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VETERANS NEWS, By Edward G. Aulman, Director Nassau County Veterans Service Agency

## US Army Drill Teams at Eisenhower Park

Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi has announced a first for Eisenhower Park. The Q-8 Invitational Drill Competition will be held Saturday October 14th 2006 from 8AM until 2PM at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, New York. The Drill Meet will feature the best Junior and Senior ROTC, Pershing Rifles, Civil Air Patrol and Naval Sea Cadet drill teams from around the nation competing in Exhibition (trick) Drill, Color Guard, Regulation Drill, Saber Drill, and Marksmanship. Admission is free, donations are appreciated. Bring a lawn chair! Proceeds will go to the Q-8 Alumni Association Scholarship fund. The opening ceremony at 8AM will feature the 77th US Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Band, aircraft overflights, and a pass in review by all competing teams. The closing ceremony at 1:30 PM will feature a wreath laying ceremony, 21 gun salute, Taps, overflight and retreat ceremony. The Veterans Corps of Artillery will provide the salute battery. All Veterans are welcome to join in the closing ceremonies at 1:30 PM and to line up in formation. They are welcome to wear veteran's organizational uniforms and insignia and may line up by units or in mass. For more information see their website at www.prq8alumni.com or call Jim Ridley at (631) 730-3910 or email him at jridley3@optonline.net.

## Unemployed Veterans

The slogan "Hire a Vet" is not just a worthy idea. The latest statistics available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that veterans are more employable than non veterans. 4.4% of Americans were unemployed in August 2005. Only 3.7% of our 23.4 million veterans were unemployed. Hispanic veterans have an unemployment rate half of non-veteran Hispanics and black veterans have an unemployment rate 50% lower than non veteran blacks. One disturbing fact however is that current young veterans 18-24 years old have a 18.7% unemployment rate twice the rate of non veterans the same age.

If you know an unemployed veteran tell him/her to contact Andy Rodriquez at the New York State Department of Labor Office in Hicksville at 516-934-8508 or Peter Paftinos at the Hempstead DOL Office 516-485-5000.

## VA Regional Office is Hiring

After years of hiring freezes at the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in New York City the VA is now hiring new people to replace many seasoned veterans who have retired. Interested applicants should go to www.usajobs.com for information and applications.

## Learn While You Earn

The Nassau Suffolk Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (J.A.T.C.) is accepting applications for their 5 year Apprenticeship Program. If your MOS was electrical this may be a great place to take advantage of the skills you learned

in the military. You may also discover that the VA will send you a check while in the program. Contact J.A.T.C. at 631-434-3939 for details.

**More Veterans Get Tax Exemption**

On August 9, 2006 Governor Pataki signed a bill that pushed the date of the beginning of the Vietnam War back to February 28, 1961 a date the Federal government recognizes as the beginning of the war for veterans who served in Vietnam. Many veterans previously denied a veteran's tax exemption will be eligible for the Alternative Veterans Tax exemption because of the expanded war time era that ends on May 7, 1975. For an application call the Veterans Service Agency. (Thanks to Bob Mitchell and Chris Sterling)

**$900 per Hour is too much for Veterans Counseling**

Several private companies are soliciting Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes throughout the State and for a fee up to $900 to apply for pension benefits for veterans and surviving spouses. War time era veterans and widows are eligible for pension benefits if their income and assets fall below levels set by Congress. Many living in Assisted Living Facilities may be entitled to substantial payments from the VA depending on their physical and financial health. A smaller benefit of $90 per month is available to wartime veterans and widows on Medicaid and living in nursing homes. The application process is free and County Veteran Service Officers and the VA can assist at no charge to the veteran or widow. Call the Veterans Service Agency for information and applications. (Thanks to Bob Mitchell and Joe Collorafi.)

**Veterans Small Business Help**

The next Veterans Small Business Resources Workshop will be Thursday, November 16, 2006 0900-1200 at the SBDC Training Center on the Campus of Farmingdale State University. Call John Narciso at 631-370-8891 for details.

**Blue Water Veterans Win at Court.**

The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has ruled that Vietnam veterans who served on ships in the waters close to the shores of Vietnam have the same presumption of exposure to Agent Orange as veterans who actually stepped foot on the soil of Vietnam. Veterans who have been denied service connection for an Agent Orange presumptive condition because they could not prove they "set foot" in Vietnam should see a veterans counselor.

**My Heroes**

Three thousand disabled veterans from Nassau County need a ride to the VA Medical Center or Plainview Clinic every year. Sixty volunteers provide this service. My thanks to: Charlie Boyd a marching musician and active member of the Williston Park VFW, Robert Queen a twice retired career Air Force veteran from Farmingdale, Peter Eiseman who has been driving for us for 15 years, and Professor Al Pagano from the Police Post American Legion. Thanks also to Hilda Jordan from Levittown member of the American Legion Auxiliary who is a warehouse volunteer who spends many hours helping us organize our Stand Down donations.