



Peekskill Lodge #744 opened its doors for a Veterans Night on July 16th and Exalted Ruler Jack Barnes welcomed more than sixty local veterans in the community. The idea to honor some of our veterans was brought about by Michael Ayotte, so that they could meet one another, relax, and exchange their memorable experiences. A delicious buffet dinner was prepared by chefs Michael Ayotte and Dutch Treptow. Gift certificates and cards were donated by Shoprite and Walmart, and money from the Ladies Club was used as gifts to the veterans. Most of the success of that evening belongs to the many who volunteered to make this dinner, the veterans, would not soon forget.



Glens Falls Lodge #81 held a dinner to raise funds to purchase supplies for the Adirondack Vets House, Inc. The house, which is a model for similar programs around the country, provides a transitional living program for homeless veterans. The mission of the program is to direct veterans to service providers who will assist them in preparing for an independent and productive life after their stay is concluded. The Lodge purchased bedding, personal items, cleaning supplies, and food for use by the residents. Pictured from left: Frank Wells, Tom Wells (event co-chairman), Past Exalted Ruler Jo Ann Daegle, Vets House Director Jeff Varmette, and Exalted Ruler Joseph De Lorenzo.



Clifton Park Lodge #2466 held their monthly Veteran's Scholarship breakfast. A group of Veterans from Ellis Hospital in Schenectady, NY were able to attend the breakfast, complimentary on the Lodge. PDDGER Allan P. Atwell also presented these Veterans with their own 3-flag set which consisted of an American flag, an Elks USA flag and a flag with each with their specific unit of service. Every 4th Sunday of each month, the Lodge holds their fundraising breakfast which is routinely attended by Veterans from the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, NY along with the group from Ellis Hospital. The money raised on this day was approximately \$225 which will benefit both

the Veterans' and Scholarship programs of the Lodge. Tips in the amount of \$115.00, which was donated by the workers of the breakfast, will be divided between the 2 programs and the Lodge's "Adopt a Vet" program. Pictured above; Back Row Left to Right: Rebecca Isabelle (Veteran), PDDGER - Allan P. Atwell, NYS Elks Association President - Michael J. Bloss, Clifton Park Lodge #2466 Exalted Ruler - Michael A. Mrochko. First Row Left to Right: Joe Cardettino, Levio Angelozzi and Pat Pavillo (all Veterans).

Webster-Fairport Lodge # 2396 adopted seven soldiers in combat in Afghanistan. Since that time the members of the lodge with the assistance of the Lodge Lady Elks have sent many personal requested items to these brave men. The Lodge Lady Elks are also providing the postage for this project. The lodge learned the names of these soldiers from their lodge member James Perry. James Perry's stepson-in-law, SPC Kyle Wright, age 22, was also a soldier in the same combat unit with these men. Tragically on January 13, 2010 SPC Kyle Wright was killed in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan. He was laid to rest on February 2, 2010 in Arlington National Cemetery with full Military Honors. Since October 2009 the members of the Elks Lodge, under the direction of Members Bruce and Alice Norton, have continued to send requested personal items every month to the soldiers who served with SPC Kyle Wright. During the Christmas season the lodge sent two shipments to these men. The Adopted Soldiers who are currently receiving personal items from the Lodge Members are assigned to the U.S Army, 2nd. Infantry Division, 3rd Platoon, and are conducting Operation Ram Rod in the mountain area near Kabul, Afghanistan.

Cairo-Durham Lodge #630 Veterans across the nation suffer from the perils of homelessness, a lack of essential needs or even the ability to stay warm during the deep freeze of winter. Doing its part to help relieve these plights, the Lodge #630 has donated more than \$7,000 worth of goods to the Samuel S. Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany for distribution to needy veterans. Jeffry Fumei, Veteran's Committee chairman of Cairo-Durham Elks Lodge #2630, presents \$7,029 in brand new clothing and goods at the Samuel S. Stratton VA Medical Center. Fumei founded the Veterans In Need program to help homeless, underprivileged and needy veterans in the region.

The 30 cases of goods delivered Tuesday, all new and unused, included heavy socks, knit caps, gloves, coats, jackets, scarves, assorted hygienic products and blankets. The items were purchased new thanks to donations from the community. There are strict VA guidelines which required used items to be certified as clean before donation, which can be more costly.

"The goal is to meet the provisional needs of veterans in need, said Jeffry Fumei, Veterans Committee chairman of the Cairo-Durham Elks Lodge. Fumei began the Veterans In Need Program in November 2007, and was able raise \$5,300 for items in its first year. This year, the program has surpassed that total by nearly \$2,000. The collection process, which began the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, has been a daunting yet rewarding task for Fumei and

his fellow Elks. Together they have logged 1,800 commuting miles, \$1,600 in operational expenses and 800 labor hours.



Larry Dobson has served as Veterans Chairman for **Liverpool Lodge #2348** as well as District Chairman for the Ontario District. In October of 2000, he took over as the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service Representation for the Syracuse VA Medical Center and is still responsible for overseeing the activities of 22 Elks Lodges that service the Syracuse VA and its satellites, with his wife LuAnn as his Deputy Chair. Larry Dobson, of Onondaga County, was a 19 year old soldier serving with the 82 Airborne in Vietnam. It took more than forty years but, a local veteran finally has the Purple Heart for wounds received on the battlefields of Vietnam. On April 16, 1969, a truck Dobson was riding in hit a landmine. It was a moment Dobson has never forgotten. "You not only ever forget it but you relive it constantly over and over again it constantly replays," he says. Dobson spent months recovering from the blast. His wounds healed but his Purple Heart never came. That is until his wife got involved and, thanks to the help of Senator Chuck Schumer, Dobson was awarded his Purple Heart by Senator Schumer during a ceremony at Hancock International Airport in Syracuse, New York. "It's hard to put into words what it feels like to work for something for 40 years," Dobson says. In addition to the Purple Heart, Dobson also earned a Bronze Star for combat actions in Vietnam. Dobson says he is dedicating his Purple Heart to all of his fellow Vietnam Vets who never made it back home. "I wish I could give this to the thousands of other GI's who I was with. Too many of them that paid the ultimate sacrifice for this," he says. Pictured above; Senator Charles Schumer, Larry and LuAnn Dobson.

Haverstraw Lodge #877 --The lodge has entertained some 70 patients from FDR VA Hospital in Montrose, New York with full meals. This was followed by bingo, where each patient received a \$5.00 canteen book and a deck of playing cards. Additional visits consisted of a deck luncheon at the lodge overlooking the Hudson. There will also be a Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.



Rome Lodge #96 - Grave site renovations were made to a Citizen of Rome, NY. In Recognition of FRANCIS BELLAMY, author of the "Pledge of Allegiance" Pictured above; L to R; Past State President David Carr and Past State President Charles I. Noonan.