



# NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 18 Number 11

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## FALLEN HEROES

*Leo Ortiz, Department Commander*

As we all know, May is the month we remember and honor our fallen heroes. Please take time to march in your local parades and participate in Memorial Day services and events.

I am recovering from surgery that took place late last month, and will begin touring the upstate VAMC's with my co-partner, the DAVA Commander Marie Sternecker.

Our State Convention will soon be upon us. It will take place at the Hudson Valley Resort June 27th through the 30th, 2010. Our DAV National Commander Roberto "Bobby" Barrera will be our National representative. I hope to see you all there. There will be classes to re-certify our Chapter and Department Service Officers. If you plan to attend, your Chapter must reserve your spot with Assistant Supervisor Howard Lam at our New York City National Service Office.

Please continue to support the many bills in Congress by keeping in touch with your local representatives. I am pleased to hear there will be no Tricare fee increase in 2011. The \$125 billion VA Budget request sent to Congress covers many areas, but focuses on three central issues: Reducing Claims Backlog; Automating the GI Bill; and Eliminating Homelessness.

Please continue to pray for our servicemen and women wherever they may be serving.

## "IN THE TRENCHES"

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

This column is not about our fun loving "Trench Rats," although many of the "rats" do many other selfless acts that benefit us all.

Trench warfare to the best of my recollection probably ended when the "Maginot Line" collapsed during the fall of France before the United States entry into WWII.

My specific usage refers to those of us who volunteer our time to fulfill the Disabled American Veteran mission to make life better for our disabled comrades and their families.

As we remember our fallen veterans on this Memorial Day, we also have a concurrent responsibility to care for America's disabled veterans and those volunteers in our State who are on a daily basis contributing to the quality of life for all of us.

A prime example of honoring those who perished so that we could all be free and taste the fruits of our liberties is the annual Memorial Day ceremony on the deck of the historic naval museum the Intrepid. Restored to its pristine condition several years ago, the Intrepid adds to the myriad of memorial tributes from Arlington National Cemetery to all of the ceremonies and monuments in our Nation and whereas our troops have fallen.

The best example of volunteerism, and they are all significant, are the volunteers who ensure our disabled veterans can have transportation for their medical treatments. The countless miles are in the

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millions, during all kinds of seasonal extremities. We should remember the men and women who do the volunteer work in the hospitals. These contributions make these folk special!

So, as we look at this coming Memorial Day, let me suggest that as we remember our fallen comrades, we also remember those volunteers that help our living men and women veterans enjoy a better quality of life.

## **KUDOS TO MANTILLA**

Jr. Vice Commander Samuel Mantilla recently received the President's Call to Service Award from President Obama presented by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. This was in recognition and appreciation of his commitment to strengthening our Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service.

## **SCOOTERS AT CONVENTION**

Once again, at our Department Convention in June, Golden Technologies will graciously have twenty scooters available for use free of charge. If you need a scooter, please call Headquarters to be put on the reserve list.

Also, Golden Technologies will have some scooters for sale. The price for scooters to be purchased "as is" will run from \$300.00 up to \$375.00. If you are interested in purchasing a scooter, please see Doug Platt at the Convention.

## **2010 – 2011 CSO/DSO CERTIFICATION TRAINING**

DAV National Service Officers from the New York City, Albany, and Buffalo National Service Offices' will be conducting the 2010-2011 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 28, 2010, starting at 2:00 p.m. and Tuesday, June 29, 2010, starting at 2:00 p.m. until completion in conjunction with the DAV Department of New York's Annual Convention. (Dates and times are

subject to change)

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 2010-2011. Official notification and instructions have been mailed 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 to Howard Lam at the National Service Office in New York City – not Department Headquarters.

The following Chapter's Addendums have been received:

Chapter 1 - 3 to be certified  
Chapter 4 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 5 – 1 to be certified  
Chapter 8 – 3 to be certified  
Chapter 16 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 23 – 6 to be certified  
Chapter 28 – 1 to be certified  
Chapter 34 – 4 to be certified  
Chapter 38 – 3 to be certified  
Chapter 82 – 3 to be certified  
Chapter 88 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 92 – 5 to be certified  
Chapter 98 - 2 to be certified  
Chapter 109 – 1 to be certified  
Chapter 118 – 4 to be certified  
Chapter 126 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 143 – 3 to be certified  
Chapter 145 - 2 to be certified  
Chapter 154 - 3 to be certified  
Chapter 156 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 203 – 2 to be certified  
Chapter 212 - 4 to be certified

If your Chapter is not on this list, I have not received the Addendum yet. Those Chapters need to contact me ASAP or that Chapter will not be certified at the Department Convention for the CSO training.

NSO Assistant Supervisor Howard V. Lam (212) 807-3157.

# RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR OF NYS DVA

*NYS DVA Media Release 5/18/10*

ALBANY, NY (05/18/2010)(readMedia)-- Governor David A. Paterson has accepted the resignation of James McDonough, Jr., as the Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs.

"During Jim's tenure as Director of the Division of Veterans' Affairs he aggressively and successfully led the Division forward in service to New York's veterans and their families," Governor Paterson said. "In the two and a half years under Jim's leadership, the Division dramatically increased the amount of federal benefits awarded to New York's veterans and their families. I thank him for his service to New York's veterans, and wish him well in his future endeavors."

Director McDonough said: "It has been a profound honor and privilege to serve New York's veterans and their families as Director of the Division of Veterans' Affairs and for that, I'd like to thank Governor Paterson and his Administration for their support."

Director McDonough's resignation will be effective on June 15, at which time William A. Kraus will assume the role of Acting Director. Mr. Kraus has served as the Division's Executive Deputy Director since January 2008. Prior to working for the Division, Mr. Kraus was employed by the New York State Assembly, Department of Labor and the Office of General Services. Mr. Kraus has a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the State University of New York at Albany. In January 2009, Kraus retired from the United States Navy Reserve at the rank of Commander.

## U.S. TREASURY DIRECT EXPRESS® DEBIT MASTERCARD® PILOT

*NYS Division of Veteran Affairs email 5/17/10*

The U.S. Department of the Treasury is sending a direct mail letter in the coming weeks to a select group of VA Compensation or Pension check recipi-

ents to encourage them to switch from a paper check to the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card for their payments. The Direct Express® card is endorsed by VA and is safer, easier and more convenient than receiving a paper check.

### THE MAILING

#### *Who will receive the mailer and when?*

In May and June 2010, 150,000 VA Compensation or Pension check recipients in Texas, New York, California, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, and West Virginia will receive the mailer, which will include a letter from Treasury's Financial Management Service, a brochure explaining the features and benefits of the card, and a form they can use to sign up for the card by mail. (A postage-paid envelope will also be included.) VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries can also sign up by phone at (888) 544-6347.

#### *How will a VA Compensation or Pension beneficiary know the mailing is legitimate?*

The return address will display the name "Department of the Treasury, U.S. Treasury Processing Center," and the letter inside will be signed by Walt Henderson, Director of Treasury's EFT Strategy Division.

#### *How might VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries hear about the Direct Express card even if they don't receive the mailing?*

If a VA Compensation or Pension beneficiary also receives Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, he/she may have heard about the Direct Express card through check inserts sent by the Treasury Department. Additionally, VA will provide information about the mailing and the Direct Express card to its veteran service organization partners, regional offices and call centers, and on its website.

#### *If a VA Compensation or Pension check recipient does not receive the mailer, can he/she still sign up for the card now?*

Yes. The beneficiary can call the U.S. Treasury Processing Center at (888) 544-6347 to switch to the Direct Express card.

## **THE DIRECT EXPRESS CARD**

### ***Why is the Direct Express card better than paper checks?***

Paper checks can be delayed, lost and stolen. In fact, in 2009, an estimated \$69 million in Treasury-issued checks were fraudulently endorsed. The Direct Expresscard provides safer, easier and faster access to money. The benefits are clear:

**Safe.** No need to carry large amounts of cash and no risk of lost or stolen checks. Money in the card account is FDIC-insured (up to the maximum amount allowed by law).

**Easy.** Money is automatically posted to the card account on payment day, so there's no need to wait for the mail to arrive.

**Convenient.** Cardholders can make purchases and pay bills anywhere Debit MasterCard® is accepted. The card can also be used to get cash at retail locations, ATMS and banks and credit unions throughout the world.

**Recommended.** The Department of Veterans Affairs and Treasury Department encourage VA Compensation and Pension check recipients to sign up for the card.

### ***Are there fees associated with the card?***

There are no sign-up fees, monthly fees or overdraft charges. Most services are free. Some fees for optional services may apply. For information on fees and features, call (877) 212-9991 or visit [HYPER-LINK "http://www.USDirectExpress.com"](http://www.USDirectExpress.com) [www.USDirectExpress.com](http://www.USDirectExpress.com).

### ***Are current Direct Express cardholders satisfied with the card?***

So far, approximately one million people have signed up for the Direct Express card. The vast majority of Direct Express cardholders have expressed satisfaction with the card because it offers convenience, safety and immediate access to their money. According to Treasury Department research, 95 percent of cardholders surveyed said they are satisfied with the card and 86 percent said they are very likely to recommend the card to family or friends who receive a federal benefit payment.

## **SIGN-UP INFORMATION**

### ***How can VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries sign up for the card?***

VA Compensation or Pension check recipients can switch to the Direct Express card by calling (888) 544-6347. This toll-free phone line is dedicated to helping VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries sign up for the Direct Express card. Phone sign-up is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. People who received information in the mail can also fill out and mail back the application in the postage-paid envelope provided. No bank account or credit check is required.

### ***Can VA beneficiaries sign up for the card online?***

Not yet. VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries are encouraged to sign up by phone at (888) 544-6347 or by mail if they received the letter. The phone number is dedicated to helping VA Compensation or Pension beneficiaries sign up for the Direct Express card.

### ***Can a VA Compensation or Pension representative payee sign up for the Direct Express card?***

No. A representative payee for a VA Compensation or Pension benefit recipient may not yet receive payments on the Direct Express card.

### ***If a VA Compensation or Pension beneficiary also receives Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) checks, can he/she also sign up to receive those benefits on the card?***

Yes. When a VA Compensation or Pension benefit recipient signs up for the Direct Express card, he/she can also request to receive Social Security payments via the card. Call (888) 544-6347 to do this.

### ***If someone already receives Social Security or SSI benefits on the Direct Express card, will he/she need to sign up for a separate card?***

No. If the VA Compensation or Pension check recipient is already receiving another federal benefit payment through the Direct Express card, he/she can sign up to receive the VA Compensation or Pension benefit via an existing card. Call (888) 544-6347 to do this.

***Can other VA benefits be paid using the Direct Express card?***

No. Only VA Compensation or Pension benefit payments are available for now.

***Where can people go for more information?***

For more information, people can go to [http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/direct\\_express.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/direct_express.htm) or visit [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/direct\\_express.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/direct_express.htm) or visit [USDirectExpress.com](http://USDirectExpress.com).

## **PREPARE YOUR CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS NOW**

The 89th 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 type-written, 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 28, 2010.

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

***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

***(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.

**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.

### **Attention all Chapters:**

**If you have not received your Chapter Officer Report from National, please call National toll free 1(888) 236-8313 to request a copy. A copy of the Officer Report must be filed with National, Department Headquarters and your nearest National Service Office within 10 days of your Chapter's election.**

#### **Membership Status as of 5/19/10**

Trial Members: 2,318  
Part Life Members: 2,253  
Full Life Members: 47,030  
Total Members: 51,601  
Goal for Full Life Members: 46,915 (100.25%)

#### **DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

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# TRUE AMERICAN

*Email from Kurt von Maucher*

It is time to change from REDNECK humor to TRUE AMERICAN Humor!

Only it isn't seen as HUMOR, but the correct way to LIVE YOUR LIFE!

If you feel the same, pass this on to your True American friends.

Y'all know who they are...

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
It never occurred to you to be offended by the phrase, 'One nation, under God.'

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You've never protested about seeing the 10 Commandments posted in public places.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You still say 'Christmas' instead of 'Winter Festival.'

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You bow your head when someone prays.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You stand and place your hand over your heart when they play the National Anthem.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You treat Viet Nam vets with great respect, and always have.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You've never burned an American Flag.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You know what you believe and you aren't afraid to say so, no matter who is listening.

You might be a TRUE AMERICAN if:  
You respect your elders and expect your kids to do the same.  
If you got this from me, it is because I believe that you, like me, have just enough TRUE AMERICAN in you to have the same beliefs as those talked about in this.

MOREOVER, YOU ARE A TRUE AMERICAN, IF YOU THINK THE NATIONAL ANTHEM SHOULD ONLY BE SUNG IN ENGLISH!

God Bless the U.S.A! Amen



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **2010 New York State Convention**

June 27, 2010 to June 30, 2010

Hudson Valley Resort

400 Granite Road

Kerhonkson, NY 12446

### **Rehab Cruise XVIII**

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

New York Princess

Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, NY

### **2010 National DAV Convention**

July 31, 2010 to August 3, 2010

Hyatt Regency Atlanta  
on Peachtree St.

265 Peachtree Street NE

Atlanta, GA 30303

404-577-1234

\$129.00 Single/Double Occupancy