

# AT EASE



**Vietnam Veterans of America Central New York Chapter #103**  
**P.O. Box 675, Liverpool, NY 13088**  
**[www.cnyvva103.org](http://www.cnyvva103.org)**

**May 2008**

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER #103  
P.O. BOX 675. LIVERPOOL, NY 13088  
(315) 458-1323  
WWW.CNYVVA103.ORG**

**2008**

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VA/VVA Liason	Gordon Lane	(638-2827)
VVLP	Ron Fairbank	(451-5986)
Watchfire	Pete Bronstad	(673-7243)

**SYRACUSE VET CENTER  
478-7127**

**BUFFALO REGIONAL  
OFFICE  
1-800-827-1000**

The website of the New York State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America is [www.nyvietnamvets.org](http://www.nyvietnamvets.org).

Sue Doan, our State Veterans Counselor, has the following address:

Sue Doan  
State Veteran Counselor  
State Office Bldg. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
333 E. Washington Street  
Syracuse, NY 13202

If any veteran has a question or problem that needs to be addressed, give Sue a call at 428-4046 at the State Office Building. She helped many veterans last year, especially through referrals from members of this chapter. The Iraqi/Afghan vets we've helped send to her are very thankful to Sue for watching out for them.

# Presidents Message-May 2008

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**At our June Meeting Mr. John Southerden from the Veterans Community Care Center** will give us an over-view on the Homeless Vet Program which is now operated by the Syracuse VAMC. There are many things we need to be brought up to speed on and get our questions answered so we can pick and choose just how our Chapter can best support the program. Your attendance is crucial to help determine our Chapter's next steps to become involved in this effort.

**The annual raising of the Vietnamese Flag over City Hall** took place Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our Chapter Honor Guard was invited to march with their Veterans and Community Members from St. John's on State and Willow Streets to City Hall. The Vietnamese Community Elders were very grateful for our participation. Our Chapter helped lead the way to establish this annual event. Gordy Lane was called front and center during the ceremonies to accept an attractive Lucite trophy which commemorated the event and recognized our continuous support of this event. **Special thanks**, to the several members who marched, or turned out to help support this event.

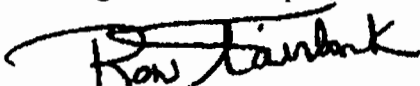
**The County Legislature met on May 6<sup>th</sup>**. The proposed law that outlaws the sale of tobacco products to ANY person under the age 19, **resurfaced**. Remember this very same proposal was passed last year and subsequently vetoed by County Executive Nick Pirro because it failed to exempt members of the military. Now with a new administration it was brought up again with some minor wording changes but essentially the same thing BUT NOW specifically included military members by saying they need to show their military ID's to prove they were 19 years old. **Gordy and I attended the session and raised our objections—in the end the proposal was tabled** for further discussion as there was a lack of support in the body itself to bring it to a vote.

**Warmer weather is here** which, will help us implement our plans to sort out all the items from our museum and make a disposition of them. The bulk of these items were donated by YOU the Chapter members—**attempts to return them to you have failed in the past—SO if you have an item you want to hold on to—please contact Cliff Canfield at 668-6372 or Dick Madden at 635-2019 or Gordy at 638-2827.** Please stake your claim to it before it's too late. These items are becoming mildewed and we don't want them to become unusable.

**The Syracuse Nationals is on the horizon**—we have started lining up a crew to man the hot dog cart out there. We need at least 4 more people—please call Bonnie and Cliff to put your name on the list -668-6372. The more people we get the less hours any one person has to work. The Chapter needs the money to continue helping veterans in the community.

The Chapter sent our sympathies to Wendy (Gordy's lady) on the passing of her Mother earlier this month—there were no services held in Syracuse, and no memorial gifts requested.

For the good of the Chapter,



Ron Fairbank

# Chapter Notes

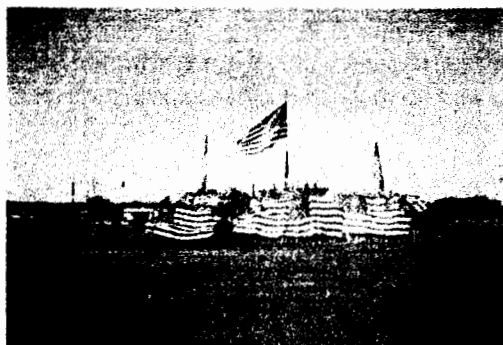
In an effort to reduce expenses concerning the mailing of the newsletter, the membership will be asked to voice their opinions on measures to that end: mailing only six editions per year, subscribing to twelve issues per year at a nominal fee (to be determined), transferring it to email, etc. We need your input. Email me, ([rmadden002@twcny.rr.com](mailto:rmadden002@twcny.rr.com)) call me (635-2109), or better yet, come to the next meeting to offer suggestions.

July 18-20 at the Fairgrounds – the Syracuse Nationals car and custom show. We need volunteers to work the VVA #103 booth selling our myriad collection of hats, t-shirts and other memorabilia. Call Bonnie at 668-6372 – meet lots of people, see old friends and thousands of the coolest cars on the planet!

Unbelievable!! The largest Watchfire to date – news reports had the crowd between 15,000 to 20,000 people. Our event sustains itself through every Memorial Day and has grown enough that when people think of this weekend, they think Watchfire. That's quite an accomplishment. We thanked so many people that did so much to see that this event was successful, but our hats are off to the people of Central New York for making this so. Their support for the veteran's community shows itself at every Watchfire. How big can this thing get? Time will tell, but I envision a time not too far off when the entire Watchfire Park will be packed from one end to the other as the centerpiece of Memorial Day in Central New York

Still: We have an urgent need for additional van drivers to help bring our disabled veterans to the VA for their appointments. I say we because I'm a DAV van driver. The patients run the gamut from WWII to Iraq. They're a bunch of great guys and ladies with some incredible stories - they could use your help. If you're so inclined, please contact the DAV transportation office at the VA and ask for Frank – he'll set you up!

*Change of address? Please let us know if you have moved. E-mail Dick Madden at [rmadden002@twcny.rr.com](mailto:rmadden002@twcny.rr.com)*



*Watchfire 2008*



*Ron Fairbank chatting it up with a reporter from CH 10 news.*

# Military Order of the Purple Heart



12 MAY 2008

Chartered by Congress

TO: MOPH – NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL

RE: S-7999 – N.Y.S. FREE LICENSE PLATES FOR PURPLE HEART  
RECIPIENTS

ATT: MR. LARRY DOUCETTE, REGIONAL 1A FIELD SUPERVISOR

ENCLOSED YOU WILL FIND A COPY OF THE NEW YORK STATE  
SENATE BILL S-7999, SPONSORED IN THE SENATE BY THE HON.  
JOHN DEFRANCISCO, N.Y.S. SENATOR REPRESENTING THE 50<sup>TH</sup>  
DISTRICT.

WE SHOULD BRING THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR N.Y.S.  
MOPH CHAPTERS AS TO INFORM THEIR MEMBERSHIP THEY  
SHOULD CALL AND UNITE THEIR RESPECTIVE SENATOR(S) TO  
GET BEHIND THIS BILL, S-7999.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF SENATOR DEFRANCISCO WE HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO GET THIS DONE.

WRITE TO: SENATOR JOSEPH BRUNO  
9FL. LEG. OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, N. Y. 12297

YOUR LOYAL PATRIOT,

  
JOHN C. DESPIRITO III  
CMDR 406

CC: MR. JACK LENORD, NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR  
NEW YORK STATE CMDR. RUBEN R. PRATTS

**NEW YORK STATE SENATE  
INTRODUCER'S MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT  
submitted in accordance with Senate Rule VI. Sec 1**

**BILL NUMBER:** S7999

**SPONSOR:** DEFRANCISCO

**TITLE OF BILL:** An act to amend the vehicle and traffic law, in relation to the elimination of any fees associated with the distinctive license plates for purple heart recipients

**PURPOSE:** To eliminate any fees associated with first-time and renewal issuances of Purple Heart license plates.

**SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS:** Section 1 - Amends subdivision 3 of section 404-e of the Vehicle and Traffic Law to eliminate fees associated with the Purple Heart license plate.

Section 2- Effective date.

**JUSTIFICATION:** Recipients of the Purple Heart have put their lives on the line for the United States of America and have shed blood in the defense of this nation. Each and every Purple Heart recipient is an American hero and deserves the respect of all Americans. This legislation seeks to eliminate the fees associated with the Purple Heart distinctive license plate. Purple Heart recipients are eligible to receive this license plate. Because the sacrifices made by Purple Heart recipients, it is only appropriate that they receive their Purple Heart license plate for no cost.

**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:** 2005-2006 -- A.4764 referred to Transportation  
2003-2004 -- A.8195 referred to Transportation

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:** Undetermined.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
*Syracuse VA Medical Center*  
800 Irving Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210

May 14, 2008

Dear Community Advisory Board Members:

Plans are underway for **OPERATION SALUTE**, a community-wide event to honor the men and women who have served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Afghanistan/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This is your personal invitation to attend on Sunday, July 27, 2008, at the Convention Center at Oncenter, 800 South State Street, in Downtown Syracuse.

I am confident that you share with us the desire to express gratitude to these men and women. **OPERATION SALUTE**, open to the public, is scheduled from 12 noon until 4 p.m., providing you an opportunity to meet and greet our veterans and their families.

We accept that the military experience may produce difficult issues for military personnel and their family members. Some have permanently returned to their homes and families, while others continue to serve their missions. Assisting these military servicemen and servicewomen and their families is why Syracuse VA will have an extensive information area staffed by local, state, and federal agencies providing assistance on health-related questions and concerns. We are also committed to help our returning servicemen and servicewomen find good jobs. In this joint effort, **OPERATION SALUTE** will present a "Job Fair," with representatives from area companies and businesses who will be offering real employment opportunities with a solid future.

**OPERATION SALUTE** will be a fun-filled event, offering music and activities for the entire family, including drawings for some outstanding prizes. The event is made possible by Clear Channel Radio Group (WSYR, WHEN, WYYY 94FM, WBBS B-104.7FM, Power 106.9FM, WWDG 105FM, WWHT, Hot 107.9FM) in partnership with the Syracuse VA Medical Center and the University Hill Corporation. We anticipate a great deal of media coverage and a tremendous veteran and CNY community turnout.

Supporting our military and veteran community is everyone's responsibility. I look forward to having you with us on July 27! For more information, contact Gordon Sclar, Public Affairs Officer, by phone at 315.425.2422 or 315. 415.7275, or by e-mail at [gordon.sclar2@va.gov](mailto:gordon.sclar2@va.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Cody".

JAMES CODY  
Medical Center Director

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER #103**

P.O. BOX 675  
LIVERPOOL, NY 13088

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Veterans must provide evidence of service (DD214 or Equivalent)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran (Y) \_\_\_ (N) \_\_\_

Are you a Vietnam-Era Vet? (Y) \_\_\_ (N) \_\_\_

In-Country Vet? (Y) \_\_\_ (N) \_\_\_

**ANNUAL DUES** for Veterans is \$20.00/year. We accept checks, credit cards or money orders. Please do not send cash.

Type of Membership: ( )New ( )Renewal Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**When you need help...Medical  
Problems? Medical Concerns?  
Eligibility Questions?  
Call VA Telecare  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1-888-838-7890 (toll free)**

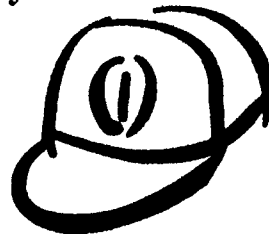
**VA Medical Professionals are as  
close as your telephone. VA  
Telecare, a service of the  
Syracuse VA Medical Center**

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**To purchase hats, T-shirts,  
stickers, pins, ect. Go to:**

**Westvale Gardens  
2400 West Genesee St.  
Syracuse, New York 13209**

**And say "HI" to Bill Martin!**



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2501 James Street, Syracuse, New York 13206

**Bruce McDaniels** (315) 701-6921 Office  
**Realtor** (315) 415-5221 Cell  
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**★ AT EASE ★**

VVA Chapter #103 holds its meetings at American Legion Post 188, 205 Cypress St., Liverpool, NY on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Directions: From Heid's Corners, follow signs to Rt. 370 (2<sup>nd</sup> Street). Take first left past Washington Park. The Post is on your right side, across from the park.