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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

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



June 2009 Newsletter, Volume 17 Number 12

### **Membership Status as of 6//09**

**Trial Members 2,504**

**Part Life Members 2,732**

**Full Life Members 49,789**

**Total Members 55,025**

**Goal for Full Life Members 49,606 (100.37%)**

### **CHAPTER 12**

*Robert J. Finnerty, Department Commander*

As we near the end of the DAV year, it also coincides with a changing of the guard. The Department accomplished many wonderful things this year.

Sid Siller and I traveled up to Albany along with most of the other veteran organization commanders throughout the State to meet with the Director of NYS Division of Veterans Affairs. One of the advisors did inform us that the State is beginning a counseling program to help returning veterans and their families and reunite them with other families in similar situations. My question about the program is, did they discuss what benefits the veterans are entitled to during these sessions? It is up to all of us to inform the returning veterans of their rights. It is very important that they fill out the necessary paperwork immediately because they only have a few years to file. Lastly, we were informed that the United States plans to deploy and redeploy troops to Iraq until 2012.

On Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, Sid and I attended a dedication of the portside elevator on the USS Intrepid, which hasn't worked since 1972. Otis Elevator donated the labor for the installation of the elevator and DAV National donated the sum of \$450,000.00 for the elevator. Now as many as 42 wheeled bound veterans and other disabled people can visit the flight deck. Before the elevator was installed, they could only go to the second deck hanger. The elegance and restoration of the Intrepid was excellent. I think the Intrepid is a vital part of our naval and air history, which should be visited by all of us. Veterans do receive a discount to visit the Intrepid.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May we had our gala dinner and dance at the El Caribe. It is hard to believe that Prosper out did himself again. This time he really raised the bar. Next years gals will have a hard time to out do this year. Great job Prosper and from the whole Department, thank you for the outstanding job you did.

See all of you at the 88<sup>th</sup> Convention – Go DAVNY!



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## **“EXCELSIOR” – THE ESCUTCHEON**

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

It's the New York State motto. Not sawdust. It's a brilliant use of one word as an appropriate motto for our Empire State. With Flag Day on June 14<sup>th</sup>, we all celebrate “Old Glory” for all of the virtues that it signifies. Yet, hardly anyone mentions their State Flag positively, and there are any number of splendid works of art representing many states. Nonetheless, most vexillologists rate New York's escutcheon as a symbol of historical value.

“Excelsior” means upwards – some say onwards and upwards. I prefer onwards and upwards.

Adopted April 2, 1901, a simple description of our New York Flag: The background is a deep navy blue with two female figures holding a shield between them. The shield contains a body of water (supposedly the Hudson River) with two (2) vessels, while mountains depict the highlands.

At the left, stands Liberty, at her feet a discarded crown symbolizing freedom from British Rule, while her right hand holds a pole topped by a Phrygian Cap which was given to freed Roman slaves. On the right stands Justice blindfolded. Equality is represented by scales in her left hand; ideally presenting that all should be treated equally.

New York was admitted to statehood on July 26, 1788.

Nearly 19 million New Yorkers were counted in the 2000 census. Despite the States size – close to 50,000 square miles – almost ½ of the population lives in metropolitan New York City. Among those born in New York State were U.S. Presidents Martin Van Buren (8<sup>th</sup>), Millard Fillmore (13<sup>th</sup>), Theodore Roosevelt (26<sup>th</sup>) and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (32<sup>nd</sup>).

The Flag of New York State represents diversity, influence and resiliency that makes the tapestry of geography and ethnicity so American. We have magnificent mountaintops, waterfalls to valleys, rivers, lakes and the Atlantic Ocean beaches with the Metropolitan Museum, the United Nations, the New York Stock Exchange, the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty.

But, most importantly, New York State has been and still is a leader in civility in the nation, as well as resilient; as again proven in the days following 9/11.



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What makes New York State (the people) made this country great. New York was a fountainhead for immigration and finance. Most of the wealth of the nation floated through New York to other states. People worked and made their careers in New York and most in the last 60 years retired to warmer climates; taking their personal wealth (the aggregate value of their value as human beings) and their property.

On this Flag Day, let us not only revel in the history of “Old Glory,” but also give a thought or two to the Empire State Flag. I am sure that many can be said for many other State Flags, but I still am enthralled by New York’s own.

“Excelsior,” DAV’s “onwards and upwards.”

### **2009 – 2010 CHAPTER SERVICE OFFICER CERTIFICATION TRAINING**

DAV National Service Officers from the New York City, Albany, and Buffalo National Service Offices are pleased to be conducting the 2009-2010 Annual Department and Chapter Service Officer Certification Training at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa, 400 Granite Road, Kerhonkson, NY, 12446. This year training will be held on **Monday, June 29, 2009, starting at 2:00 p.m. and Tuesday, June 30, 2009, starting at 2:00 p.m. until completion.** in conjunction with the DAV Department of New York’s Annual Convention.

Although all are encouraged to attend this training, certification and training materials will be limited to Department Service Officers and newly elected or appointed Chapter Service Officers for 2009-2010. NSO Supervisor Bryan Held has sent official notification and instructions to each Chapter regarding this training.

**It is vital for this information to be shared at Chapter meetings and the registration information properly completed and returned as soon as possible. Please DO NOT WAIT TO GET THESE IN as we an accurate count for supplies.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this training, please contact NSO Supervisor Bryan Held at (716) 857-3354.

**VA SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE**



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Suicidal ideas and attempts to harm oneself are the result of problems that may seem like they can't be fixed. The Department of Veterans Affairs has set up a toll-free National Suicide Prevention hotline staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day. If you feel you are in crisis, call toll-free **1-800-273-TALK** and tell them you are a veteran. You'll be immediately connected to VA suicide prevention and mental health professionals. All calls are confidential.

### **VA BLUE WATER CLAIMS**

*Source: NAUS Weekly Update 29 May 09*

As most Vietnam-era veterans know presumption for Agent Orange related health conditions are based upon the member having actually had "boots on the ground" for at least one day. Those serving aboard ships have been divided into two groups. In the Blue Water groups are those individuals who were considered not to have been in country and among the Brown Water group are those who worked primarily on the rivers and are already considered to qualify.

A question by a veterans' organization representative, at a previous quarterly meeting, has led the VA to slightly change the rule. Now if a service member can prove that he was aboard a ship that actually tied up to a pier in Vietnam and that can be proved, the member will be considered as being in country and the presumptive conditions can apply. If you or someone you know meets these qualifications and has previously been turned down for Agent Orange related conditions, now is the time to re-open your case with the VA.

### **PURPLE HEART POSTAGE STAMP**

*Source: Military Report article 25 May 09*

Tammy Duckworth, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) assistant secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, recently spoke at a U.S. Postal Service ceremony announcing the reissue of the Purple Heart stamp. This is the fifth issue of the Purple Heart definitive postage stamp. The Purple Heart stamp was first issued on May 20, 2003. The reissued stamp features a photograph by Ira Wexler of one of two Purple Hearts awarded to James Loftus Fowler of Alexandria, Va., who was battalion commander of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines serving in Vietnam. A picture of the



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new Purple Heart stamp is available on the U.S. Postal Service website [http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2009/pr09\\_022.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2009/pr09_022.htm). For more information, contact your local post office.

## **VA STUDIES ADVANCED PROSTHETIC ARM**

*VA Press Release 5/27/09*

### ***New Mobility for Veterans, Service Members, Other Americans***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced a three-year study of an advanced artificial arm that easily allows those with severe limb loss to pick up a key or hold a pencil.

“This arm is a high-tech example of how VA researchers are continually modernizing the materials, design, and clinical use of artificial limbs to meet Veterans’ lifestyle and medical needs,” says Dr. Joel Kupersmith, VA’s Chief Research and Development Officer.

In collaboration with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the study marks the first large-scale testing of the arm, which allows those who have lost a limb up to their shoulder joint to perform movements while reaching over their head, a previously impossible maneuver for people with a prosthetic arm.

The study is under the direction of Dr. Linda Resnik at the Providence, R.I., VA Medical Center. Veterans fitted with the arm will provide feedback to guide engineers in refining the prototype, before it is commercialized and also made available through the VA health care system.

A unique feature of the advanced arm is its control system, which works almost like a foot-operated joystick. An array of sensors embedded in a shoe allows users to maneuver the arm by putting pressure on different parts of the foot. The current version uses wires to relay the signals to the arm, but future versions will be wireless.

The arm can also be adapted to work with other control systems, including myoelectric switches, which are wired to residual nerves and muscles in the upper body and respond to movement impulses from the brain, shoulder joysticks or other conventional inputs. Frederick Downs Jr., director of VA’s Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service who lost his left arm during combat in Vietnam, said he was “brought to tears” recently when the



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prosthetic arm allowed him to smoothly bring a water bottle to his mouth and drink. "Learning to use the controls is not difficult," he said, due in part to a sensor in the artificial hand that sends a vibration signal that tells how strong the grip is. A stronger grip causes more vibration.

VA prosthetics research also includes vision and hearing aids, wheelchairs and propulsion aids, devices to help people with brain injuries to become mobile, and adaptive equipment for automobiles and homes -- "everything that's necessary to help Veterans regain their mobility and independence," said Downs.

## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY PAYMENTS OF \$250**

*NSO Supervisor William F. Gibney*

### **Economic Recovery Payments of \$250**

Many of our members may be receiving unexpected cash money in the coming weeks as part of the efforts to spur the economy out of the current doldrums. And it is only the smallest part of the overall effort as described below.

#### **Overview of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, 2009. It is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act is an extraordinary response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression, and includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

#### **Implementing the Recovery Act**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides the Department of Veterans Affairs funding of \$1,408,200,000 to improve its medical facilities and national cemeteries, provide grants to assist States in acquiring or constructing State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing facilities in order to furnish care to Veterans, to hire and train temporary claims processors, to pursue needed information technology systems initiatives, to administer one-time payments of \$250 to eligible Veterans and their survivors or dependents, and to oversee



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and audit programs, grants, and projects funded under ARRA. The ARRA also provides for an additional, estimated \$700 million for the one-time \$250 economic recovery payments.

### **Veterans Benefits Administration - Veteran Economic Recovery Payments**

(estimated \$700 Million for payments plus \$7.1 Million for General Operating Expenses and \$100,000 for Information Technology to administer the payments)

The ARRA provides for a one-time payment of \$250 to eligible Veterans and survivors to help mitigate the effects of the current economy. VA estimates making \$700 million in payments. VA is working in coordination with the Social Security Administration, the Railroad Retirement Board, and the Department of the Treasury to make these payments beginning in June 2009.

It sounds like good news, in the form of one-time payments of \$250, coming down the pike. We are waiting to learn just who the “eligible” veterans and survivors are.

### **NAVAJO CODE TALKERS**

*Source" MarineCorpsTimes Felicia Fonseca article 21 May 09*

A Navajo Code Talker who was part of the original group recruited to develop what became an unbreakable code that confounded the Japanese during World War II has died. John Brown Jr. died May 20th at his home in Crystal, N.M., according to his son, Frank Brown. He was 88. Several hundred Navajos served as Code Talkers during the war, but a group of 29 that included Brown developed the code based on their native language. Their role in the war wasn't declassified until 1968. Brown received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2001 along with other members of the original Code Talkers. Less than a handful are still alive. In an acceptance speech on behalf of the Code Talkers, Brown said he was proud that the Navajo language bestowed on them as a Holy People was used to save American lives and help defeat U.S. enemies. As Code Talkers and Marines, he said they did their part to protect freedom and Democracy for the American people. "It is my hope that our young people will carry on this honorable tradition as long as the grass shall grow and the rivers flow," Brown said, according to a CNN transcript.

Navajo Code Talkers used their language to transmit military messages on enemy tactics, Japanese troop movements and other battlefield information in a code the



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Japanese never broke. Code Talkers took part in every assault the Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945, according to the Naval Historical Center in Washington. After the war, the Code Talkers were told to keep their work a secret. The younger Brown said even after his father's role in the war was declassified, he didn't say much about it. "He was just real secretive until very recently," said Frank Brown. "I've seen him do lectures. People, they wanted to hear more details, things he did in combat, but he really wouldn't come out about it." Keith Little, president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association and a Code Talker himself, said he often wondered who developed the code. While in training, he asked questions but only told he'd find out later. "It's quite an honor to have him as one of the Navajo Code (Talkers), using the Navajo language," Little said of Brown. "Of course we all respect him for being one of the first."

### **ALL NATIONAL CONVENTION (GO-ERS) DELEGATES**

If you are attending the National Convention in August, please note that the **DAV District Meetings for our District** will be held on **Friday, August 21, 2009 from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm and it is imperative that you be there.** Check the Convention Agenda for the meeting room location.

### **DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT YOUR 2009 DELEGATE CREDENTIALS**

You'll need delegate credentials to represent your Department, Chapter or Auxiliary Unit during the 88th DAV and Auxiliary National Convention at the Sheraton Hotel in Denver, Colorado, "so don't leave home without yours."

"It's important for all DAV and Auxiliary delegates attending our National Convention to obtain proper credentials to be seated as voting delegates representing their Department, Chapter or Unit," National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson said. "Having proper credentials maintains the integrity of our convention system and guarantees the most accurate representation of the will of the membership of this great organization."

National Membership Director Anthony Baskerville stressed the electoral process is the key to the future of the DAV and Auxiliary, adding the National Membership Department is prepared to assist anyone in order to make the process of obtaining credentials as easy and accurate as possible.

Details of the credentialing process are mailed to all Departments, Chapters, Auxiliary



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State Departments and Units well in advance of the National Convention. The April Membership Memo is scheduled to include all necessary forms needed for credentialing. The forms must be signed by the Commander and Adjutant of the delegate's appropriate Department or Chapter or Auxiliary State Department or Unit. All subordinate organizations of the DAV should select delegates and alternates as soon as forms arrive and be sure to get the lists of delegates and alternates to National Headquarters before the deadline.

Remember, conventions are for guests too. Be sure to register guests attending the National Convention to ensure they will have registration badges permitting them to attend many business sessions and lots of planned social functions.

The 88th DAV and Auxiliary National Convention at Sheraton Hotel Denver will certainly be a fun-filled, exciting event you won't want to miss. Get your credentials, and join us for a great convention.

### **CHAPTER OFFICERS - PLEASE TAKE NOTICE**

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.

#### **TAPS**

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

**Bruno "Brownie" Yacavone**, Chapter #153, 5/6/09

**Oliver C. Stanton**, Chapter #153, 5/14/09

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.



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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **Department of New York Convention**

June 28, 2009 to July 1, 2009

Hudson Valley Resort  
Kerhonkson, New York

### **Rehab Cruise XVII**

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Nautical Empress  
Freeport, NY

### **Buffalo Bisons DAV Day at the Ballpark**

Sunday, July 19, 2009

Coca-Cola Field  
Buffalo, NY

For information call (716) 857-3354

### **2009 National DAV Convention**

August 22, 2009 to August 25, 2009

Sheraton Hotel Denver  
Denver, CO 80202

## **HOUSE PASSES LEGISLATION TO END DELAYS IN VETERANS HEALTH CARE FUNDING**

*DAV Press Release 6/10/09*

The DAV applauds today's passage of the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act by the House Committee of Veterans' Affairs (S.423/H.R.1016). This vital legislation would authorize Congress to approve health care appropriations to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) one year in advance of the start of each fiscal year, effectively ending the funding delays that have plagued the VA when Congress has failed to pass an appropriations bill on time.

"After many years of failed attempts to end delays in funding for veterans health care, we are encouraged that this legislation continues to move forward in Congress with the House Committee's vote today," said DAV National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey. "Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Bob Filner (D- Calif), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, sufficient, timely and predictable funding for



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veterans health care is one step closer to becoming a reality. We look forward to Congress passing this legislation, which will provide VA administrators and directors ample time to properly plan how best to use VA funds without adding a single dollar to the federal deficit.”

The Veteran Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act (S.423/H.R.1016) was unanimously approved by the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs in May. In addition to the bi-partisan support of 48 Senators and 117 House members, President Obama has expressed his support for advanced appropriations VA health care.