



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

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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



***December 2009 Newsletter
Volume 18 Number 6***

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Status as of 12/8/09

Trial Members: 2,314

Part Life Members: 2,247

Full Life Members: 46,597

Total Members: 51,158

Goal for Full Life Members: 99.32%

HOLIDAYS

Leo Ortiz, Department Commander

The holidays are upon us, and there are so many of our comrades who will be alone. This time of year can be very lonely for our hospitalized veterans. If you can take time out of your busy schedules to visit, you will be amazed at what it can do for them.

Homelessness among veterans is being strongly addressed by the VA. The plan is to end homelessness within five years. They are working with business, government and the private sector to combat this issue. The VA also partners with many community organizations to provide housing, jobs and health care.

Our Mid-Winter Conference will be held February 28 through March 3 in Arlington, Virginia. Our National Commander Roberto Barrera will deliver the DAV's Legislative presentation to Congress. The support of members, Departments and Chapter leaders is needed to make this a success.

DAVA Commander Marie Sternecker and I will be visiting the Brooklyn and St. Albans' VAMC's this month. I am looking forward to visiting with some of you. I thank the many volunteers at all our VA Medical Centers. They do a phenomenal job!

Please keep our servicemen and women in your prayers.

Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday. May the New Year bring us closer to peace!

SEEDS

Sidney Siller, Sr., PDC; Department Adjutant

We visualize an idea, by coming up with a modern method, or the extension and development of an old or new project. We are, since the days of our first National Commander Robert Marx, horticulturists of various magnitudes. We are the heirs of



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original concepts that formed and developed this great organization. We must continue to plant seeds that grow our organization into the premier veteran service organization that we so value.

So, for starters, allow me to irrigate the seeds we have planted so that we can nurture our present and build for the future as we look forward to a new year (2010).

- Increase recognition by every New Yorker that our Disabled American Veterans is the premier veteran service organization; and it's mission continues unabated to better the lives of disabled veterans and their families. That disabled veterans, long after their military service, continue to contribute to the safety and welfare of the citizens of New York.
- On December 19, 2009, we dedicated our new Headquarters followed by our Holiday Celebration. The Headquarters will be a patriotic site as well as a venue for service of veterans throughout New York State. Veterans who live in Kings, Queens, Suffolk and Nassau Counties who generally reject going to Houston Street in New York City, to present their claims, were invited by our National Organization to attend a seminar on Saturday and Sunday, December 5th and 6th, 2009, to initiate or modify their claims for benefits. Four National Service Officers as well as Department Service Officers assisted in this two-day weekend event. We can report that for the two-day event, over 225 veterans reported to our Headquarters. This is the first time veterans have been serviced in this superlative and efficient way. We want to thank National Service Director Randy Reese, Supervisor of National Service Officers in New York State Jeff Hall, and Director of Department Service Officers Bob Dolan, who helped us initiate the new Headquarters as a site for veterans to come and be serviced. What a great start. Most important, we must continue to give greater access and availability of our claims service to those who need it. The weekend was a great idea.
- Greater recognition of the Hospital Transportation Program and its' Telephone Center, that makes it work so efficiently at Northport. We thank Dennis Krulder, PDC, Joseph Kozlowski and the many volunteer's across New York who fill the transportation needs of our veterans. Our appreciation for all of the HSC's and volunteers grows greater by the day.
- Expand the Telephone Center at Northport to service the entire state.
- Expand the Department Service Officer (DSO) Program.



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- We have proposed that the VA permit us to build 10 Assisted Living Facilities across New York State for senior disabled veterans. The VA Central Office likes our project. After four years, the Northport VAMC held a public hearing for the community to determine the granting of a 75 year Enhanced Lease for almost 21 acres, across from a nine hole golf course at Northport. After the VA conducts further studies, a request for proposals from the public will begin. We must compete with all those who would like to build on it. We have a “great” chance of prevailing since we are not only a 501C (4) corporation, but also a 501C (3). The next two years will be one set of numbers after another, but we will with tax exempt and not for profit status, prevail. When we do get the lease, we will need to raise anywhere from 20 to 30 million dollars. New York State Department of Finance has orally (as of 2008) agreed to float bonds. In April of 2009, they said they still would, but we would need to have a guarantor. We do not have one yet. HUD may have a grant in this regard.
- Sponsor one or two seriously wounded veterans to the DAV’s Winter Sports Clinic.
- Sponsor an annual DAV Day at West Point.
- Sponsor DAV participation at Army & Navy Football Game. Ensure that DAV be recognized. Request participation from all Departments in the Northeast.
- Greater emphasis on State Legislation in New York.
- Continuation of the Northeast Department’s Congressional Breakfast (in the Capital-D.C.) the morning the National Commander testifies before Congress.

As you can see, our garden is quite verdant. We have planted some seeds, so you are cordially invited to become seed planters. The results are not always visible or tangible, but if they are “mission proof” and dedicated to servicing our constituents, as well as cost favorable, then the answer could very well be “Seed Planters Let’s Go.”

VETERANS WELCOME FUNDING INCREASE APPROVAL
DAV Press Release

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9—The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) congratulates the House and Senate conferees who last night approved the Fiscal Year 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Bill which includes \$109.6 billion for 2010 projects and programs crucial



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for our nation's veterans and their families, plus \$48.2 billion in advance appropriations for veterans medical care during fiscal year 2011.

“The conference report, which could go before the House of Representatives as early as this week, provides the vital funding needed to care for our nation's veterans in 2010 and 2011,” said DAV National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante. “The importance of this funding cannot be understated as thousands of our nation's servicemembers are being deployed to Afghanistan beginning this month.”

“Thanks to the wisdom of our elected representatives, the Department of Veterans Affairs will be prepared to meet the needs of our nation's veterans when they return home from Iraq and Afghanistan,” said DAV's National Commander Roberto “Bobby” Barrera. “It is regrettable that it took Congress 10 weeks into the new fiscal year to pass the 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Bill.”

Commander Barrera praised the conferees for their bipartisan commitment to America's veterans by approving \$747 million more than the administration requested for VA funding. The funding includes \$56.6 billion for mandatory veterans benefits programs and \$53 billion for discretionary funding, primarily VA health care. The total discretionary funding is \$5.4 billion above 2009 funding. “As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, the VA health care system will be stressed to meet the needs of sick and disabled veterans returning home,” said Barrera. “They will desperately need excellent health care and the benefits they have earned in the defense of our nation.”

The Consolidated Appropriations Bill authorizes funding for several new programs designed to support our nation's veterans, including renovating surplus VA buildings for use as housing for homeless veterans, increasing the number of VA outpatient clinics in rural areas where veterans do not have ready access to VA hospitals and funding to treat more than 6.1 million patients in 2010, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is estimated that next year, compared to 2008, VA medical centers will see a 61 percent increase in patients who served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2008.

The conferees appropriated \$4.6 billion for mental health care to treat the psychological wounds of returning combat veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder. The legislation also includes \$1.7 billion to hire about 1,200 additional claims processors to address the backlog of benefits claims and to reduce processing time for new claims. The VA estimates that nearly 397,000 claims are currently pending and awaiting adjudication.

“The members of Congress should be congratulated for their visionary work in approving 2010 funding, and having the wisdom and foresight to provide advance VA health



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funding for 2011,” said Violante. “Without question the VA appropriations process will no longer be subject to the whims of partisan politics and delays. Our nation’s veterans will significantly benefit from the work accomplished by the conferees.”

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES NOW

NavyTimes Rick Maze article 20 Nov 09

Legislation granting Air Force and Navy veterans a better shot at receiving disability benefits for Agent Orange-related illness now has 204 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, 14 short of the number needed to guarantee passage. The bill, H.R.2254, is the Agent Orange Equity Act. It would grant people who served in the waters off Vietnam and the airspace above it the same presumptions as people who set foot there: that certain diseases are the result of exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange, widely used to defoliate jungle around U.S. bases and outposts. If enacted, the bill would cover veterans who had received a Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal or who served on Johnston Island, a Navy outpost, beginning April 1, 1972 and ending 30 September 30, 1977.

Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA-51), the House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman who is the measures chief sponsor, said the bill goes a long way toward providing benefits to veterans whom the Veterans Affairs Department illogically refuses to acknowledge. Current law requires VA to provide care for service members exposed to Agent Orange by virtue of their boots on the ground, but ignores veterans that served in the blue waters and the blue skies of Vietnam, Filner said. His bill would provide the same presumptions to all combat veterans of the Vietnam War, regardless of where they served. Filner said he hopes Congress acts soon. Time is running out for these Vietnam veterans. Many are dying from their Agent Orange-related diseases, uncompensated for their sacrifice.

Achieving the 218 votes needed to guarantee passage of a bill through the House does not guarantee the change will become law. There is a Senate version of the bill, S.1939, sponsored by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) that has eight co-sponsors, far short of the 51 needed to guarantee passage.

VA TO SURVEY VETERAN HOUSEHOLDS

VA Press Release



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WASHINGTON (Dec. 3, 2009) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a national survey of Veterans, active duty service members, activated National Guard and reserve members, and family members and survivors to learn if they are aware of VA services.

"By hearing directly from Veterans and their family members, we gain valuable information to help us serve them better. We hope those who receive the survey will respond to it," Secretary Shinseki said.

In addition to assessing awareness levels, the National Survey of Veterans will collect important health care, benefits, employment, and demographic information that VA will use to inform policy decisions and improve benefits. Recognizing a broader client base than just Veterans, this is the first time VA has included others, such as Veteran family members, in its survey population.

VA is mailing out survey "screeners" to more than 130,000 households to identify potential survey participants. The screener asks if anyone in the household is a member of one of the identified survey groups - Veterans, family members and survivors, active duty, Guard or Reserve members. Eligible survey participants then may be requested to participate in a full-length survey.

Participants will be able to select a preferred survey method: through U.S. mail, telephone or a password-protected Internet address. VA expects approximately 10,000 Veterans to complete the full-length survey.

This is the sixth VA National Survey of Veterans since 1978. The information collected will help VA in its efforts to design and conduct outreach to Veterans. In addition, it will provide a clearer picture of the Veteran population's characteristics to help evaluate existing programs and policies and measure their impact.

The data collection is expected to be finished by the end of February and the final report released by December 2010.

TAPS

Department has been notified that the following comrades have been called into final formation above: **Patrick J. Cerra**, Chapter #200, 10/10/09

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



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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2010 National Mid Winter Conference

February 28, 2010 to March 3, 2010
Crystal Gateway Marriott
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202
703-920-3230
\$189.00 Single/Double Occupancy

2010 State Executive Committee Meeting

March 12, 2010 to March 14, 2010
Hudson Valley Resort
400 Granite Road
Kerhonkson, NY 12446

2010 New York State Convention

June 27, 2010 to June 30, 2010
Hudson Valley Resort
400 Granite Road
Kerhonkson, NY 12446

2010 National DAV Convention

July 31, 2010 to August 3, 2010
Hyatt Regency Atlanta on Peachtree Street
265 Peachtree Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-577-1234
\$129.00 Single/Double Occupancy