



**Rotterdam Lodge #2157** - Picture caption: Brother Richard Durant (l) is presented with the Outstanding Veterans Service Award by ER Stephen Sellie, for his service as a veteran and community activist for veterans. During a service at Rotterdam Lodge #2157, Richard Durant was presented with the "Outstanding Veteran's Service Award". This is the first award of its kind at Rotterdam Lodge, and the Lodge expects it to become an annual award. Richard has dedicated his entire life to our country. He has 34 years of military service, starting out in the US Navy in 1962 where he served for 2 years, and then moving to the US Army for 4 years. He served 2 tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter door gunner. He was awarded 5 purple hearts, the Bronze Star for Valor, the Distinguished Service Cross, and he was nominated twice for the Congressional Medal of Honor. He finished his career in the Air National Guard in Glenville with approximately 20 years of service there, being discharged with the rank of Master Sergeant. But Richard's greatest contribution has been his dedication to the Veterans in our community. Richard spends countless hours helping veterans at the VA Hospital, on the streets, and in the Lodge. For this he is truly an Outstanding Veteran.



**Port Jefferson Lodge #2138**, under the direction of Chairman Robert McClean and in furtherance of the Elks pledge "So long as there are Veterans we will never forget them", conducted its annual Stickball Tournament in honor of local disabled American veterans from the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. As a result over \$10,000 was raised and was distributed to 7 disabled Veterans in attendance, the wife of a deceased Veteran and for care packages which were purchased and mailed to members of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Units. The games were conducted on Lodge grounds and were made up from pre-registered Elks and community teams and families. A small fee was charged for team registration and family admittance. Chairman McClean reports that approximately 170 guests attended and enjoyed the hamburgers, hotdogs, sausage and peppers, salads, ice cream and candy was also served. In addition United States Congressman Tim Bishop and Legislator hopeful Anthony Montcayo made appearances and praised the Veterans who were present. Last but certainly not least was an appearance by none other than Santa Claus. He arrived via fire truck and gave each child a present. Pictured above; L to R - Tournament Committee

Member Tom D'Amore, U.S. Congressman Tim Bishop, Veteran John Nallis, Veteran Steven Sellner, Tournament Founder and Chairman Robert McClean, Port Jefferson Elks #2138 President Anthony Forio and NY State East District VAVS Chairman Nicholas Feliciano.

**Syracuse Lodge #31** held their annual Vets Dinner at their Lodge for the 6th consecutive year. This dinner is held to accommodate the members of the Syracuse Veterans Outreach Center and they are treated to dinner and camaraderie for their service to their country. On most occasions, there are youth groups from the area that also attend and honor the Vets with a show. They have included a local Irish Dance group, an area elementary school chorus, and an area chorale group. These honorees have all expressed how much they enjoy and look forward to this event every year and truly appreciate the effort put forth by the members and the Lodge. Syracuse Elks also, on several occasions, has performed the annual Flag Day ceremony at the Outreach Center for the benefit of these Veterans.



**The Ontario District Elks** were privileged to host the members of the traveling performance group, Recreation, USA at the Camillus Elks Lodge #2367 for an appreciation dinner prior to their show held at the Syracuse VA Hospital. These young performers all travel across the country and perform their patriotic and fun shows at numerous Veteran related sites. They all do this on a volunteer basis, receiving no pay but gaining the experiences from their travels. We got to know them on a personal level and all of the Elks were duly impressed with their dedication and personalities. They were given a great home cooked meal and some tokens of appreciation along with homemade baked goods to enjoy on their travels. We also were well represented at the show the next day and had the opportunity to see just how much it meant to the Vets to be able to interact with them throughout the show and afterwards. Pictured above members preparing before the show left to right... Cherise Miller, Rebecca Aclin, Hillary Boyssel, Ashley Krochta, Mitchell Rains, Kara Erwin, Paul Vanidour, Melissa Downs, Jordan Nuckels and Tirus Twyne.



Convention attendees at the New York State Elks Association fall convention had the

opportunity to hear from Scott King, founder and president of "Remember the Wounded Ride". On Sunday, May 8, 2011, King departed on his bike from the Gateway Elks Lodge in Portland, Or. Scott, who is also an Elk, has ridden across the US to raise awareness and funds for our military personnel wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As part of the ride, Scot interviewed combat wounded Veterans and collected their stories for a series of books that will chronicle their experiences. In each state, a combat wounded Veteran of that state was selected to be honored for his/her service and to represent all Veterans of that state. At each state capital, Scot has requested a state flag from the governor's office. These flags will be brought back to Portland, OR where they will be presented in the Veterans Memorial Coliseum during a special ceremony at the end of the ride. Each flag will represent the combat wounded veterans of its respective state and their service to our country.

This years ride ended in October 2001 in Washington DC with over 7,000 miles accumulated. The trek resumes in May of 2012 with another 12,000 miles expected to be covered. Convention goers donated over \$1,700 dollars to "Remember the Wounded Ride".



**Oswego Lodge #271** held a solemn ceremony for the men and woman who lost their lives and family members on September 11, 2001. The Oswego City Police, Oswego Sheriffs and the Oswego Firefighters and State Vice President Dave Longley of the Ontario District along with Paige Gray and Katherine Robinson, Gold Scouts from Troop 41 walked together to the Elks flag pole and laid a wreath at the foot of the flag pole for the deceased men and woman. Michael Taylor, NYS University Police Lieutenant Retired lowered the Flag to half mast in honor of the fallen men and woman of 911. Approximately 85 people attended. Corey and Emily King of Oswego Played echo taps for the ceremony as the officers walked to the flag pole. A luncheon followed the ceremony where a Power Point Presentation was given by Jamie Susino on the events of September 11, 2001.



**Hudson Lodge #787** - Retired Marine Corporal Scott King of Portland Lodge #142 is

traveling the country by bicycle in an effort to bring attention to our wounded veterans. He stops at each state capital to meet with the Governor of the state and collects a state flag which he will bring back to the Portland Lodge for a very large ceremony. On his way to the State Capital in Albany, NY Scott stopped off at the Hudson Lodge of Elks #787 in Hudson, NY. The members of Hudson Elks Lodge #787 provided Scott with dinner and a room for the night. The Hudson Elks Flag Day committee also provided Scott with a check for \$100.00. Pictured above; L to R are Daniel Shaughnasey, PER ( 101st Airborne Veteran ), John Minners, PDD ( US Navy Veteran ), Scott King (with his bike), Gerald Wood, PSVP (US Air Force Veteran), and William Mellan, JR. Exalted Ruler.