americans, is to try to give back to this country as much as it has given us, as we continue our American journey together.  
~ Colin Powell

I believe that Colin Powell's statement can apply to the VFW as well.

I wish each and everyone one of you and your families a wonderful Christmas and Hanukah season with a Healthy and Prosperous 2015!!!

**Marlene Roll**  
**Sr. Vice Commander**



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



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

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

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

Gene Ratigliano  
Service Officer Raffle Chairman



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Go to: [www.nyamvets.com](http://www.nyamvets.com)  
<http://www.nyamvets.com/empire-amvet-newspaper.html>



Go to: [www.calegion.org](http://www.calegion.org)  
<http://www.calegion.us/ca-legionnaire-low.pdf>

*Publishing for veterans, firefighters and police associations since 1982*



## Department Service Officer Update on Clothing Allowance

Veterans who have unique clothing needs as a result of a service-related disability or injury may receive a supplement to their disability compensation. The clothing allowance reimburses you if a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance you wear permanently damages your clothing, or by a prescribed medication you use on your skin. If eligible, you can receive a one-time or yearly allowance for reimbursement.

### Eligibility

You may receive a clothing allowance as a Veteran who uses either of the following:

- Prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, such as a wheelchair or crutches, because of a service-connected disability Note: soft and flexible devices, such as an elastic stocking, are not included.
- Medication prescribed by a physician for a service-connected skin condition that causes permanent stains or otherwise damages outer garments.

Additional clothing allowances may be provided if more than one prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, or medication described above, is used and/or affects more than one type of clothing garment.

### Benefit

Payments are based on the rate table set by law. You can view the current rate table to determine the benefit amount. (Clothing Allowance is currently \$764.30.)

To receive annual payment, you must establish eligibility by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the year for which you claim payment.

### How to Apply

Submit VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance to the prosthetic representative at your local VA medical center. You can use Facility Locator to locate your nearest VA health care facility. If you have not submitted a claim for disability compensation, you must complete the application prior to filing for clothing allowance. For more information, call VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Applications are collected throughout the year and held until the closing date of August 1st. They are then processed and Veterans will receive payments between September 1st and October 31st. This is an annual payment and will only be made during this time frame. If you have not received your payment by October 31st, you should contact your local prosthetic representative.



Merry  
Christmas

*Happy Holidays  
to our members  
and their families  
and all the  
Best in the New Year!*

## 2015 Military Retirement COLA Set for Week of October 27, 2014

Military and federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients will see a 1.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment in January.

*A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who sent sympathy cards to us for the death of Paul's brother. We really appreciated your thoughts and prayers during this time.*

**Paul and Bonnie Burgy,  
VFW Ladies Auxiliary PSP**



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## SOCIETY OF THE 1st INFANTRY DIVISION



PO Box 607, Ambler, PA 9002  
 Phone: 215-654-1969 / Fax: 215-654-0392  
 PO Box 1127, Junction City, KS 66441  
 Phone: 785-579-6761 Fax: 785-579-6762



Email: [soc1ID@aol.com](mailto:soc1ID@aol.com) [PA] [soc1ID1918@aol.com](mailto:soc1ID1918@aol.com) [KS] Web: [www.1stID.org](http://www.1stID.org)

### NEWS RELEASE

### Famous "Big Red One" To Hold 2015 Reunion in Lombard, IL

Ambler, PA veterans of the Army's renowned 1st Infantry Division, The Big Red One, will hold their 97th Annual Reunion in Lombard, IL from June 17 – 21, at the Westin Lombard. The reunion will be conducted by the Big Red One veterans' organization, the Society of the 1st Infantry Division headquarters in Ambler, PA.

The 1st Infantry Division is the Army's oldest and arguably the most famous division. It served with great distinction in World War I, World War II, Vietnam and the first Gulf War (Desert Storm) as well as in Germany and the US during the Cold War. Elements of the 1st Infantry Division have participated extensively in Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and also in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The 1st Infantry Division has also trained thousands of Military Transition Team members and deployed them to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Over 700 Big Red One veterans and their guests attended the 96th Annual Reunion recently held in Orange County, CA. The Commanding General of the Division and a solid contingent of leaders and young soldiers serving in the Division added a fresh and exciting dimension to the reunion.

Everyone who ever served in the 1st Infantry Division or any unit attached to it is cordially invited to attend the reunion.

Details and reservation forms will be available in the spring issue of the Society's newspaper, *The Bridgehead Sentinel* or after January 2015 on our website: [www.1stID.org](http://www.1stID.org), or by mail, fax or phone from:

Society of the First Infantry Division  
 PO Box 607, Ambler, PA 19002  
 Phone: (215) 654-1969  
 E-mail: [SFIDPA@gmail.com](mailto:SFIDPA@gmail.com)  
 Website: [www.1stID.org](http://www.1stID.org)

LTG ROERT E DURBIN, USA (RET), PRESIDENT  
 CSM DARRELL "BUDDY" WALLACE, USA, (RET) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**"NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT: NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT: - DUTY FIRST"**

## Department of NY Scouter

Every VFW Post should have a goal to support Scouting in one or more ways:

### **SPONSOR, PARTNER, RECOGNIZE**

**Sponsor** a Scouting unit-VFW Posts sponsor Units of Cubs, Scouts, and Venture/Sea Scout Crews.

**Partner** in supporting a Scouting Unit - VFW Posts can work with other organizations (church, fraternal, school, etc.) to provide regular sponsorship support to a unit.

**Recognize** the successes of Scouts and their leaders. Make presentations to Scouts who earn Eagle, Silver Award, Quartermaster award and Girl Scout Gold award. Recognize leaders supporting Scouting in your community.

Provide Scouts with opportunities to earn service hours - Scouts are ready to assist your Post with flag retirements, participate with the Post in parades, assist with Flag Day and other ceremonies as well as assist your Post with visits to veterans in hospitals and nursing homes.

Recognize an Eagle Scout of the Year - Scouts holding the Eagle Scout Award and Girl Scouts with the GSA Gold Award. Attend Scout Courts of Honor and present certificates noting their accomplishments. Make them aware of the National Scout Scholarship. Deadlines for submission of scholarship entries for Department of New York are the 1<sup>st</sup> of March to the Post. Post entry to the District is the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. District to the Department Scouter is the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Do not submit entries to Albany.

**Verl Ringgenberg, Department Scouter**

PO Box 33, Hortonville, NY 12745  
[vringgenberg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:vringgenberg@hvc.rr.com)



## PVT Leonard Post



## VFW Post Sends Care Packages to Antarctica

October 9, 2014 by Bob Conner

Ballston, PA — Twenty large boxes of donated supplies were sent off from a local VFW post Wednesday to Stratton Air National Guard Base in Glenville, and ultimately to Antarctica.

The care packages were donated by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 358 on North Street in Ballston Spa and will be distributed between October and May to members of the U.S. Air Force 109th Airlift Wing on their coming deployment to Antarctica.



**Capt. Ashley FitzGibbon**

About a dozen members of the 109th came to the VFW post Wednesday to say thanks and pack the boxes onto a pickup truck. “This post adopted our unit,” said Capt. Ashley FitzGibbon, who lives with her husband Joshua in Saratoga Springs, and “We’re extremely thankful for it.” According to a press release from post Quartermaster John Lombardo, after the adoption the post last year held was “a well-attended welcoming party and BBQ so veterans and their families, and 109th members and their families, could get to know one another and solidify their relationship.”

109th Command Chief Amy Giaquinto said the post’s support even extended to financial assistance for a 109th member who was in an auto accident.



**Command Chief  
Amy Giaquinto**

Some of the airmen are, like VFW Post 358 Commander and Vietnam veteran Dennis LaQue, veterans of foreign wars. 109th Staff Sgt. Derek Monaghan and Tech Sgt. Leslie Gould spent about five months in 2012 split between Afghanistan, at Bagram Airfield, and Kuwait. Senior Master Sgt. John Lawlor was in Iraq from January to May 2008, serving in Baghdad at the Sather Air Base.



**Staff Sgt. Derek Monaghan**

“The hot item was beef jerky,” said Monaghan about last year’s care packages from the post. Other items in the packages included personal care products, clothing and “memory foam pillows,” Monaghan said. He is that there is a community store on the Antarctica base, but sometimes there are shortages when bad weather stops incoming flights. He said members of the 109th came up to Ballston Spa last week to help pack the boxes.



Most of the 109th members present Wednesday were full-timers in the Active Guard Reserve. FitzGibbon said there are about 1,200 people in the unit, 500 of them in the Active Guard Reserve. One is Senior Airman Timothy Schmitt, who is from Malta and now lives with his wife in Saratoga Springs. He is making a career in the National Guard. He expects to serve his third Antarctica deployment from January to March next year, which is summertime in

Antarctica. A crew chief, he and most of the others who deploy will work on maintaining the LC-130 Hercules aircraft used by the Air Force in Antarctica. The planes land on skis.

The 109th Airlift Wing’s mission supports the National Science Foundation’s research into matters such as climate changes, ozone depletion, earth history and astronomy.

This year, the VFW post doubled the number of packages to 20 at a cost of almost \$4,000. Much of the money came from fund-raisers, said LaQue, such as a lobster bake and, last Saturday, a \$10 chicken barbecue held at the post. Karen Shea, a member of the Ladies Auxiliary and post liaison to the 109th, helped coordinate the project as did Quartermaster John Lombardo.

In the press release, Lombardo cited the involvement of Monaghan and Gould in the project, and urged members of the military and area veterans to join the VFW and become active members. He said the post “pays the dues every year for anyone who is still serving in the military. So there is really no reason not to join us. But getting the word out and getting military members to take the time to sign up is difficult.

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## DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.

### POW/MIA Program 2014 – 2015 Contest National POW/MIA Recognition Day is the third Friday in September – (Sept. 19, 2014)

**Purpose:** To implement programs at Posts, Districts, and Department levels that will raise and intensify awareness of the **POW/MIA** issue among our members and within our communities.

**Goals:** 1) To achieve the fullest possible accounting of American service personnel who are Missing in Action, and the return of those held as Prisoners of War;  
2) To assist the families of **POW/MIA** service personnel.

**Methods:** Veterans of Foreign Wars, including the Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries, should maintain high visibility of the **POW/MIA** issue.

- 1) Fly or display the POW/MIA Flag at your Post.
- 2) Include the POW/MIA Flag in your color guard.
- 3) Appoint a POW/MIA Chairman who will do the job, not just accept the position.
- 4) Disseminate reliable information to your membership, utilizing your every

means of communication with your membership and community, such as your bulletin board newsletter and reports at meetings.

- 5) Include your community leadership in your functions and events.

**Examples:** Arrange a City Proclamation for **POW/MIA** Recognition Day/Week. Invite the Mayor or representatives to attend your ceremonies. Inform the local media about your activities. Be prepared to answer questions about the **POW/MIA** issue.

**Reports and Awards:** No formal reports are required. However, I suggest that you send me information about your **POW/MIA** event through your District **POW/MIA** Chairman, so we will be able to use it as a basis for awards at the 2015 Department Convention. Please include news articles, photos or other documentation if you can.

(NOTE: This will be in addition to your regular Community Service Report. All reports must be in my hands no later

than May 15, 2015 in time for the 2015 Department Convention.)

Keep yourself and your membership informed. A very reliable source of information is the National Alliance of **POW/MIA** Families online at [www.nationalalliance.org](http://www.nationalalliance.org)

To receive their online newsletter, "Bits N Pieces," email: [lynn@nationalalliance.org](mailto:lynn@nationalalliance.org)

**YOUR SUPPORT OF ALL V.F.W. PROGRAMS IS NEEDED!**

\*\*\*Citations will be awarded for outstanding participation in **POW/MIA** program\*\*\*

For assistance with your program, feel free to contact us any time:

Pat Luliucci, Department **POW/MIA** Chairman  
516-668-7383  
Email: [thevulcan325@aol.com](mailto:thevulcan325@aol.com) (or)  
Pete Vitulli, Department **POW/MIA** Co-Chairman  
516-729-8053  
Email: [sneakypete43@aol.com](mailto:sneakypete43@aol.com)



### Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars POW/MIA Program 2014 – 2015 Pin and Patch



**Please show your support by wearing a POW/MIA pin or patch!**  
**Proceeds Donated to National Alliance of Families  
for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen**

[www.nationalalliance.org](http://www.nationalalliance.org)

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- (Actual pin size is one inch)

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  - \$45.00 a dozen
- (Actual pin size is one inch)

- Patches \$5.00 each
- \$55.00 a dozen

All items can be mailed

To place your order, please contact any one of the following:

Pat Luliucci, POW/MIA Chairman  
516-668-7383  
Email: [thevulcan325@aol.com](mailto:thevulcan325@aol.com)

Pete Vitulli, POW/MIA Co-Chairman  
516-729-8053  
Email: [sneakypete43@aol.com](mailto:sneakypete43@aol.com)

Donald Thorne  
518-947-0999  
Email: [frogsafari@yahoo.com](mailto:frogsafari@yahoo.com)

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