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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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



September 2007

TOUR OF DUTY: CONTINUES

*Theodore A. Barbuto
Department Commander*

As I toured the New York State VAMC's, I decided to add visits to the New York State Veteran's Homes to my agenda. New York State Veteran's Homes are run by caring and compassionate staffs. What I discovered, as I toured each facility with Commander Brooks, is that unlike many public nursing homes, the rate of turnover staff is less. This longevity is due to the fact that the staff is committed to serving those who have served.

State Veteran's Homes welcome both veterans and their qualified dependents when space is available. The administrators stressed the importance of making sure that veterans are aware that these facilities exist for them. Not only are the facilities aware of the needs of the veterans, there are a number of benefits both financial and other, that exist for veterans. Each New York State facility was clean, friendly and had unique features.

The New York State Veteran's Home at Montrose is situated on the Montrose VAMC campus overlooking the beautiful Hudson River. We were greeted by Director Nancy Baadanso, Resident President Mike, Vice President Carmine and staff. We were impressed by the numerous activities and amenities available to all who reside there. The rooms are very nice, with much privacy allowed for each resident.

The Long Island State Veteran's Home is located on the beautiful Stonybrook campus.

Fred Sganga runs this top notch facility with a very proud staff. Rooms are currently being renovated to have the look of home, which is exactly what it is for these residents. One of their newest additions is a recreation vehicle called "The Freedom Express," which is used to transport residents to various activities. They were returning from Belmont Racetrack the day we toured.

St. Albans' State Home is located on the St. Albans VAMC campus and, under the direction of Neville Goldson, Administrator, is undergoing construction to update the front of the building for future enjoyment and comfort for the residents and staff. We had lunch in the beautiful atrium area which can be viewed from each floor.

New York State Veteran's Home at Oxford is run by Sally Venugopalan, who is very proud to be involved in the decision making of the new facility that is being built on the current property. The new facility is scheduled to be completed in 2008 and will boast of being the first New York State Veteran's Home to offer private rooms for each resident. One resident of the home affectionately known as "Old Timer" publishes a newsletter. He welcomes humorous stories to publish in the "Echo" for all in the home to read and enjoy!

The Western New York State Veteran's Home is housed on the Batavia VA campus. Under the direction of Joanne Hernick, many new modern advances are being made. Doors are being widened for easy wheelchair access and patient transfer devices are being installed



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in each room. These can be operated with one hand, which helps to ensure safety for both the residents and the nursing staff.

I was fortunate to be able to attend Buffalo VAMC's welcome home day "Honoring Our Veterans & Troops" on August 18th. Fallen

At a recent VAVS meeting at Syracuse VAMC, we were given information about a service called Angel Flight, which provides free flights for medical patients of all ages whose financial resources do not permit them to travel by airplane to get the medical attention they need. For more information about Angel Flight, call either 1-800-549-9980 or e-mail www.angelflightne.org.

We need to continue to fight for and insist upon mandatory funding for Veteran's healthcare. Both our VAMC's and our State Homes work to do their very best with what they have. With new veterans coming home each day, we must continue to pursue the medical care that we and they are entitled to.

SILENCE UNDER FIRE CAN BE IMPORTANT

*Sidney Siller, Sr., PDC
Department Adjutant*

Criteria of the principles of leadership never truly change; similarly character and integrity, the essence of leadership, remain constant if not in most cases immutable.

The recent controversy over the report to Congress by Four-Star General Petraeus is a good example of stern rectitude to a formidable mission. The facts herein are not

heros were memorialized as well as returning soldiers. Many displays were set up to promote health benefits that the VAMC has to offer. A day of remembrance, food, fellowship and fun was enjoyed by all who attended.

for consideration in this piece, but rather the considerable fortitude of this commanding officer in maintaining his devotion to his duties, and his aplomb in the face of heavy personal criticism, including a charge of "betrayal." I am certain that lesser men and women would have taken the spears and venomous arrows personally. On the face of it as an observer, this was the character of a great military man at a significant juncture in our history.

Which leads me to recall that somehow the same principles can be applied to lesser situations, such as the unwarranted attack a few years ago by a few members who sought to capture DAV-NY over Admiral Halsey issues.

The Department of New York and it's officers past and present, were perfectly innocent of malfeasance. The officers of New York were subsequently found to be clean and green in every respect by New York State authorities.

We expect to shortly write the finish to the Admiral Halsey story. And we also sense that General Petraeus will eventually be lionized for his exceptional adherence to leadership principles.



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SENATE PASSES MILCON/VA BILL

Source: NAUS Sept 7, 2007

On Thursday, September 6, 2007, the Senate passed the Military Construction/VA spending bill (HR 2642) by a vote of 92-1.

The bill provides \$21.6 billion for military accounts, \$391 million more than the

In addition, the bill addresses funding for military construction infrastructure requirements as well as the health care and benefits for veterans. The construction funding will prepare the military for the rebasing of nearly 70,000 troops, mainly from Germany and South Korea, that will be moving back home over the next five to six years. It will also fund BRAC additions to bases and take care of the needs of a base that is going to be closed.

Though the bill is \$4.1 billion more than he requested, the President has indicated that he would sign it despite some concerns with more than 60 member-requested earmarks in the bill. Differences between the House version, passed before the August recess, and the Senate version will be sorted out in conference committee.

ALZHEIMER'S UPDATE

*Source: TSCL Social Security and Medicare
Advisor 29 Aug 07*

Treating the heart may help the brain, scientists are learning. A new study suggests that treating risk factors for heart disease and stroke, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, may slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

President requested and \$3.6 billion above last year's level. It would also provide \$43 billion in discretionary funding for VA, which is \$3.6 billion more than asked. The VA portion mainly aims to accommodate the medical needs of veterans with severe trauma and brain injuries, geriatric care for older veterans and research into prosthetics and the use of artificial limbs.

Researchers found that, among the dementia patients studied, those who had their vascular risk factors treated declined less than those who did not. "By slowing dementia progression, vascular risk factors treatment may delay the severe stages and have a significant impact on reducing the burden of dementia," said researcher Yan Deschaintre.

The findings are important because they provide new hope for slowing the disease that currently has no cure. There are now more than 5 million people in the United States who suffer from Alzheimer's and the risk increases steadily with age, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Experts estimate that nearly half of those 85 and older may have the disease. The cognitive risk factors included in the study were high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, atherosclerotic disease (which reduces the oxygen supply to the brain and could cause stroke), and tobacco smoking. Treatment was defined as receiving blood pressure medication, insulin or drugs to lower blood sugar, cholesterol-lowering drugs, or anti-clotting medications.

Legislation introduced in the Senate by Barbara Mikulski (MD), "The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act" (S. 898), with companion legislation H.R. 1560 introduced in the House by Rep. Edward Markey (MA), would dramatically increase



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federal funding for Alzheimer's research and prevention; and "The Family Assistance Act" (S. 897), also introduced by Senator Mikulski (MD), which would create a \$3,000 tax credit for families caring for a loved one with a chronic condition like Alzheimer's to help pay for prescription drugs, home health care and special day care. Veterans are encouraged to ask their Members of Congress to support these bills.

In addition, for those needing help, contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1(800) 272-3900, or visit it on the web at: www.alz.org.

PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

*Source: NavyTimes Michael Hoffman
Article 27 Aug 07*

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is conducting a nationwide effort to

To register with the Hall of Honor, recipients must prove they received the medal by submitting the appropriate official documentation, including a DD-214, DD-215, WD AGO-53-55, General Orders or a Letter of Transmittal. Hall officials also requested recipients send a written narrative of how they earned their medal, any newspaper articles written about them receiving the medal, and any photographs of them while in the service. Although it's not required, recipients can also tape an interview at the Hall of Honor chronicling their service and the events that led to their Purple Heart. An unedited copy of the DVD is given to the recipient, while an edited version is kept at the Hall and stored with that individual's record.

Recipients can contact the Hall of Honor at (845) 561-1765 and 1-877-

register Purple Heart recipients in the museum's database. So far, 70,000 recipients have been registered since the Hall of Honor opened in New Windsor, NY in November, but organizers hope to enroll as many as 1.5 million, said Sergio Morales, a member of the museum's board of directors. Hall visitors can access the list of Purple Heart recipients on the museum's 15 computers that chronicle photos and stories about those who have earned the medal. The Defense Department does not keep an official database of Purple Heart recipients. Hall of Honor organizers hope their efforts will create as complete a list as possible of those who have earned the medal to ensure they are not forgotten, Morales said.

28HONOR, or on its website www.thepurpleheart.com.

VDBC UPDATE

Source: MOAA Leg Up 24 Aug 07

The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) has moved closer to completing its' October report to Congress, tackling a multitude of recommendations from the Institutes of Medicine (IOM). Most of IOM's 40-plus recommendations were accepted by the commission, including those concerning the impact a disability has on a veteran's quality of life (QoL) and changes to individual unemployability (IU) determination and compensation. Here are some highlights of the commission-approved recommendations:- VA should compensate for work disability, loss of



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ability of useful life activities, and loss in QoL.- VA should develop a tool for measuring QoL, including the effects of disability on family members.- Congress should increase compensation rates 25% as an interim measure to address loss of QoL, pending development and implementation of a QoL measure.- VA should develop and test incentive models that would promote vocational rehab and return veterans to gainful employment.- VA should require vocational assessments in determining unemployable eligibility. - VA should gradually reduce the unemployability portion of disability compensation for those able to return to employment rather than abruptly terminating it The Commission also developed two recommendations addressing the Center for Naval Analyses' testimony highlighting that members who become severely disabled at younger ages face a greater financial penalty because their earning careers are cut short, vs. those whose severe disabilities develop later in life. It recommended increasing compensation rates for younger disabled veterans to help eliminate the disparity. It also proposed paying a "severely disabled

A PHONE CALL AWAY

Veterans, do you need information about medication dosages or prescription interactions, or do you have questions about your general health? Day or night, get answers to all your healthcare questions by calling the VA Nurses Helpline, 24 hours a day, at 1-800-877-6976.

VIEWING VETERAN LEGISLATION

stabilization allowance" during the first three years after leaving service, to better address out-of-pocket costs severely disabled servicemembers face in their transition to civilian life.

RETIREE SEMINARS 2007

Source: *DFAS Retired Pay Newsletter Aug 07*

There are several retiree conferences and seminars held each year throughout the country, as well as in a few foreign locations. These seminars provide an opportunity for retirees to hear about current retired and annuitant legislative matters and activities, get questions answered and account changes made, gather information from other participating agencies (such as DVA and Tricare), as well as enjoy camaraderie with fellow retirees and annuitants.

I have listed the 2007 Retiree Seminar schedule for our area. It has been updated as of July 1-10/13/07 Ft. Monmouth, NJ ---- POC: 732-532-4673 10/20/07 NAS Pensacola, FL --- - POC: 850- 452-5990 Ext 3111 10/20/07 NAS Willow Grove, PA 10/27/07 Ft. Hamilton, NY ---- POC: 718-630-4552 10/27/07 NAS San Diego, CA -- -- POC: 619- 556-8987

VA NURSES HELPLINE - STATUS

For a listing of Congressional bills of interest to the veteran community that have been introduced in the 110th Congress you may go to <http://thomas.loc.gov>. By clicking on the bill number indicated you can access the actual legislative language of the bill and see if your representative has signed on as a cosponsor.



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Support of these bills through cosponsorship by other legislators is critical if they are ever going to move through the legislative process for a floor vote to become law. A good indication on that likelihood is the number of cosponsors who have signed onto the bill. A cosponsor is a member of Congress who has joined one or more other members in his/her chamber (i.e. House or Senate) to sponsor a bill or amendment. The member who introduces the bill is considered the sponsor. Members subsequently signing on are called cosponsors. Any number of members may cosponsor a bill in the House or Senate.

You can also review a copy of each bill, determine its' current status, the committee it has been assigned to, and if your legislator is a sponsor or cosponsor

WASHINGTON- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson today presented a Secretary's Award to Little Caesars founder Michael Ilitch in recognition of his advancement of veterans in business through pizza franchise discounts. Ilitch's restaurant franchise has a program to aid any veteran interested in starting a Little Caesars restaurant and also offers special opportunities with additional deep discounts, credit, training, and marketing support for those veterans who are service-disabled. "Michael Ilitch recognizes the value of veterans in business," said Nicholson. "VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise will assist veterans seeking to become Little Caesars franchise owners and looks forward to helping veterans translate the leadership skills they learned while in uniform to business ownership and expansion." In conjunction with the award ceremony, Ilitch, who is a former Marine, served pizza to homeless veterans at the VA headquarters in Washington from Little

of it. You can find out who your representative is, his/her phone number, emailing address, or email/website to communicate with a message or letter of your own making.

CANCELLATION OF DISCOVERY CHANNEL DOCUMENTARY

The August Newsletter ran an article about a British Company doing a documentary on Vietnam, looking to speak with interested Vietnam Veterans. Unfortunately, the documentary is no longer going ahead.

VA HONORS LITTLE CAESARS FOUNDER FOR SUPPORTING VETERANS IN BUSINESS

VA Press Release Sept 17 2007

Caesars' "Love Kitchen," a pizza kitchen on wheels that travels across the U.S. and Canada to feed the homeless and disaster survivors. To assist service-disabled veterans who want to open a Little Caesars restaurant, the program waives a \$20,000 franchise fee on the first store, provides \$10,000 credit on the initial equipment order, and provides a variety of marketing support and financing options and other benefits, which can total \$68,000. For other veterans, the fee is reduced by \$5,000 and the credit extended for equipment is \$5,000. Veterans are offered business opportunities by a variety of franchisers through the International Franchise Association's VetFran program. More information about the companies' special benefits for veterans is available at www.franchise.org and the VA Center for Veterans Enterprise's resource site to assist veteran entrepreneurs at www.vetbiz.gov.

KUDOS TO OUR NSO's



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The following letter was e-mailed to Headquarters with a request for DAV license plates:

I'm a 100% (service connected) disabled veteran, thanks largely in part to DAV's diligence, knowledge and hard work. I'll never forget what DAV did for me getting the 100% S/C from VA for me...God Bless you and our troops past and present, retired or otherwise.

Edward A. Hillje Jr.

CPO Retired, 100% Disabled

FOR SALE -

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN

1997 Ford Econoline Van E150 High Top (63 ½ inches from floor to ceiling) Ricon Slide-away platform lift Raised Door (approx. 58 in. from lift platform to top of door) Four point tie down and seat belt Registered in NY State, good condition both interior and exterior Working heater and a/c, CD and tape player 3 seater bench in back Only 24,000 miles Paid \$22,000 in 2004 Asking \$15,000 (Price negotiable) Call Michele at 718-599-2859

TAPS

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

Charles Krtanik, Chapter #166

Leonard L. Vanelli, Chapter #166

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 Headquarters if you have a loss in your Chapter that you would like to include in this column.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2008 Mid Winter Conference

March 2, 2008 to March 5, 2008
Crystal Gateway Marriott
Arlington, VA 22202

State Executive Committee and Seminars

March 28, 2008 to March 30, 2008
Hudson Valley Resort
Kerhonkson, New York

Department of New York Convention

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

2008 National DAV Convention

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



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