



Sons of The American Legion



Suite 1300  
112 State Street

# THE LIBERTY

## Detachment of New York

Albany, New York 12207  
(518) 463-2215

Volume 3 Issue 33

[www.sonsdny.org](http://www.sonsdny.org)

Mid Winter Issue 2009

### *Dates of Special Interest:*

- February is Americanism month
- Feb 1st—POW / MIA Internet Blackout Day
- Feb 3rd - Four Chaplains' Sunday
- Feb 12th— Lincoln's B-day
- Feb 22nd—Washington's Birthday
- March 3rd—Washington Conference
- March 15-17th—American Legion Birthday 1919
- March 18th—Legislative Hill Day in Albany
- April is C & Y month
- April 7th—CWF Week
- April 6th—US Entry WWI

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## COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

by Gary Denmon

Fellow SONS Members,

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. Since I last wrote to you I have traveled a little under 5000 miles and have visited 39 Counties. I would like to thank all the members that have turned out for the visitations and have taken the time to spend the day with us. During the Holidays while I was not out on visitations I was still very busy. December 7<sup>th</sup> myself and several members of the Broome County Sons wrapped gifts to be delivered to the Veterans at the Bath VA. December 14<sup>th</sup> the Broome County American Legion had a bus trip to the Bath VA to deliver the presents and sing Christmas carols we had 12 Sons go on this trip, it is such a rewarding time to see the smiles on their face as they received their gifts. One of our own served has Santa Claus. **I have attached a picture,** can you guess who he is? Hint he is from Broome County and you all know him.

Christmas day found me at American Legion Post 80 with Past Detachment Commander Smallcomb, and Asst. Sgt At Arms John Knapp and members of the Broome County Sons helping serve dinners



Detachment Commander Gary Denmon

to approximately 3000 people.

Visitations will be in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Districts in February and I would enjoy seeing a lot of our members attend. Be sure to check with your county on the date and time, get your tickets before it is to late.

I was very proud to see that we made the 45% membership target date. Now that the holidays are over, its time to continue that push to get that membership in and make the next target date.

**continued on page 6...**

# FROM THE ADJUTANT'S DESK

by Robert J. Avery

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I welcome all members to this 90<sup>th</sup> annual Mid-Winter Conference, and I hope that you will take advantage of all of the opportunities offered to learn more about our organization and to meet new friends from the Legion Family here in the Great Department of New York.

Congratulations go out to all who made it possible for us to achieve the 45% Membership Target Date on December 10<sup>th</sup>! The remaining Target Dates are as follows:

January 14, 2009	60%
February 11, 2009	75%
March 11, 2009	80%
April 8, 2009	90%
May 13, 2009	100%
July 20, 2009	105%

As we now make the turn to head down the home stretch of another Administrative year, I would like to provide a few upcoming dates to keep in mind:

**March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009** - Cutoff date for determination of National Membership Citation of Achievement Award (Legion Birthday Certificate).

**April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009** - Deadline to submit resolutions to amend

the Detachment Constitution or By-Laws

**April 30, 2009** - Lt. Michael L. Lewis, Jr. Scholarship application deadline Rocco and Virginia Cerullo Scholarship application deadline Consolidated Squadron Report submittal deadline

**May 1, 2009** - Deadline to transmit current year new members to receive a pre-printed card in the following year.

**May 13, 2009** - Blue Brigade Recruiter Award application deadline

**May 31, 2009** - Charles B. Rigby Award application deadline

Detachment Recruiter Award application deadline

History Book pre-submittal deadline

**June 15, 2009** - Cutoff date for determination of various Detachment membership awards.



**July 1, 2009** — Scrapbook pre-submittal deadline

**June 24, 2009** - Detachment Convention Delegate pre-registration deadline

**July 8-11, 2009** - Detachment Convention – Buffalo, NY

**July 21, 2009** - Grassroots Veterans Advocate Award application deadline

**August 21-31, 2009** - Nation Convention – Louisville, KY

Squadrons are reminded to complete and submit their Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) to Detachment HQ by April 30, 2009. You will be receiving the CSR within the next several weeks. Squadrons who have not received a CSR by March 15<sup>th</sup> should contact Anne Wilsey at Albany HQ 1-800-ALEGION. **Please always remember that it is extremely important to complete the reporting form!**

I thank every member for all that you do in support of America's veterans, and wish you the very best as you continue to grow our membership ranks and complete your programs and projects for the year!

For The Legion Family

## An American Legion Success Story, Post 701 Amsterdam, New York

### 4th District Report by *Dennis Jablonski*,

As always, seeing is believing. My hat goes off to all who made this wonder event possible. I am proud to be a member of this compassionate group of volunteers that repeatedly puts on a Christmas dinner, with all the trimmings and desserts included. And, as if that wasn't enough - - it is completely free. Aside from preparing all the food and serving it, they home delivered over 90% of the meals. In its 26<sup>th</sup> year, this event has become a showcase of the things Post 701 is capable of doing. Volunteers from the community, from all walks of life, repeatedly show up to lend a hand and deliver meals.

In the time I have been affiliated with Post 701 I have found that the Legionnaires, Sons and Auxiliary have always worked side by side. When asked to serve it is always, "Yes is the answer; what is the question?"

And, I am proud to be a part of this family, to have served as the Squadron Commander and now representing the 4<sup>th</sup> District as Commander I am able to share some of their success stories with you.

American Legion Post 701 marked the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas dinner served to community members, free of charge. Dinner Chairman Bob Phillips said they were prepared to serve over 1,400 dinners this year. The volunteers donated and cooked 77 turkeys and more than 300 pounds of ham along with vegetables, salad and other food.

Any food left over will be donated to people in need, said Phillips, "usually there's not much left." To prepare the meal, Phillips said he and the 120 volunteers start a week before Christmas in order to put it all together.

The crowd always enjoys the food, said Phillips, who said some people come to the event because

they might not have anyone at home and enjoy seeing friends. "That's what this is about", said Phillips, "Giving and talking."

In closing I can only reiterate that we are a melting pot of volunteers from all walks of life, but we share a common thread of compassion for others. And now we welcome in 2009! Hopefully we all enjoyed the holidays and spent quality time with our families and friends.

For the many members of the Post, Sons, and our own Auxiliary we were able to embrace some special time for those who gave, and are giving, so much for our country; for those less fortunate; for those who are lonely; and for those who need comfort as they struggle with issues of health, loss of loved ones and spirituality. It is in genuinely caring, sharing and giving that we truly receive lasting gifts to be held in our hearts forever. I commend everyone's efforts, and I know that we made a difference.

Respectfully submitted,

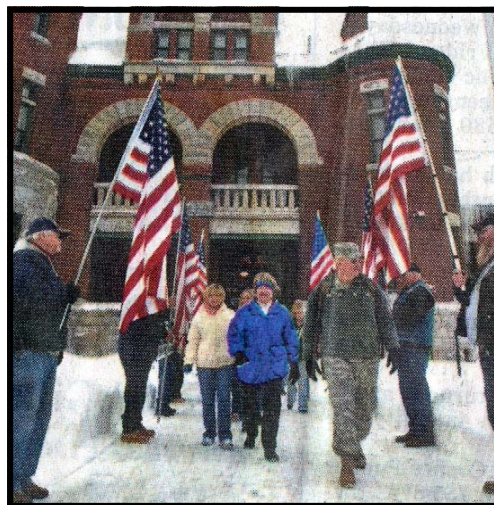
*Dennis Jablonski*,  
4<sup>th</sup> District Commander

### Salute to Soldiers

American Legion Family members of Hudson Falls Post #574 joined a march to honor troops deployed for the holidays. It was a public show of support for deployed soldiers on Christmas Eve. "We're having to give up a little bit of our time," said Sgt. First Class Arthur Coon. "We're here and we're forced to think about servicemen and women." Members of the Army National Guard 466<sup>th</sup> Area Support Medical Co, and their family and friends, organized in honor of deployed soldiers. About 70 people turned out

for the march, which started at the Glens Falls Armory.

Three years ago Coon planned a march of five miles, then send photos of the trek to soldiers serving overseas, to acknowledge that they were out of sight, but not out of mind.



"Word got around that that's what I was doing and they were like...

"We're not going to let you do that alone," Coon said. The march has swelled into a tradition that joins the community with families and friends of deployed military members, those about to deploy, and those who have returned.

## Americanism Commission by James Coats, Chairman

The Americanism Commission concerns itself with the promotion of the "true spirit of Americanism" throughout our nation.

Most Americanism Programs are high visibility programs designed to benefit America's young people. American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State are two such Americanism programs. Others include American Legion Baseball, the High School Oratorical Contest, and the Junior Shooting Sports Program. All are very competitive and highly structured.

Other recognizable programs falling under the Americanism Program are Boy Scout unit sponsorship, Get out the Vote initiatives, Flag Education, and Education & Scholarship programs and information. The latter would include distribution of the Legion's financial aid handbook, "Need A Lift", The Ameri-

can Legion Samsung Scholarship and the Legion's American Legacy Scholarship for the children of America's fighting men and women who died on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

The Detachment of New York also offers the Lt. Michael L. Lewis, Jr. Memorial Fund and The Cerullo Memorial Scholarships and the awards for these scholarships will be announced at Detachment Convention. Applications for these scholarships can be obtained by contacting a member of your Americanism Commission, or "contact us" from the web site.

Community Service activities also fall under the Americanism category, and may include Adopt-A-Highway, Citizen Corps, Meals on Wheels to name but a few.

Your Detachment of New York

Americanism Commission promotes such projects as Pledge of Allegiance and Flag Education Programs in schools, the "What America Means to Me" Essay Contest, Get out the Vote programs, Eddie the Eagle Gun Safety Program, assistance and scholarship programs and Five Star / Ten Ideals Programs.

You can find information or links for many of these programs [www.sonsdny.org](http://www.sonsdny.org). We have also added some guidelines for completing the Americanism section of the Consolidated Report Forms on the web site. We would like to remind everyone that the Consolidated Reports are due by April 30<sup>th</sup> this year so please plan accordingly and get the word out.

Respectfully,

Your American Commission for  
The Detachment of New York

James Coates, Chairman

Boyd Schaffer  
Larry Montello  
Robert Myrtle  
Shawn Hathaway  
Arthur Maggy, Members

### Four Chaplains Sunday

It was the evening of Feb. 2, 1943, and the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers.

Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship. The Dorchester, one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy, was moving steadily across the

icy waters from Newfoundland toward an American base in Greenland.

On Feb. 3, at 12:55 a.m., a periscope broke the chilly Atlantic waters. Through the cross hairs, an officer aboard the German submarine U-223 spotted the Dorchester. The hit was decisive--and deadly--striking the starboard side, amid ship, far below the water line.

As the ship went down, survi-

vors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains--arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers.

Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. When the news reached American shores, the nation was stunned by the magnitude of the tragedy and heroic conduct of the four chaplains.

To get the rest of the story, attend a 4—Chaplain Service near you.

# V. A. & R. Commission

by Thomas Kurk, Chairman

Dear Members,

We sincerely hope that the Holiday Season was a time of joy to all the members in our great Detachment. As we enjoy life here let us not forget what our servicemen and women who are protecting our freedoms both abroad and or are in military hospitals across the country are enduring to keep us safe. We would like to thank all of you who contributed to 'Operation Comfort' with the dedication of the members of the Sons Of the American Legion this program reached and surpassed the goal of \$50,000.00 to provide comfort items to hospitalized service personnel.

We have two events coming up in the spring of this year to keep in mind. The first one is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "They Marched for Us, We Walk For Them Walk-A-Thon". The date is April 18, 2009. Our Veterans here in New York State need our help. With your dedication to our veterans and working with your local American Legion Auxiliary County and Unit organizations we can reach the goal of \$2,000.00 per county. Our Detachment Web-Master John Walpole has asked to be notified of locations of the different sites of walks across the state and he will be put them up on our web-site. This information can be e-mailed to him at [\[polejr@sal1634liny.org\]\(mailto:polejr@sal1634liny.org\) or I at \[tekngk@aol.com\]\(mailto:tekngk@aol.com\). Please include the name of a contact person and information of contact for this person. The second event is National Veterans Assistance Day. This is also the second year of this event. The date that has been set aside for this is May 16, 2009. This is a project that has no boundaries and every one of our Squadrons can come up with its own agenda to show our appreciation for our veterans who have our Nation. Last year many Squadrons served free lunches to their area veterans and the Eight District Sons of The American Legion took on the task of painting a veterans house. Please start planning now. The efforts of your generosity will never be forgotten by those who receive the labor of your dedication.](mailto:jwal-</a></p>
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In the past there has been confusion on what can be reported on the Consolidated Report Form under VA&R. This Commission has listed by line item and an explanation of each line. This detailed explanation is included in this newsletter and can also be found on our Detachment web-site at [www.sonsdny.org](http://www.sonsdny.org). Look for it under the VA&R Commission section under Commissions and Committees. It is very important that we are accurate with our information that we put on the Consolidated Report

Form. We hope this helps clear up some confusion. Remember as of this year the Consolidated Report Form must be sent into Detachment Headquarters by April 30, 2009 along with the William P. O'Connell Memorial Scholarship applications. At this time we should remind our Squadron that we have not received any entries for the Charles B. Rigby Award in two years. This award is open to any member of the Sons of The American Legion who has gone the extra distance for the rehabilitation of our veterans. The application can be found in our Detachment Manuel or contact any of the members of the Detachment Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

In closing lets never stop volunteering at our local Veterans Administration Medical Centers, one of the Five New York State Veterans Homes, the Fisher House in Albany or locally with our veterans in our communities. Both returning veterans and veterans who served in past conflicts need our support. Our membership is based on our Veterans. Let's give back to them and their families what they gave to us, our Freedom and Privileges we now enjoy as citizens of the United States of America.

See pages 12 and 13 to better understand how information is entered on the consolidated report form,

For The Good Of The Sons

## To all Detachment of New York Members

Did you realize that you too can be a C.A.T.? Do you even know what a C.A.T. is?

No, not a cat, but a C.A.T. Our C.A.T is the best kind of cat, because our C.A.T. is a do-gooder for kids!!! A C.A.T. in the Legion vernacular is a Children's Action Team member.

What is our role as a C.A.T.?

Our role is to be an advocate of all the programs supported by the Child Welfare Foundation. When you join the C.A.T team, you take your role as a supporter of the CWF to an even greater level, which benefits children even more than before.

Fill out the application and start the process today.

Bill Lutz, Children & Youth Chairman



## Children's Action Team Application (C.A.T.)

I am interested in learning how I may become an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Children's Action Team member for the Detachment of New York.

Fill out an on-line request form at: [legion.org/cwf/contact](http://legion.org/cwf/contact)

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1055; Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Phone: (317) 630-1202

Fax: (317) 630-1369

[www.CWF-INC.ORG](http://www.CWF-INC.ORG)

Email: [admin@cwf-inc.org](mailto:admin@cwf-inc.org)

Continued Commander....

As of 1/13/09 we needed 326 members to make the 60% target date. Did we make it? We are so close hopefully those 326 are in transit. You all are to be congratulated on getting us so close if not past it. Remember there is a template for a post card on the Detachment website that you can fill out and send a reminder to your delinquent members. Currently our renewal rate is 41% we have about 16,250 members that have not renewed as of yet. We all need to do our best to renew them.

If you haven't been tracking all that your squadron has been doing I would encourage

you sit down **now** and starting writing it down for your consolidated report. It is the responsibility of every squadron and their members to see that your gets sent in. Don't just assume that someone else (ie. adjutant) is doing it follow thru and see that your report gets sent in. These reports are a very valuable tool for us as SONS but also for The American Legion and our Veterans. These forms are simply to fill out and they are so valuable in helping to lobby Congress for the benefits that our Veterans are entitled to for their

service and sacrifices. So, I am pleading with you to complete the CRF and have it submitted to headquarters by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

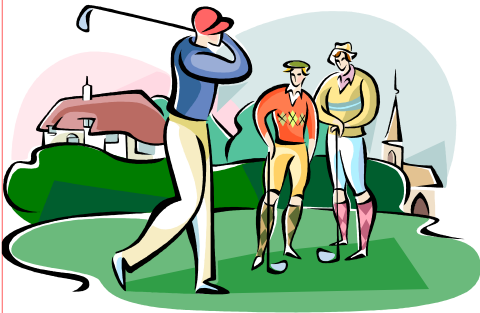
Yours for the Sons,  
Gary Denmon



## Membership

Happy New Year, Detachment of New York Membership!

This comes from my heart. I would like to thank all of the Vice Commanders, Membership Chair people, District Officers, Squadrons, Robert Avery, Paul, Anthony from the great Long Island, and everyone for all of the help we've gotten to make our membership be where it is right now.



Let's get down to business and look at the overall picture of membership. We need to raise up to the challenge to make our 100% goal. This is not an attack on anything personal, but look at the reports and see which Districts are still having the same difficulties they did last year. They need to step it up right now, or we will be in the same place we were in last year. We were close to 200 members from being at 100%. I hope this doesn't happen again.

Let's get our phones going so we can stay on par and make our 100% by March. My goal was January, but when someone is having bad golf game, it's hard to keep on par...but, don't give up! We really have to get those golf carts going if we are going

to keep up on our target dates. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR HAVING A GREAT SEASON SO FAR!

REMINDER: If you have any membership at your Squadron, they need to be turned in on a monthly basis, even if you only have five. Please turn them in as soon as possible. It makes Paul's job a lot easier than getting hit all at once. This gentleman works very hard for our organization and we'd be lost without him. Thank you, Paul.

In closing, I hope that Annie will be back soon. We miss her very much, and Paul is losing the rest of the hair that he has left!

## 8th District News

### **.Squadron #622 Christmas Giving**

Frank Deubell, a veteran of the National Guard, was hurt on the job with a serious back injury. During his recovery, he suffered a sudden stroke on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Frank is still recovering from his stroke and just getting his speech back. He told us his taste buds are coming back slowly, and his therapist suggested foods such as tasting hot sauce, blue cheese and other spicy foods...which may help in bringing his taste back.



On Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, Squadron #622 delivered toys & gift cards to the Deubell Family in Elma, NY. The Ladies Auxiliary provided a turkey dinner and all the fixings to top off the visit. The Sons donated an assortment of toys, a \$50 Wal-Mart Gift Card, and

two \$20 Gift Cards to Tops Market were presented by members Darrel Larkin and Rich Balbuszewski. Frank, his wife Julie, and their children, Matthew 8, Jacob, 6 and Lucas, 1 year old, welcomed us into their home. Bob Krawczyk, Commander; Darrel Larkin, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander; and Alex Crowe, member, presented the family with their holiday gifts and treats. The Sons had previously provided the family with a Thanksgiving Dinner, of which they were thoroughly grateful.

We were pleased we could help out in a time of a veterans need.

## 7th District Report by James Coates

One of the highlights of my tenure as commander was giving the Veteran's Day address at the Arkport Memorial Post 1248 Veterans Day Dinner on November 8th and I thank the members of the Legion Family of Arkport Memorial for the invitation. It was truly an honor and a privilege to address those men and women that I honor and pay tribute to.

I want to thank all members of the Seventh District Sons who participated in the Auxiliary VA Gift Wrap on November 23d at the Canandaigua VA. We had a great turn out from all of The American Legion Family. This is another example of the great work our American Legion Family does for our hospitalized Veterans.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Wreaths Across American Ceremony at the Bath National Cemetery.



7th District Commander Jim Coates at the Bath VA Cemetery.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to you, officers and members of the Seventh District Sons of The American Legion, for your support. We are on track for another successful year because of your efforts and I am very optimistic as we go forward. Thank you



Bath National Cemetery 2009

again and keep up the good work.

As always, I would like to thank our advisors Bill Crane, Maurice Arthur, and Charles Schade for the guidance, support, and encouragement you continually provide us.



Crew that worked on the Wreaths Across America project. Tom Kurk, Dave Calkwell, John Bogart, Bill Crane, Jim Coates, Will Ellis

## Tribute to Gold Star Mothers

American Legion Family members from Marion Memorial Post #1430 planed a luncheon to honor area veterans in Marion, NY.

In attendance were two gold star mothers that were presented the gold star flags. When SAL member Daryl Verstrete, Jr arranged the lunch he had no idea it would turn into such an honored event.

The Gold Star organization

was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran.

After years of planning, June



4, 1928, twenty-five mothers met in Washington, DC to establish the national organization, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

The success of our organization continues because of the bond of mutual love, sympathy, and support of the many loyal, capable, and patriotic mothers who while sharing their grief and their pride, have channeled their time, efforts and gifts to lessening the pain of others.

We stand tall and proud by honoring our children, assisting our veterans, supporting our nation, and healing with each other.

## 3rd District Report

*By: Robert J. Myrtle, Commander*

It is my honor to report to you some of the highlights of the 25 Squadrons of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. Our members have been marching in parades, going to memorial services for comrades and legion family members, donating time at post functions; Halloween, Veterans' Day, Christmas, Dinners and helping in every way they can.

**In Albany County** Squadron #977 Helderberg - Snow plows the post in winter and helps with the Post chores inside and out to make it easier for all members.

Squadron # 1493 Voorheesville; donated \$100 to Kids Bass Masters, \$100 to the local library, \$200 to kids Hilltown Christmas and over 35-hours for Thanksgiving Community pantry dinner.

Squadron # 1520 J & E Zaloga - For Christmas donated to the Stratton Veterans Administration homeless program that where 40 kids received presents, for the 3 Rehabilitation & Transitional Houses food cards were provided. The young Sons made Christmas card for our Veterans at the hospital; the joy on the faces of both the children and veterans when the juniors personally handed out there cards on a visit was priceless.

Squadron # 1610 Albany - Has been hard at work with their Wounded Warrior's Project,

they had a fund raiser at their post and a bowling fund raiser which they are proud to say is just under \$10,000 (GREAT JOB).

Squadron # 927 Legnard Curtin - In a joint effort they put on a Christmas Party together with the Ladies Auxiliary and sent packages to Iraq to a unit with one of their own members in the unit, they were sent back a flag that was used by them in Iraq.

Squadron # 1040 Nathaniel Adams Blanchard - Held a free dinner for veterans at the Post, that was a great event.

**In Columbia County** Squadron # 047 John McConnell - Donated over \$1,000 in toys and cash to the Marines Toy's For Tot's.

**In Greene County** Squadron # 291 Greenville - Donated to the Marines Toy's For Tot's.

**In Rensselaer County** Squadron # 471 Fort Crailo - They are part of the Yankee Doodle Band and have been making appearances all year doing American theme songs.

Squadron # 1231 Melvin Roads - Had a pancake breakfast and helped start up an American Legion Riders group. Also started a new website for their Post and County (the District has been offered a spot).

Squadron # 1489 North Greenbush Memorial - Our best in

Membership with 109% Held an October Fest to raise funds for a youth camp. Donated money to the food pantry, hospice, diabetics and is planning a Boaters Safety Class this spring.

Squadron # 1683 Gerald O'Neil - Jointly with the Voorheesville Post helped the Children's orphanage by donating \$200 for supplies, \$100 for Support our Troops and held a ham dinner. They are in the process donating new sneakers and boots to the V.A. hospital.

**In Ulster County**, Squadron # 72 Lamouree - Hackett - Did roofing repairs and maintenance at the Post and grounds. They volunteered 3 different days during the December ice storm. Donated \$100 in a candy drive to the post.

Squadron # 950 Phoenicia: They adopted a soldier's family to help them while he is serving in Iraq with a \$200 donation and \$100 towards the cost of a Christmas party.

Squadron # 111 Cook - Taylor: They gave three senior citizens homes 124 bags of fruit and other items. During the giving of the bags they coordinated with the local high school students to sing carols for the residents.

I am very proud to be part of this group of people. All of the Squadrons in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District did a fine job of helping their communities with the manpower and funds available to them.

# Legislative Update

## Detachment of NY Legislative Report

We are all ready planning for another positive On-The-Hill Day in Washington this coming March 3, 2009. The American Legion is watching over 913 bills, resolutions, and proposals that are currently going through the House and the Senate. Last year was a positive year for Veterans' legislation and many moves were made to hold harmless some of the budgetary actions. This will help to ensure that at least the benefits do not get decreased from year-to-year.

The Legion is proposing that we support 384 Bills and Resolutions that are out there, they are opposed to 16 others, and they continue to monitor over 513 proposals. Going on to the National American Legion website will help clarify their stands on these issues and give you specifics. Basically the Legion is supporting many Veterans' health care benefits bills. One of the newest issues that has arisen and that they are supporting is helping the traumatic brain injury casualties and there are several bills that discuss these efforts (S 1233, HR 2201, HR 3458, HR 1944). They also continue to support bills that allow for positive re-integration of soldiers coming home and returning to civilian life.

Currently, bill HR 6599 dealing with FY 2009 Veterans' Affairs Appropriations is now up for debate. Write your representative and support this but take a strong stand **against** outsourcing the administration of the new GI Bill benefits.

If you are planning to attend Washington On-The-Hill Day and would like to have an appointment set-up with your Congressman please get in touch with Doc Gibbs as soon as possible. We had a great impact last year and we anticipate another round of positive visitations this March. Email at [ggibbs@sbu.edu](mailto:ggibbs@sbu.edu) or call 716.648.3004.

For the Good of the Sons  
 Dr. Greg Gibbs,  
 SAL Detachment of NY

**Squadron #574** organized a trip to Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany on November 9th. On their way they stopped at the Golden Corral for a group breakfast. "We had a few members from the Post in attendance for the first time, now realize how important and rewarding this trip is.



On December 6th the Sons

and the Auxiliary organized a fundraising party for "Toys for Tots" of the Marine Corps League Memorial Detachment #2. We offered free food, draft beer and soda to more than 225 people for bringing a new unwrapped toy or a \$15 donation. The night before the party the Marines still needed \$1550 for their goal. We raised \$1495 and collected enough toys to supply at least 20 families.



Mike Lewis and Tom Varmette at Toys for Tots fundraiser.

Squadron # 574 future plans include hosting a Four Chaplin breakfast on February 7th..

## Veteran's History

Detachment Vice Commander,  
Kenneth G. Kraetzer

Asking veterans about their military experiences and documenting this history can be very rewarding activity for Sons of the American Legion.

We noticed our own community had forgotten much of the history of sacrifice made during the different war periods of the Twentieth Century. There was probably a time when the Memorial Day list consisted of heroes well known personally to many who would attend the ceremony. Sadly many veterans from WWII and subsequent wars are leaving our ranks. If you went to the war memorial in your own community, would you know the background of the names of veterans who gave their lives for our country? It is part of our duty in the Sons to make an effort to keep these stories alive.

I was very impressed visiting the war memorial in Commander Gary Denmon's town of Endicott. This plaza has murals depicting scenes from several major conflicts that service members from the community had served in. Along the walkways they had placed plaques with the likeness and story of what had happened to those who had died during their service. The names of many of America's most well known battle sites were well represented. The Edicott Memorial not only was a distinguished place to take visitors but will tell the story of the military service of these heroes for generations to come.

In Pelham we have found that our Post/SAL website can be a great place to present the stories of our veterans. The Yahoo Site-builder website service we use costs \$12 per month and I taught

myself how to use it in about three nights work. Websites go hand in hand with digital photography, it is easier to connect a camera to a computer to download the pictures and post to a website than in can be to print them out. We now have several years of pictures of our events and scan and add the old time ones when ever we find them in. Our challenge is finding more volunteers interested in learning how to do this.

In the last year we have posted over 200 biographies of veterans adding to the 70 stories we had previously placed about our residents killed in service. We discovered that most stories that have appeared about veterans before the mid-1990s are not available on the internet. The stories about veterans we have gathered from microfilm of local papers from the war years, websites such as the New York Times which has articles going back to the civil war, and first hand interviews with veterans about themselves and friends who have passed on. If you can find out what unit or ship a veteran served with, then you can access the many websites which provide detailed military history.

At our ceremonies during the year we ask students and scouts to read several veteran's biographies. We also ask them to read the listings we have researched of our communities thirteen MIAs, and those interred at overseas cemeteries and at Arlington National Cemetery.

In October, our Post/SAL website helped promote an event honored the memory of the WWII submarine the *USS Wahoo* and her legendary Commanding Officer "Dudley "Mush" Morton on the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its loss in battle off Japan. We learned earlier in the year from a retired Pelham science teacher and WWII submarine veteran that the "Son of the greatest submarine

skipper of them all" had been one his students in class. We learned that Commander Morton's family moved to Pelham after the war. We contacted the son, Doug Morton, now a publisher in Denver, Colorado and he mentioned that despite the years, it was still hard for him each year on the Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of his Dad's submarine.

We decided to create a 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in Pelham and Doug agreed to join the squadron and come in for the event. When we contacted guests to attend, the first thing we did was reference the website which presented our track record of hosting military guests. An email to the US Submarines Veterans Association attracted over 30 submarine veterans to Pelham from all over the Northeast. One was Jim Irwin from the Rochester area who had served several tours on the *Wahoo* before leaving the ship.

A call to the US Naval Academy resulted in two submarine commanders attending including Capt. James Gray of the new Virginia Class sub *USS Texas*. The US Navy Public Affairs office in New York City provided us the US Navy Band based in Newport to provide a concert before the ceremony. Our Congresswoman Nita Lowey attended and we received a thoughtful note recognizing the event from Admiral Mike Mullen in Washington. It was interesting to watch Cdr Gray give a short talk in his presentation about the value of Virginia Class submarines to the member of the

Pictures of the *USS Wahoo* event, a recording of the speeches, and the stories of our veterans are available on [www.legionpost50ny.com](http://www.legionpost50ny.com). Please let me know any questions on setting up your own Squadron/Post website. Offering to take pictures of an event, conducting veterans research, and maintaining a website, can be an immensely valuable role for your members.

## CONSOLIDATED REPORT FORM

### VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

Listed below is an explanation of the line items under VA&R on the Consolidated Report Form. It is very important to be accurate with your totals that you record under each category.

#### **Number of Visits to Veterans Homes**

This is the Number of visits a Squadron makes to one of the five (5) New York State Veterans Homes. Located in Jamaica; Batavia; Montrose; Stoney Brook and Oxford.

#### **Total Hours of Visits to Veterans Homes**

This equals the total amount of volunteer hours accumulated by a Squadron during the course of the reporting year made to one or more of the New York State Veterans Homes.

#### **Cash Donations to Veterans Homes**

This is the total amount of cash donations made to the New York State Veterans Homes by a Squadron. Merchandise can be included in this total. Convert the amount of merchandise into an actual dollar amount and add it to your actual cash donations.

#### **Number of visits to VAMC's**

This is the total amount of visits a Squadron makes to one of the thirteen (13) Veterans Administration Medical Centers here in New York State.

#### **Estimated dollar amount of items donated to VAMC's**

This is a total monetary amount of cash donations and items donated to VA hospitals in your area or any other VA Medical Center.

#### **Field Service Hours**

Field Service Hours are hours earned through work done on behalf of veterans in state or community based nursing homes/soldiers homes, contracted veterans homes, day care centers, halfway houses, hospices, homeless shelters or stand downs.

#### **Home Service Hours**

Home Service Hours are hours earned through work done in your home for the benefit of homebound sick or injured service members or veterans. These items might include sewing, mending, babysitting while the veteran attends medical appointments or rehab. **Providing these services to a family member or relative cannot be counted.**

#### **Fisher House Hours**

This is the total number of volunteer hours donated to the Fisher House at the Stratton VA in Albany.

#### **Cash Donations to the Fisher House**

This is the total amount of monetary donations sent by a Squadron to the Fisher House.

#### **Support for the Troops Hours**

This is the total amount of hours donated by the members of a Squadron in support of our active duty troops. This may include organizing rallies for troops that are being deployed, welcome home parties for returning troops. Also included in this are sending care packages to our troops that are stationed overseas who would truly appreciate toiletries and other items that are not readily available to them.

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**Cost of Support of our Troops**

This is the total cost that a Squadron has spent in Support for the Troops for any of the above projects.

**Family Support Network Hours**

Many families of our active duty veterans need help at home while their family members are serving our country away from home. We can help by volunteering to do errands, household chores, shopping and or babysitting to help out these families. The total number of hours that a Squadron contributes to this would be reported under Family Support Hours.

**Family Support Network Cost**

This is the total monetary cost to complete the activities under Family Support Network.

**Other VA&R Projects**

This is any other projects that are done in support of our active duty veterans and veterans who have served in the past.

**Total Number of Hours for other VA&R Projects**

This the accumulative number of hours donated for other VA&R projects such as our Detachment Walk-A-Thon, meals served to our veterans at our Post Homes and other events or projects that are not previously listed above.

**Total Cost of other VA&R Projects**

This is the total cost spent throughout the year on other VA&R Projects.

**National Veterans Assistance Day**

**Squadron Participation in National Veterans Assistance Day**

This is answered Yes or No. You either participated in this or your Squadron did not.

**Number of Veterans Helped during National Veterans Assistance Day**

The total amount of veterans your Squadron helped by either doing tasks for our veterans or serving meals for our veterans in our communities.

**Total Hours for National Veterans Assistance Day**

This is the total number of hours your Squadron used in planning for National Veterans Assistance Day and volunteer hours your Squadron had on the Day of the event.

**Total Cost for National Veterans Assistance Day**

Total amount of funds that were used to organize National Veterans Assistance Day for your Squadron to complete the days events in thanking our veterans.



Detachment of New York  
officers for the 2008—2009 year.

Gary Denmon— Commander  
Kenneth Kraetzer - Vice Commander  
Districts 1 & 9  
John Rogers — Vice Commander  
Districts 2 & 10  
Gaither Espey— Vice Commander  
Districts 3 & 4  
Dean Williamson- Vice Commander  
Districts 5 & 6  
David Caldwell— Vice Commander  
Districts 7 & 8  
Christopher Burtch—Chaplain  
William Lutz— Historian  
Fred Merscher— Master Sgt-at-Arms  
John Bogart— N.E.C.  
Raymond Jarvis— A.N.E.C.



Photo from an event to honor the memory of  
the WWII submarine the *USS Wahoo*

## Public Relations Commission

The Detachment Public Relations Commission would like to thank every member for their contributions and support. Our goal to report all newsworthy items, to educate ourselves and others of the activities and programs of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.

Please send your news articles into the Commission  
for the Spring issue **by April 5, 2009**

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## National Public Relations

Chairman, Larry "Bear" Weinzirl

### Here's What We Do

The National Public Relations Commission is looking for you to brag about what is going on in your Squadron, District or Detachment. What have the Sons of The American Legion in your state accomplished lately? A service project, fundraiser, outstanding member or are you chartering a New Squadron?

Give us a few details. We want to share your story and get it on the record. Please help us spread the news about the Sons of The American Legion.

Who was involved?

Where did it take place?

How did it help a Legion program or your Community?

When did it happen?

Do you have a picture?

How would you describe the event?

Person Submitting:

Please send your reply to:

Larry "Bear" Weinzirl

National Public Relations Commission

Eastern Area Representative

PO Box 578

Perryville, Md. 21903-5078

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