

## **Alternative Veteran's Exemption and School Taxes Q & A:**

### **1. What school districts have adopted this in the Town of Somers?**

As of March 28, 2014, only the Somers Central School District has adopted this exemption.

### **2. Who is eligible for the Alternative Veteran's Exemption for school taxes?**

A resident home-owner who was honorably discharged after full-time active service during a time of war (dates as determined by NY State Taxation & Finance) in one of the 5 branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, the surviving un-remarried spouse of such a veteran, or a Gold Star Parent is eligible. National Guard service is not considered to be active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. In general, reservists are also excluded unless they performed significant, full-time active duty. Those who served outside the time of war dates established by NY State may be eligible for the Cold War Veteran's exemption, but they are not eligible for an exemption on school taxes.

### **3. How does one apply?**

Those who have already applied for the Alternative Veteran's Exemption will automatically receive the exemption from their school taxes beginning in 2015. Those who have not applied but fit the requirements must apply in the Assessor's Office by May 1. The exemption will be applied to the 2015 Town/County bill and the 2015 School Tax bill and all subsequent tax bills. A completed form, RP-458-a, must be submitted along with a copy of the veteran's discharge papers from the military (typically a DD-214). If the veteran is disabled due to military service, a copy of the VA's determination letter is also required.

### **4. How much will a Veteran save in Somers Central School District taxes?**

This will vary based on the level of exemption – wartime, combat, plus disabled veteran; the adopted limits of the exemption; the town's equalization rate as determined by the state; the tax rate; the assessment of the property; and other exemptions held by the property owner. As the district has adopted the basic NY State full value limits of 12,000/8,000/40,000, by using the 2013 equalization rate of 13.80 (used for 2014 tax bills), the proposed school tax rate of \$153.87, and the minimum residential assessments, a wartime vet would save about \$255, the combat vet about \$425, and a disabled vet (either wartime or combat) could get up to an additional \$849 depending on the veteran's disability rating. **Please remember that these are estimates based on the most current information and will change by the time the 2015 bills are issued.**

### **5. Will I get a refund if my school tax is currently \$0.00?**

No. This is an exemption, not a rebate. An exemption will only allow your school tax to go to \$0.00 and no further. If you already have a \$0.00 school tax bill due to the Enhanced STAR or Senior Citizen Low Income Exemption, you will not benefit from this exemption. However, the Alternative Veteran's Exemption will come off of your taxes first and the balance will be removed by the Enhanced STAR, so the Enhanced STAR amount is actually being lowered in some cases (predominantly in Heritage Hills) so that NY State will be required to pay a lower STAR dollar amount

to the school districts. (NY State currently reimburses 100% of the value of the STAR exemption to the school districts throughout NY. All other exemptions have the effect of lowering the taxes for the one receiving the exemption and raising the tax rate for everyone in that taxing district, including the one receiving the exemption.)