



(516) 887-7100 Fax (516) 887-7175

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK, INC.  
200 Atlantic Avenue, Lynbrook, New York 11563



### April 2008 Newsletter

#### **OUR 87<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY: CONTINUING OUR MISSION**

*Theodore A. Barbuto; Department  
Commander*

***America was not built on fear.  
America was built on courage, on  
imagination, and unbeatable  
determination to do the job at  
hand.***

**~President Harry S. Truman**

We recently held our annual March State Executive Committee meeting in beautiful Kerhonkson, New York. We had a great turnout and held very productive meetings. I hope that each of you who were not able to attend this year will consider attending next year. The Auxiliary held their annual March School of Instruction at the same time.

Our Joint Session held on the last morning was exceptional. The room was packed, the camaraderie fantastic, and the information shared exceptional. Our National Guest, Junior Vice Commander Wally Tyson spoke and said that our Joint Session is something that he will take back to share with his home state of South Carolina.

I want to thank everyone who helped to make my Testimonial Dinner a night to remember. I especially want to remember, P.D.C. Joseph Paone. He, along with many of you, traveled my journey with me on the road to commander. My friends and family

made this a night that I will always treasure. I am glad that so many of you were there.

Our work is never finished. We are still working to find prospective sites for assisted living in New York State. As we strive to take care of our own, we must be creative, imaginative, and bold in asking for what we need. There still may be many sites that could be available for the asking.

With spring comes the promise of renewal. We must keep on our legislators to review and renew the promises they made to us during election years. Check their voting records. Make sure they are voting for veteran's issues and not just vocalizing their support when they need us. We ARE Disabled American Veterans and WE VOTE! We are not afraid to change the candidates we want in office. We have the courage now that we had as young men and women who faced the challenge of defending our country and its people.

Our 87<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner is coming up May 18th. This is a day in which we gather as comrades of the State of New York to celebrate the many years that we have worked, collaborated and overcome our disabilities to stand united together in this great organization of ours. Please send your reservations in early. Dinner at the El Caribe is fabulous. I hope to see many of you there.



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### **A NEW YORK STATE OF "BENIGN NEGLECT"**

*Sidney Siller, Sr., PDC; Department  
Adjutant*

Wherever I went - wherever I chose to live - in whatever style I could afford -

Many of the great things the I have experienced in this melting pot of cultures from every corner of the world; together with languages and foods that I tastefully experienced. A treat preserved for me by my Hungarian born mother who was generous enough through her own epicurean skills protected my tastebuds so that I could enjoy the benefits of many national foods.

A state and city that gave me for the most part a classical education, in the public schools and college (Brooklyn). Most of us do not realize that in 1949, when I received my BA from Brooklyn, it was recognized as the #1 Academic College in the United States. Yet, it was virtually a tuition free school except for student fees of about \$25.00, and of course books. Personally, New York State in this sense was good to me.

Yet, with all these bountiful gifts from the Empire State, I have a growing disrespect for New York State that is based on its' "benign neglect" of its' veterans of all the wars. Basically, the only two things that I recall were good

I always, without a nano second of hesitation - declared that I truly enjoy "my" great state of New York. I affirm this in spite of enduring many past summers of intense heat; insufferable winters; crowded subway cars; and twice a day traffic jams.

programs by New York State was the bonuses paid to World War II veterans, and the purchase of Camp McGregor. Both of which were initiated under the aegis of Governor Thomas E. Dewey.

The bonuses went to World War II veterans based on stateside or overseas duty.

The Camp McGregor issue was complicated. Governor Dewey paid Met Life one (1) million dollars for McGregor in 1945 for the purpose of rehabilitation after the troops left the VA hospitals in New York State. However, problems arose locally when the State claimed the veterans were "hitting" on the local ladies to the objection of the local male studs.

The fact that the State of New York was in its perpetual state of poverty and wanted to pick up the one (1) million dollar expenditure was the real reason, not the social problems caused by the viagra-less inmates of McGregor.

In the 50's one term Governor Averill Harriman tried to sell McGregor but was rebuffed by the legislature in "Special Session."



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In 1960, Governor Rockefeller nailed it; when he made a deal with a certain VSO to support the sale of McGregor, and it was a done deal. McGregor was sold after 15 years.

So what's my gripe? The New York Legislature has not passed any significant legislation that provided necessary and vital benefits to our disabled veterans and those veterans who have served their country, and their state.

What I propose now is that we end  
*VA Press Release*  
WASHINGTON (April 3, 2008) -- Veterans who last year received disability compensation, pensions or survivors' benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may be entitled to an economic stimulus payment of at least \$300. To qualify, veterans must file a tax return for 2007, even if they aren't normally required to file. "The President's economic stimulus benefits have a special provision for low-income veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "VA is working closely with the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department to get the word out about this unique benefit." Under the White House's program, payments are \$300 for an individual, \$600 for a married couple filing joint tax returns, plus \$300 for each dependent child under age 17 on Dec. 31, 2007. To qualify, taxpayers must have at least \$3,000 in income in 2007. While VA's disability compensation, pensions and

this period of virtual stagnation when it comes to our veterans in the State of New York.

What we need is a State of New York **GI Bill of Rights**; and a pressing need to end New York State's "Benign Neglect" of our finest citizens - those who served.

Keep tuned!

### ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE WILL BENEFIT SOME VETERANS

survivors benefits are not subject to income tax, the administration's economic stimulus proposal, passed by Congress in February, allows veterans and survivors to count those payments toward the income requirement of \$3,000. To claim the benefit, veterans -- like other taxpayers -- must file an income tax return. For eligible veterans who do not normally file a tax return, information about claiming the economic stimulus payment is available in "Package 1040A-3," available from IRS offices or on the Internet at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/k1040a3.pdf>. IRS is mailing a package of information to recipients of VA benefits who did not file a tax return last year. For more information, visit the IRS Web site at <http://www.IRS.gov>.

### PROSTHETIC LIMB DEVELOPMENT

*Lt. James EMO Tichacek, USN  
(Ret) Director, Retiree Assistance Office*



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Hundreds of veterans face the challenge of learning to live with a missing arm. To make that transition easier, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) launched a \$55-million project that pools the efforts of prosthetics experts nationwide to

This summer the team hit a critical milestone when it finished Proto 2, a thought-controlled mechanical arm -- complete with hand and articulated fingers -- that can perform 25 joint motions. This dexterity approaches that of a native arm, which can make 30 motions, and trumps the previously most agile bionic arm, the Proto 1, which could bend at the elbow, rotate its wrist and shoulder, and open and close its fingers. A person wearing a Proto 2 could conceivably play the piano. The next steps are to shrink the battery, develop more-efficient motors, and refine the bulky electrodes used to read electrical signals in muscles. A video clip of this prosthetic device can be viewed at <http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/industry/4224764.html?series=37video>

Research on the use of Rockets to help power robotic arms, could help lead to "better, stronger, faster" bionic limbs. Strength is a major hurdle in overcoming the develop-challenge of building a usable device. A new prototype rocket powered arm can lift about 20 to 25 pounds (three to four times more than current commercial prosthetic arms) and can do so three to four times faster. "Our design does not have superhuman strength or capability, but it is closer in terms of function and power to a human arm than any previous prosthetic device that is self-powered and weighs about the same as a natural arm. It has about 10

create a thought-controlled bionic arm that duplicates the functions of a natural limb. If all goes well, by 2009 the agency will petition the Food and Drug Administration to put the arm through clinical trials.

times as much power as other [robotic] arms", said researcher Michael Goldfarb, a roboticist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. "The rocket-powered arm also has greater dexterity and freedom of movement than any other prosthetic to date. Conventional prosthetic arms have only two joints, at the elbow and the "claw." This prototype functions more naturally than previous models, with a wrist that can twist and bend, and fingers that open and close independently. A video clip of this prosthetic device can be viewed at [http://www.livescience.com/php/video/player.php?video\\_id=220807BionicArm](http://www.livescience.com/php/video/player.php?video_id=220807BionicArm).

In a separate effort, Inventor Dean Kamen is developing an extraordinary prosthetic arm at the request of the US Department of Defense, to help the 1,600 who've come back from Iraq without an arm (and the two dozen who've lost both arms).

His tasking is to develop a prosthetic with which vets could pick up a raisin or a grape off a table, put it in their mouth, without destroying either one, and be able to know the difference without looking at it. In other words, a device that has efferent, afferent, and hepatic response.

With a team he put together 13 months ago, they have developed a



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prosthetic that has 14 out of the 21 degrees of freedom available to a normal arm. You don't need the ones in the last two fingers. It has an elastic set of 14 actuators, each one, has its own capability to sense temperature and pressure. It also has a pneumatic cuff that holds it on, so the more it is put under load, the more it attaches. When the load is reduced it becomes more compliant. In a video clip recorded MAR 07 that can be viewed at <http://www.cnn.com/2007/TECH/science/09/05/bionic.arm/index.html> a demonstration of the effectiveness of the arm is shown. A man wearing the prosthesis takes a bottle of water from a woman's hand, drinks from the bottle, raises the prosthetic arm to his face and scratches his nose, picks up a pen with his opposed thumb and index finger, and picks up a piece of paper, rotates it and raises it to read.

### 2008 – 2009 CHAPTER SERVICE OFFICER CERTIFICATION TRAINING

Once again, DAV National Service Officers (NSOs) from the New York, Albany, and Buffalo National Service Offices are pleased to be conducting the Yours in Comradeship, Bryan J. Held, Supervisor Disabled American Veterans, Buffalo, NY (716) 857-3354

### VA ANNOUNCES SGLI AND VGLI PREMIUM REDUCTIONS

*VA Press Release*

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2008) - Veterans and military personnel with life

2008-2009 Annual Department Service Officer (DSO) and Chapter Service Officer (CSO) Certification Training at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa, 400 Granite Road, Kerhonkson, NY, 12446. This year training will be held on **Monday, June 23, 2008, starting at 2:00 p.m. and Tuesday, June 24, 2008, starting at 2:00 p.m. until completion**, in conjunction with the DAV Department of New York Annual Convention.

Although all are encouraged to attend this training, certification and training materials will be limited to newly elected or appointed Chapter Service Officers for 2008-2009. Supervisory NSO Bryan Held will be coordinating training and will be sending official notification and instructions to each Chapter regarding this training in the near future. It is vital for this information to be shared at Chapter meetings and the registration information properly completed and returned by the deadline. Please contact me with any questions you may have:

We look forward to seeing you at the training.

insurance policies managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see a reduction in their premiums, thanks to improved investment earnings and a reduction in non-combat claims. The premium cuts affect military personnel covered by Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and veterans covered by the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI). "The reduction in SGLI premiums makes life insurance even more affordable for



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today's men and women in uniform," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Lower VGLI premiums will allow more veterans to provide this low-cost financial security to their families." On July 1, 2008, the premiums for basic SGLI will be 6.5 cents per month for \$1,000 of coverage, down from 7 cents per month for \$1,000. This translates into a 7 percent savings. Servicemembers with the maximum \$400,000 of coverage will see their monthly premium reduced from \$28 to \$26. Servicemembers are also covered against severe traumatic injury for an additional dollar each month. The reduction in SGLI premiums is made possible by lower, non-combat-related claims and increases in investment earnings. VA officials believe this premium reduction will help maintain the nearly universal participation in the program. VGLI provides renewable term policies for people after their discharges from the military. Veterans pay premiums according to their age for this coverage. On July 1, 2008, VGLI premium rates will be reduced for veterans aged 30 to 64, who make up 85 percent of those insured under the program. Premium rates for those under age 30 are already competitive. Premium reductions, ranging from 4 percent to 12 percent, are a result of fewer claims being received. The reductions will ensure that VGLI remains highly competitive with

These well equipped "offices on wheels" will eliminate long trips some veterans must take to visit our National Service Offices. This means providing better service to more veterans and their families. NSO's, often aided by Department and Chapter Service Officers who are staffing the MSO's, will

similar insurance offered by commercial insurers. "With servicemembers putting their lives at risk against terrorism, life insurance coverage is more important than ever," added Peake. Peake said the premium reductions should result in increased program participation and retention. With increased enrollment, the department may be able to reduce rates in the future. More than 2.4 million people currently participate in the VA-managed SGLI program, with another 433,000 in VGLI. To obtain more information about the SGLI and VGLI premium reductions or to view a table with the new VGLI rates, visit the VA insurance Web site at [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov), or call the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance at 1-800-419-1473.

### **MOBILE SERVICE OFFICE PROGRAM**

The work of NSOs extends well beyond their offices and extends deep within the veterans community.

Part of their outreach activities involves DAV's Mobile Service Office (MSO) Program. This program is designed to educate disabled families on specific veteran's benefits and services.

stop in communities across the country and assist veterans in completing applications for benefits from the VA and other government agencies.

The following is the Spring 2008 MSO list of stops in our area. The time



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for all stops is from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm.

Please contact NSO Supervisor Bryan Held with any questions you may have at (716) 857-3354.

#### **Sat. May 31, 2008 -**

**Gowanda** Harley-Davidson  
2535 Gowanda-Zoar Road

#### **Sunday, June 1, 2008 - Fredonia**

Wal-Mart  
10401 Bennett Road

#### **Monday, June 2, 2008 - Salamanca**

Haley Building  
3645 Administration Drive

#### **Tuesday, June 3, 2008 - Machias**

Machias Library  
9538 Main Street

#### **Wednesday, June 4, 2008 - Sonyea**

American Legion #1341  
7150 Sonyea Road

#### **Thursday, June 5, 2008 - Rochester**

VA Outpatient Clinic  
465 Westfall Road

#### **Friday, June 5, 2008 - Rochester**

VA Outpatient Clinic  
465 Westfall Road

Additionally, the MSO will return to the Albany, Buffalo, and New York City area later this year.

Information regarding MSO stops to be scheduled will be posted in an upcoming newsletter.

### WHERE YOU STAND

*Joseph Alvino, Commander, Nassau/  
Suffolk County District Council DAVNY*

There's an old expression: "Where you stand depends on where you sit."

It means that all of us have thoughts and feelings that are influenced by our experience and perspective. That's true for a lot of things in life, but it's a very good way to think about being a member of the DAV. Most of the time, we only think about what affects us directly. What's going on with my disability claim? What's going on in my chapter? Who are my leaders and what are they doing or not doing for me? These are natural inclinations and fair questions that you should be able to answer. But, you can't stop there. Even self-interest often requires you to look beyond yourself.

DAV is bigger than all of us. What happens to benefits and entitlements we have earned while in service to our country affects all of us and the more we know about them, the better. Likewise, there is strength in numbers and we as members of this great organization are much more effective when we work together.



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That doesn't mean it is easy. Protecting our rights for fair treatment by the Congress and Administration and ensuring that our benefits are not diminished or taken away is becoming an everyday challenge. The DAV fights for these things every day. Think about what other veterans who don't have an organization such as the DAV are up against.

The DAV only succeeds as often as we do because individuals like you and so many others are willing to come together and work for the common good. It is our strength, but there are many forces out there trying to break it every day. Our best protection is a better informed, experienced and active you!

DAV is the nation's leading veterans service organization for many good reasons. Take a broader view of what we do and why. It will improve where "you" stand.

### **VA BENEFITS GUIDE**

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently published their Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents for 2008. An easy-to-read reference guide, it provides the most current information about your earned benefits.

Be careful before hitting the print button--it is 153 pages and may take some time to print. However, you may want to hit your "Save to" tab and download it for future reference into a

folder of your choice. You can download or print your copy at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf>.

### **PREPARE YOUR CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS NOW**

The 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention will soon be upon us. It's time to start preparing general and constitutional resolutions, if any are to be submitted by your or your Chapter.

The rule is simple: All resolutions should be submitted to the Office of the Adjutant in quintuplet (in plain English, that means 5 copies), printed or typewritten, signed by the sponsor or sponsoring Chapter, and in proper resolution form, no later than (10) days prior to opening of the Department Convention. All resolutions submitted after such time will be referred to the appropriate Convention Committee by the Adjutant on or before noon, Monday, June 23, 2008.

What is proper form, you ask?

Here is a sample:

**(A Concise Title)**

***(Whereas Clauses - give justification)***

***Whereas***, the Tax Simplification Plan, released by the Department Treasury, proposed taxation of VA disability compensation benefits; and



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**Whereas**, in the entire history of the disability compensation programs, more than reduction in benefits have never been subject to taxation; and

**Whereas**, taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veterans population; NOW

#### LAST WORD:

Convention committees cannot consider resolutions that are not in proper form and are not routed through the Department Adjutant's Office.

Be nice, do it right, please.

#### TAPS

Department has been notified that the following comrades have been called into final formation above:

**William T. Holbert**, Chapter #153, 1/12/08

**James M. Partigianoni**, Chapter #153, 3/14/08

**Carl B. Proper**, Chapter #153, 3/17/08

**Gerald E. Cornell**, Chapter #153, 3/18/08

***(Resolved Clause - give course of action to achieve goal)***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Disabled American Veterans, Department of New York in Convention assembled, vigorously opposes any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation.

**Edwin G. Moran**, Chapter #153, 4/4/08

**Thomas A. McMasters, III**, DAV Past National Commander (1995-1996)

**Harry R. MacDonald, Jr.**, DAV Past National Commander (1997-1998)

Department and the membership extend deepest sympathies to the family members, friends and comrades of these fallen heroes. May each one rest in honor.

Please feel free to call, write or e-mail [davny@optonline.net](mailto:davny@optonline.net) Headquarters if you have a loss in your Chapter that you would like to include in this column.

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Department of New York's 87th Anniversary Celebration**  
Sunday May 18, 2008



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El Caribe Country Club  
Brooklyn, New York

**Department of New York Convention**

June 22, 2008 to June 25, 2008  
Hudson Valley Resort  
Kerhonkson, New York

**Rehab Cruise XVII**

July 8, 2008  
Nautical Empress  
Freeport, NY

**2008 National DAV Convention**

August 9, 2008 to August 12, 2008  
Bally's Hotel Las Vegas  
South Las Vegas, NV

Please take care when filling out the **Chapter Officer Report** and the **Chapter Recommendation For Committees Form**. Make sure the names and addresses are legible. Do not forget to include the correct zip codes.

**MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Theodore A. Barbuto,  
Department Commander

**To:** All DAV Members and Guests  
**Re:** Department of New York 87<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Celebration

**Make your reservations for:**  
May 18, 2008 El Caribe Country  
Club Brooklyn, New York

**CHAPTER OFFICERS - PLEASE  
TAKE NOTICE**