



# NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS  
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

Volume 17 Number 5

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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

*Robert J. Finnerty, Department Commander*

October was a very busy month for me and my aides. We continued our upstate tour by visiting Buffalo, Batavia and Bath Hospitals. I would like to thank the directors and VAVS managers for their warmth and friendly welcome. The tours were highly productive.

On October 17th, I attended an advisory meeting at the Bronx VA Medical Center. They introduced a new program, it's called [Healthvet.com](http://Healthvet.com). If you have a PC or access to one (every library has one), try this web site, it is full of great information on all subjects about your VA care. You can review all your VA records; appointments; and when your meds were shipped. There is quite a list of things you can do. Log on to this site and try it. It is going to be the future way the VA will inform us of appointments and all aspects regarding your health care.

On a sour note, the Pentagon as reported by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D) Ohio, shrank a backlog of unprocessed claims, wrongly denied payments to nearly 2,000 severely injured veterans.

Do not forget November 11th is Veteran's Day. Thanks to President Bush and the Congress, the week of November 9th through November 15th, 2008 will be called "National Veterans Awareness Week" to emphasize the need to develop educational programs recalling the contributions of our veterans to our country. I ask all veterans to wear an article of clothing to show everyone you are proud to be a veteran. Show off our colors, and remember our fallen comrades-in-arms. Say a prayer for them.

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## POST ELECTION AGENDA

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

Now that our quad annual political dance is over, our work and mission needs greater attention. I am certain that the times ahead will be difficult with respect to our economic issues.

The research and communications firm of Belden Russonello & Stewart issued a report on August 29, 2008; that "Americans believe that providing medical care to injured, sick and disabled veterans should be near the top of our nations priorities, and that three-quarters of the public think the federal government is not doing enough to support military veterans. A large majority of the public favors preventing funding delays of veteran's health care programs..."

These are among the key findings of a telephone poll of 827 adults conducted by Belden Russonello & Stewart on an omnibus questionnaire by DAV-National between August 20 and August 24, 2008. The margin of error for a sample of this size is 3+/-3.4 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Americans prioritizes caring for veterans, in line with resolving the war in Iraq and lowering gasoline prices.

"44% of Americans say that providing medical care to injured, sick and disabled veterans should be a "top priority" for the next President and Congress."

More needs to be done to support military veterans. Three quarters of Americans (77%) believe the government needs to support military veterans. Ten percent (one in ten persons) say that the government is doing enough and just 2% say that too much is done for veterans.

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*Continued from Robert J. Finnerty's column, page 1*

Have a happy and safe Veteran's Day. Also, thank you for your service and welcome home.

## **ALL CHAPTERS MUST NOW FILE WITH THE IRS**

*Anthony Mirando, Department Treasurer*

All Chapters must now file a 990-N form with the Internal Revenue Service before the end of the year. Unfortunately, this must be filed electronically using a computer. The website address is <http://epostcard.form990.org>.

Be sure to have your Chapter's Identification Number ready. You will first be asked to create a login and password for your Chapter. You will then be instructed on filling out the form and submitting it. All this form consists of is filling in your Chapter's address and a contact person for the Chapter.

If you do not file your e-Postcard on time, the IRS will not assess a penalty for late filing the e-Postcard. However, an organization that fails to file required e-Postcards (or information returns – Forms 990 or 990-EZ) for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-exempt status. The revocation of the organization's tax-exempt status will not take place until the filing due date of the third year.

If you need assistance filing or have any questions, please contact me at (516) 887-7100.

### **Membership Status as of 11/13/08**

Trial Members: 2,523

Part Life Members: 2,757

Full Life Members: 49,278

Total Members: 54,558

Goal for Full Life Members: 49,606 (99.34%)

### **DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

Department of New York

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*Continued from Sidney Siller, Sr.'s column, page 1*

More than eight in ten of citizens (83%) favor requiring Congress to determine the budget for veteran's health care for one year in advance to prevent delays. Fifty-six percent plus "strongly" support the proposal. Nine percent oppose changing the method of health care funding for veterans.

Overwhelming majorities support diagnosis and treatment for traumatic brain injuries. Nine of ten American's (92%) say Congress should take action this year to increase funding for "TBI" and mental health issues such as Traumatic Stress Disorder. Citizens support extending VA benefits and tuition, support job training and employment assistance to caregivers of severely disabled veterans. Nine in ten (89%) favor expanding to help these caregivers financially support the family's veteran.

The American public loves its veteran population; especially we the DAV. We have to work hard to insure that the good will of the American citizenry (a grateful nation) is fulfilled. The report of the survey is a splendid example of our National Department's professional use of a telephone survey to take the temperature of public opinion of our mission issues.

So now that the election is over, we are into planning our 2nd Northeastern Congressional Breakfast on February 24, 2009, at the Capital. Be sure to come and bring your Representative with you.

## **NEW LAW AUTHORIZES VETERANS' SALUTES DURING NATIONAL ANTHEM**

*VA Press Release October 30, 2008*

WASHINGTON (Oct. 30, 2008) -- Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during

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the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applied to members of the armed forces while not in uniform.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veteran's service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official headgear.

The most recent change, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed on Oct. 14.

The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008.

## **VA MOBIL COUNSELING CENTERS**

*VA Media Relations 22 Oct 08*

The first of a fleet of 50 new mobile counseling centers for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vet Center program was put into service 22 OCT with the remainder scheduled to be activated over the next three months. Each vehicle will be assigned to one of VA's existing Vet Centers, enabling the center to improve access to counseling by bringing services closer to veterans. The 38-foot motor coaches, which have spaces for confidential counseling, will carry Vet Center counselors and outreach workers to events and activities to reach veterans in broad geographic areas, supplementing VA's 232 current Vet Centers, which are scheduled to increase to 271 facilities by the end of 2009. Vet Centers, operated by VA's Readjustment Counseling Service, provide non-medical readjustment counseling in easily accessible, consumer-oriented facilities, addressing the social and economic dimensions of post-war needs. This includes psychological counseling for traumatic military-related experiences and family counseling when needed for the veteran's readjustment. The team leader at each Vet Center will develop an outreach plan for use of the vehicle within that region, not being limited to the traditional catchment area of a particular Vet Center. These

vehicles will be used to provide outreach and direct readjustment counseling at active-duty, reserve and National Guard activities, including post-deployment health reassessments for returning combat service members. The vehicles will also be used to visit events typically staffed by local Vet Center staff, including homeless "stand downs," veteran community events, county fairs, and unit reunions at sites ranging from Native American reservations to colleges. While most of their use will be in Vet Centers' delivery of readjustment counseling services, the local manager may arrange with VA hospitals or clinics in the region to provide occasional support for health promotion activities such as health screenings. The normal counseling layout can be converted to support emergency medical missions, such as hurricanes and other natural disasters. The 50 vehicles are being manufactured for VA by Farber Specialty Vehicles of Columbus OH. The home base of the planned vet center vehicle for New York will be in Watertown, New York.

## **BACK PAY INTEREST**

*ArmyTimes Kelly Kennedy article 19 Oct 08*

Black World War II soldiers wrongly convicted of murder and inciting a riot at Fort Lawton, Wash., are entitled to receive back pay with interest after having their paychecks cut as punishment in 1945. Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash., announced that President Bush had signed a bill 14 OCT that would award back pay plus interest to any service member who was owed back pay due to a correction of military records. The bill came after Jack Hamann wrote a book called "On American Soil" detailing the killing of an Italian prisoner of war by a white American soldier because the Italian had been flirting with American women on post. Italian prisoners of war were allowed to roam freely at the time. The American soldier tried to cover up the murder -- the Italian was hung from a tree -- by starting a fight between other Italian POWs and black American soldiers who were in a barracks adjacent to where the prisoners were being held. In a quick trial, three black soldiers were convicted of murder and 40 were convicted of rioting. Many were sent to prison, and most were dishonorably discharged. Hamann's book showed the men were innocent and that the evidence against them was flimsy at best. "Justice has prevailed, but more than that, the dignity, courage and honor lived by Samuel Snow, Booker Townsell and

other African-American soldiers throughout a half century of racial injustice will write a new chapter in American history that children will learn about for generations to come," McDermott said.

"While no amount of money can ever repay the lost opportunities endured by these African-American soldiers, they would be the first to say it was never about money; it was always about equal protection under the law for everyone in America." The new bill allows the secretary of defense to pay interest on back pay, which had previously been illegal. Samuel Snow of Leesburg FL was among the 28 black soldiers falsely convicted. Snow, a teenager at the time, served almost 12 months in a military prison and then was dishonorably discharged from the Army. Snow died last July at age 83 only hours after receiving an honorable discharge and an Army apology during a ceremony in Seattle. Snow always said that he had nothing to do with the riot. Last year, the Army overturned Snow's conviction and he was sent a check for \$725. But the amount was not adjusted for inflation. That led Nelson to take up Snow's cause and pressure the Army to include the interest. He joined U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Seattle, to place legislation in a military appropriations bill that awards back pay plus interest to veterans who have had their convictions overturned. Now that the bill has been signed into law Snow's family has received another check for \$28,305 which is the \$725 compounded over 60 years at 6% interest.

## **OVERSEAS HOLIDAY MAIL DEADLINE DATES**

The 2008 Christmas holiday mailing deadlines have just been announced. If you want your cards, letters, and packages to arrive to a military member overseas, or deployed on a Navy ship by Christmas, be sure to mail them by the following dates:

For military mail addressed to APO/FPO AE zips 090-098 (except 093); AA zips 340; and AP zips 962-966:

- Express Mail: Dec. 18
- First-Class Mail (letters/cards and priority mail): Dec. 11
- Parcel Airlift Mail: Dec. 4
- Parcel Post: Nov. 13

For military mail addressed to APO/FPO AE ZIP

093:

- Express mail Military Service: N/A
- First-Class Letters/Cards/Priority Mail: Dec. 4
- Parcel Airlift Mail: Dec. 1
- Space Available Mail: Nov. 21
- Parcel Post: Nov. 13

\*\* On a side note, Hickory Farms is offering FREE SHIPPING TO ALL APO/FPO address through January 1, 2009. Check out their web site at [www.HickoryFarms.com](http://www.HickoryFarms.com).

## **A VETERAN'S DAY PRAYER**

Dear Lord,

Today we honor our veterans,  
worthy men and women  
who gave their best  
when they were called upon  
to serve and protect their country.  
We pray that you will bless them, Lord,  
for their unselfish service  
in the continual struggle  
to preserve our freedoms, our safety,  
and our country's heritage, for all of us.  
Bless them abundantly  
for the hardships they faced,  
for the sacrifices they made  
for their many different contributions  
to America's victories  
over tyranny and oppression.  
We respect them, we thank them,  
we honor them, we are proud of them,  
and we pray that you will watch over  
these special people  
and bless them with peace and happiness.  
In Jesus' name we pray; Amen.

By Joanna Fuchs  
[www.poemsource.com](http://www.poemsource.com)

## **VA ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF DISABILITY EVAL- UATION SYSTEM PILOT**

*VA Press Release*

WASHINGTON (Nov. 7, 2008) -- Wounded service members leaving the military will have easier, quicker access to their veterans benefits due to the

expansion of a pilot program that will offer streamlined disability evaluations that will reach 19 military installations, representing all military departments.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the expansion of the Disability Evaluation System (DES) pilot which started in the National Capitol Region in coordination with Departments of Defense (DoD). The pilot is a test of a new process that eliminates duplicative, time-consuming and often confusing elements of the two current disability processes of the departments.

"Providing Service members going through the disability process with comprehensive information about their benefits from both departments and delivering their VA benefits as fast as possible is our goal. This single evaluation will help us do just that," Tom Pamperin, deputy director of VA's Compensation and Pension Service, said. "The program expansion will allow wounded warriors a smoother and more efficient transition to getting services from the VA."

The initial phase of the expansion started on Oct 1, with Fort Meade, Md. and Fort Belvoir, Va. The remaining 17 installations will begin upon completion of site preparations and personnel orientation and training, during an 8-month period from November 2008 to May 2009.

"The decision to expand the pilot was based upon a favorable review that focused on whether the pilot met its timeliness, effectiveness, transparency, and customer and stakeholder satisfaction objectives," said Sam Retherford, director, officer and enlisted personnel management, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. "This expansion extends beyond the national capital region, so that more diverse data from other geographic areas can be evaluated, prior to rendering a final decision on worldwide implementation."

The remaining installations to begin the program are: Army: Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; Fort Richardson, Alaska; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas; and Fort Polk, La. Navy: Naval Medical Center (NMC) San Diego and Camp Pendleton, Calif.; NMC Bremerton, Wash.; NMC Jacksonville, Fla.; and Camp Lejeune, N.C. Air Force: Vance Air Force Base, Okla.; Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.; Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.; and Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

In November 2007 VA and DoD implemented the pilot test for disability cases originating at the three major military treatment facilities in the national capi-

tol region. To date, over 700 service members have participated in the pilot over the last ten months.

The single disability examination pilot is focused on recommendations from the reports of the Task Force on Returning Global War on Terrorism Heroes, the Independent Review Group, the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (the Dole/Shalala Commission), and the Commission on Veterans' Disability Benefits.

## **DAV LAUNCHES "THANKS A MILLION" CAMPAIGN**

*DAV Press Release November 6, 2008*

### *New Text Messaging Initiative Aims to Send One Million "Thanks" to Nation's Veterans*

COLD SPRING, Kentucky – This Veterans Day, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) plans a grassroots campaign to send a million messages of thanks to the brave men and women who have served this great nation and to raise \$5 million to ensure our veterans receive the health care and other benefits they earned and deserve.

With a simple text message, anyone can make a \$5 donation to DAV by texting the word THANKS to 90999\*. This program allows individuals to say THANKS to our nation's heroes for their service and sacrifice any where, any time.

"We are very excited to be able to use this new text messaging technology so that more individuals can easily say "Thanks" to our heroes this Veterans Day from their cell phones," said DAV national adjutant and CEO Arthur H. Wilson. "We hope that the American public will join us in this effort to send a million thanks and convey our deep gratitude to the men and women who have served our country."

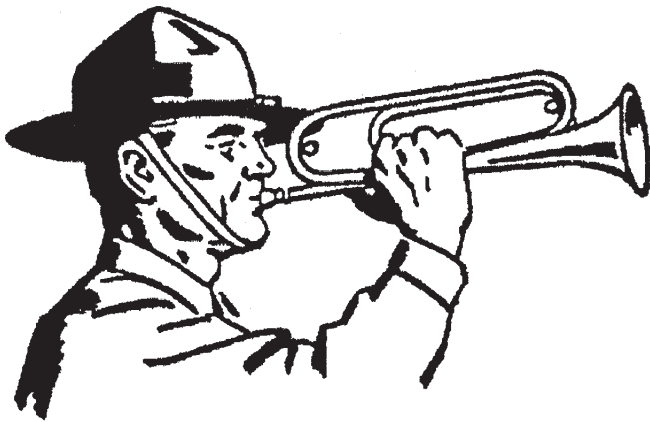
Each time someone texts the word THANKS to 90999, a \$5 donation will be added to the donor's next mobile phone bill. Text donations to DAV will fund its many important programs that provide critical assistance to our veterans and help our heroes receive the medical care they so justly deserve. For more information, visit [www.dav.org/thanksamillion](http://www.dav.org/thanksamillion)

Throughout its 88-year history, DAV is the leader in providing direct one-on-one assistance to veterans. With highly trained professional benefits specialists in hundreds of field offices and on military bases nationwide, as well as thousands of volunteers, DAV ensures veterans receive adequate medical treatment, provides transportation to/from hos-

pitals for care, delivers relief from disasters, and educates the public about disabled veterans issues. DAV provides services to over a quarter of a million veterans and their families every year.

As a new generation of wartime disabled veterans return from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, the DAV is working hard to ensure all veterans are cared for well into the future.

\*\*A one-time charge of \$5 will be added to your mobile phone bill. Standard messaging rates and additional fees may apply. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service carrier. Proceeds benefit the Disabled American Veterans. You may donate the \$5.00 amount up to 5 times. Service is available on most carriers. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting 'STOP' to 90999. For help text HELP to 90999. To Opt-Out send STOP to 90999.



## TAPS

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

**Joseph C. Barone**

Chapter #30 Past Commander, 11/1/08

**Nick Doloisio**

Chapter #153, 11/8/08

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

## **2009 Mid-Winter Conference**

**February 22, 2009 to February 25, 2009**

Crystal Gateway Marriott  
Arlington, VA 22202

## **State Executive Committee Meeting**

**March 13, 2009 to March 15, 2009**

Hudson Valley Resort  
Kerhonkson, NY

## **Department of New York's 88th**

### **Anniversary Celebration**

Sunday May 17, 2009

El Caribe Country Club  
Brooklyn, New York

## **Department of New York Convention**

**June 28, 2009 to July 1, 2009**

Hudson Valley Resort  
Kerhonkson, New York

## **Rehab Cruise XVII**

**July 14, 2009**

Nautical Empress  
Freeport, NY

## **2009 National DAV Convention**

**August 22, 2009 to August 25, 2009**

Sheraton Hotel Denver  
Denver, CO 80202