



New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc.

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VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
E-MAIL: VETS@NYSCOPBA.ORG

TO: NYSCOPBA EXECUTIVE BOARD
FROM: VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, (VMAC)
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR VETERANS & MILITARY MEMBERS
DATE: June 9, 2005

Dear Executive Board Members,

As you are aware there are numerous issues that the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, (VMAC), has been working on over the past several years. These issues affect approximately 750 members that are in the New York State National Guard and Reserves, and 2,300 Veterans, all these members are represented by NYSCOPBA. The Veterans Committee and NYSCOPBA representatives are committed to assisting our brave military members. The Committee's goal is to support the members and help gain better benefits for each and every member. The following is a list of issues that the Committee and our legislative director, Chris Leo, are working on. We will continue to work on these issues in order to achieve better benefits for all the military members:

VETERAN ISSUES:

- 1. POL 63;** Public Officers Law 63 is a law established to provide a day off for all Veterans on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. This committee feels that according to POL 63 all Veterans should be allowed the day off in order to observe Memorial and Veterans Day, or be granted a day off in lieu of. A NYSCOPBA member that selects money instead of time under Article 14 of our contract clearly receives a better benefit. NYS contends that by crediting the member with 8 hours of holiday accruals on these two holidays this will allow the member 8 hours off for those who did not get the day off. We feel that according to POL 63, the Veterans should receive the 8 hours of accruals and NOT have to charge their accruals for a day off. This issue has been grieved and presented in the courts, and has been ruled against our beliefs. We must now correct this issue through legislation.
- 2. MILITARY BUY BACK, ARTICLE 20;** Our committee strongly believes that all military members should have the option of buying back their military time. Legislation will be needed to make the following members eligible for the Military Buy Back benefit; all military members that served in the United States Armed Forces and that have been honorably discharged with a DD214. We will be working on this issue through the NYSCOPBA's legislative department.
- 3.** The VMAC will continue to handle all phone calls and e-mails coming in from our Veteran members and their families.

NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE MEMBERS ISSUES:

1. SENATE BILL S2382 AUTHORIZES AN ADDITIONAL 10 DAYS PAID MILITARY LEAVE; If this bill were to be passed it would be a tremendous benefit for our brave members that are serving in the NYS National Guard and Reserves. Our committee, with the help of Chris Leo, has been lobbying to get this bill passed. There is still a lot of work to do on this issue. We are in the process of sending out a support letter to all our Guard and Reserve members so they can write their local Senators and Assemblymen in order to get this bill passed.

2. RETIREMENT & SERVICE TIME FOR ACTIVATED MEMBERS; The VMAC is going to pursue the fact that our members that have bravely served in the war against terrorism since 9/11/01, should **NOT** have to make up the serve time to DOCS that they missed while serving on active military duty. We also feel that the members with less than 10 years on the job should not have to pay back the amount that they will be required to pay into the Retirement System. We have worked with Gary Dommermuth on these issues and will pursue this with the Retirement System and legislatively, if necessary. In addition, we need to get the state to include the Iraq conflict into Article 20 so our members can start buying back this time.

3. MILITARY STIPEND; this term refers to the difference in pay that the state pays our members while on military duty if members is making less on active duty then they would have if still at facility. When calculating the military stipend the state should not include a tax free portion of the military pay called BAS and BAQ. This amount is for the member's family to go toward household expenses while member is on active duty. We have asked GOER to stop this practice, but they will not. We are now going to go through the grievance process with the help of Hinman Straub. We also believe that NYS should be crediting our members their sick and vacation accruals while the member is on active duty. We will pursue these issues through legislation if necessary.

4. CHRIS PAISER ¾ DISABILITY RETIREMENT BENEFITS; Officer Paiser was wounded while on active duty and has lost sight in both eyes. With the help of Chris Leo we have submitted a bill to get Officer Paiser a ¾ Disability Benefit. While we are waiting for this bill to pass we are collecting leave donations in order to get Paiser up to 10 years so he can at least receive a 1/3 Retirement Benefit.

5. The committee is continually answering e-mails and phone calls from members and their families. The amount of calls, concerns, and e-mails has tripled over the past 6 months and we must continue to answer the questions and support the member's families.

6. Care Packages will be continuously sent out as we get the members names in that are serving on active duty.

As you can clearly see the issues are real and our members deserve all the help that we can provide them. They deserve these benefits because our brave men and women have and will continue to be called into action to defend NYS and the United States of America. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as submitting a list of the issues, it goes far beyond that. We need to go out and fight for these benefits, whether it be meeting with GOER or lobbying the legislators themselves. We must continue to use all the resources available in order to improve benefits for the Veterans and Military members. Over the past 3 years VMAC has been working extremely hard to assist our members and we are dedicated to our goal. Over the past 6 months a committee member has been allowed to come into the Albany office, not just to work on benefits, but to return e-mails and phone calls from both members and their families. VMAC feels that this should continue in order to give our military members the continued support that they deserve. The VMAC would like to address the Executive Board to discuss the issues and gather input. We hope the Executive Board will allow a committee member to continue coming into the Albany office. In addition, our committee as a whole would like to be allowed to meet at least once every other month in conjunction with the EA. This will allow the entire committee to meet and work on benefits.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued support of our Veterans and Military members. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Gordon Conklin at 441-2036, or any other VMAC member. The VMAC is looking forward to meeting with the new Executive Board Veterans Chairman.

Sincerely,
NYSCOPBA's Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

Gordon Conklin, Chairman, has prepared this memo on behalf of the entire committee.

Cc: Veterans Committee
Hinman Straub
John Telisky, Liaison
Chris Leo
Chief Sector Stewart's
Posted on Veteran Web site