

# VETERAN ACTIVITIES



The **State Capital District** holds a series of Penthalon events with each of the 7 lodges in the district hosting a different event. Monies raised from the sale of pins and mugs are divided between the lodges for their ENF goals and a charity that is decided upon at the start of the series. This year's charity of choice was the Veterans Committee. A check for \$662.00 was given to VA/VS representative PSVP Ed Baniak, Watervliet #1500 by ENF District Chairman Ed Quackenbush, PER, Watervliet #1500. This is money that goes directly to help veterans' programs at Samuel Stratton V.A. Hospital in Albany. Pictured in photo from left are ENF Chairs from the 7 lodges in the State Capital District: PER Bill Vazal, Esperance #2507; SVP Helen Blais, Guilderland #2480; PSVP John Blais, Guilderland #2480; DD Mel Oliveira, Rotterdam #2157; PSVP Ed Baniak & PER Ed Quackenbush, both of Watervliet #1500; Bill Sponable, Colonie #2192; PER Linda Angell, Cobleskill #2040; Loyal Knight Rich Seeley, Albany #49 & PSVP Pedro Rosa, Rotterdam #2157. In other news, the **State Capital District**, as it has done in the past, collected deer hides to raise money for Veterans at Samuel Stratton V.A. Hospital in Albany. This year the district with the help of game clubs in the area gathered 239 hides. Total money raised from the sale of the deer hides was \$2390.00. This money goes directly to help with Elks Veterans programs at the hospital such as ice cream socials, popcorn, breakfasts and barbecues. Many thanks to the volunteers that salted, stacked and transported the hides to a tannery in Johnstown.



**Camillus Lodge #2367** 1st Veterans Breakfast event was huge success. Over 100 veterans were treated to a free all you can eat breakfast and had the company of 120 regular patrons and members of the Lodge. Included among the crowd were Elks from Fulton, Syracuse, Camillus, Liverpool, Oswego and even the NYSEA Veterans Chairman Herb Flint made the trip up from Binghamton. Also attending were Honor Flight Organizers from Rochester and Syracuse as well as groups from the Syracuse Veterans Outreach Center and the Syracuse V.A. Hospital Rec. Center. The Lodge extends a thank you to all those who attended, a big thank you to all those volunteers that made the day a success and a huge thank you most of all to all Veterans everywhere ... THANK YOU'S WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH, GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

**Utica Lodge #33** was involved in two events to honor our Veteran's. On Veterans Day members of the Lodge visited the Syracuse VA Hospital. Lodge members visited with the Veterans, and held a pizza party for them along with music from a one man band. They also provided the hospital with computer software to make custom programs and posters. In December the Lodge participated in Wreaths across America, a nationwide event to place wreaths on the graves of veterans. With donations from our members, we laid 70 wreaths at St. Stanislaus Casimer cemetery. We were joined by the Military Order of the Purple, Vietnam Veterans Association and the Marine Corp. League. The Marine Color Guard from Syracuse posted the Colors for the event

**Scarsdale Lodge #2056** and **Mid Westchester Lodge #535** of the South District held a Christmas dinner for more than 100 Veterans at the Monroe VA Medical Facility. After dinner, district Lodge members presented presents to the Veterans. Among the presents the Veterans received were windbreakers, which were provided by Scarsdale Lodge and gift bags containing toiletries, a flashlight, and a deck of playing cards which were provided by the Mid Westchester Lodge. The Lodges purchased the gifts with the help of a \$2000 Freedom Grant.

## ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION APRIL 2015 GRAND LODGE NEWSLETTER MESSAGE MEDAL OF VALOR

As part of your Lodge Veterans Program, have you looked for a way to appropriately recognize the death of a local service member who has made the ultimate sacrifice on the field of battle in Iraq or Afghanistan? Please consider the ENVSC Medal of Valor Program. The Medal of Valor can be presented by your Lodge to the family of a fallen hero. It is intended to honor the memory of those who lost their lives in the voluntary defense of our country.

The Medal of Valor is available from the Elks National Veterans Service Commission at a modest price of \$8.00, which includes shipping. It is attractive, nicely made, comes with a presentation case and can be engraved. It bears the legends "Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom", and the message "Presented by the Grand Lodge of the B. P. O. Elks to the family of (Engraved Name)".

Iraq and Afghanistan continue to be hotly contested battlefields. We pray no more lives will be lost in those venues. However, until conflict ends, the Order of Elks will do all it can to honor those men and women who voluntarily defend our freedom. The Medal of Honor beautifully expresses this to the families of those who will not return.

The Medal of Valor can be easily and quickly ordered from the Elks National Veterans Service Commission at [Vets@Elks.org](mailto:Vets@Elks.org), or by calling the Chicago office at (773)755-4736.

James L. Nichelson, PGER  
Vice-Chairman

Elks National Veterans Service Commission



In recognition of the continuing work to help Veterans, **Kinderhook Elks Lodge #2530** was presented with a Memorial T-Shirt from FDNY VFW Post #12033. The T-Shirt commemorates fallen two servicemen: Staff Sgt. Christian Engeldrum and Staff Sgt. James McNaughton. They were members of FDNY and NYPD, respectively, and were deployed to Iraq after their departments were activated with the NY Army Guard. The FDNY VFW Post 12033 annually sponsored a Rugby game between the FDNY and NYPD. The game started as a fundraiser with all the proceeds going to both Chris' and James' families. The last game was played in 2014, which was the 10th year since Chris's passing. The T-Shirt was made for, and sold at the final game. It was presented to Kinderhook Elks by Senior Master Sergeant William Hayes, retired, who served in FDNY and NYPD and is now a member of VFW Post #12033. Pictured: Veterans Committee member Tom Miglio and Esteemed Loyal Knight Robert J. Cramer

Members from **Rochester Lodge #24** and **Newark Lodge #1249** of the West Central District traveled to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and visited with approximately 50 Veterans. The members provided the Veterans with Christmas gifts that totaled more than \$9,700. Among the contributing Lodges were Rochester Lodge, which provided the Veterans with Christmas cards, \$25 gift cards, and gift bags containing snacks and toiletries and Newark Lodge which provided the Veterans with lap robes, note pads, afghan

**Patchogue Lodge #1323** donated \$650 to the local American Legion Auxiliary to help provide supplies to the United Veterans Beacon House residents for homeless woman Veterans.

**Syracuse Lodge #31** members accompanied Santa and Mrs. Claus on a visit to the Syracuse VA Medical Center, where they gave gifts to 85 Veterans. The Lodge also donated a movie player and several recorded movies to the center and provided enough snacks to restock the center's recreational therapy break room.

