

Disabled American Veterans

Department of North Dakota

Tri-Annual News Bulletin



DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

2009 4th STREET NE - JAMESTOWN, ND 58401

JANUARY 2013

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER REPORT



Richard Krajewski
Department Commander DAV

I have been busy this autumn and early winter traveling around the state and visiting our chapters.

I completed a Chapter visit with Chapter 31, Jamestown, ND on 10 Oct 2012. The business meeting went well as expected. I meet with all the board officers and DAV members present. We had

an exciting talk, everyone had a lot stories to tell. Like most Chapters membership attendance was the big concern. Other than that, everyone was very enthusiastic and the hospitality was most enjoyable by all the DAV members present. There are pictures for your viewing pleasure of my visits in this newsletter.

Also, I visited with Chapter 24. The business meeting went well as expected. I meet with the officers and the members. Everyone was very enthusiastic and the hospitality was most enjoyable. I am pleased to say, like Jamestown, Chapter 31 there were many past commanders with a whole a lot of experience present at their meetings, which tells me they have a very solid organization.

I would like to thank Commander Dave Vareberg for the visit invitation and his leadership, it was great times visiting your chapter Dave. Also a special hello to a good old friend Rhiney Weber ND EX-POW. Thank you for your service and all you do for veterans.

DAVA DEPARTMENT COMMANDER REPORT



Mary Holzworth
Department Commander DAVA

Volunteerism is what the DAV Auxiliary is all about. We know that it takes a lot of heart to volunteer. Have you considered volunteering your time to your unit, your VA medical center or your VA outpatient clinic. With the busy world we live in, it is hard to find time, but the VA system has a lot of great opportunities for part-time volunteers.

Consider volunteering your time to help our veterans.

I received the following information from LeeAnn Karg, National Membership Chairman. The 2012-2013 membership program has a "Go For the Gold" incentive. The Bronze level is recognized for those who recruit 5 new paid senior members. The Silver level is recognized for those who recruit 10 new paid senior members. For those who recruit 15 new senior level members, the Gold recognition is provided. In addition, there are cash incentives \$25 monthly drawing for "Recruiter of the Month" and \$250 for the Top Auxiliary Recruiter. Remember, a Life membership can be obtained with a small down payment of just \$20.00. Good luck and I challenge you to "Go for the Gold."

As a final note, I recently was reflecting on the events of September 11, 2001. Our world has changed significantly since the events of that tragic day. Our military operations have resulted in many new disabled veterans. There is a great need for the services we offer. Thank you for what you do to help.

God Bless the United States of America and the DAV.



AMERICAN VETERANS HEROES EVERYDAY



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February 24-27, 2013
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DAV Department Convention
April 27-29, 2013
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 Mandan, ND

DAV National Convention
August 10-13, 2013
 Hilton Orlando
 Orlando, FL

DAV Department Web Portal

The Disabled American Veterans Department of North Dakota has a web portal. The address is: <http://www.davmembersportal.org/nd/default.aspx>.

There have not been a lot of recent updates, however, information will be added as it becomes available.

Shortly, the department's web site will have information about the Professional Veterans Advocates of North Dakota web site. The web address for that organization is: www.pvand.net.



You are encouraged to check out both web sites. Also, some of our chapters are getting active on the Chapter portal.

Thank You

for serving our country & protecting our freedoms!

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 Jamestown, North Dakota 58401

A Letter from Senator Conrad

Senate Passes Conrad History Project Amendment

Last month around Veteran's Day, I informed you that I hosted a panel of chief historians from the Department of Defense and the head of the Veteran's History Project (VHP) at the Library of Congress.



Sen. Kent Conrad

I am pleased to report that an amendment I authored to expand interest in the Veterans History Project was included in the National Defense Authorization Act, which passed the Senate today. My amendment requires the

Library of Congress to carry out a national campaign to encourage participation in the VHP. The campaign will help ensure that veterans are aware of the Project and have the opportunity to share their stories with future generations of Americans.

Within the next few years, our country will end the war in Afghanistan and mark the 70th anniversary of World War II, the 60th anniversary of the Korean War, and the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Vietnam War. As time goes on, we are at risk of losing the firsthand accounts veterans can provide of their experiences in these and other conflict. We must never forget the tremendous sacrifices these men and women have made for their country. With your help, the Veterans History Project can ensure that we never do.

You can personally get involved in this important effort. Please use the following web address to watch a video about how you can help capture and record an important part of our American Story. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHHQ3qzyMMQ&feature=plcp>

Sincerely
Kent Conrad
United States Senate

Chapter One Has New Meeting Place

Chapter One has moved their meeting place to the Super Buffet at 1000 45th St S in Fargo. Our meeting is on the second Thursday of the month with the meal at 6 pm and meeting at 7 pm. The Auxiliary will be having a pancake breakfast on January 19th.

Chapter Commander Shannon Norton would like to thank Jim Haukedahl for all of the work he has done for us at Chapter #1. Jim has been the Adjutant for over four years. He is in the process of training in Erica Lavoie at the new Adjutant. Erica also is the LVAP coordinator, she reports volunteer service hours for the Chapter.

Chapter Commander Norton would also like to thank Greg Seurer for all of the work he has done for us at Chapter One. Greg has been the Treasurer for over 35 years. Greg is in the process of training in Dave Oberg as the new Treasurer.



Collector Looking for DAV Plates

A member of Chapter 3 is looking for DAV Plates for display purposes and for his collection. Dave Erbstoesser is looking for DAV Plates from the 1950s and the 1962 base plate. If you know of a source for these plates, contact Dave. His email is erb1@bis.midco.net and his telephone number is (701-223-5038).



Land of the Free! Home of the Brave!

THANK A VETERAN TODAY!

Report Reveals Further Reduction in Veterans Homelessness

VA Also Announces \$300 Million to Expand Homeless Prevention Program

WASHINGTON – The Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) today announced that a new national report shows that homelessness among Veterans has been reduced by approximately 7 percent between January 2011 and January 2012. The decline keeps the Obama Administration on track to meet the goal of ending Veteran homelessness in 2015.

“This report continues a trend that clearly indicates we are on the right track in the fight to end homelessness among Veterans. While this is encouraging news, we have more work to do and will not be satisfied until no Veteran has to sleep on the street,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The success we have achieved is directly attributable to the hard work by all of our staff, and the federal, state, and community partners who are committed to ending Veteran homelessness.”

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan added, “This decline tells us that the Obama Administration is on the right path, working together across agencies to target Federal resources to produce a measurable reduction in Veteran homelessness. Key to this success has been VA and HUD’s implementation of the Housing First approach endorsed by the Administration’s strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. As our nation’s economic recovery takes hold, we will make certain that our homeless veterans find stable housing so they can get on their path to recovery.”

The 2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, prepared by HUD, estimates there were 62,619 homeless Veterans on a single night in January in the United States, a 7.2 percent decline since 2011 and a 17.2 percent decline since 2009. The AHAR reports on the extent and nature of homelessness in America. Included in the report is the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count, which measures the number of homeless persons in the U.S. on a single night in January 2012, including the number of homeless Veterans.

VA has made ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 a top priority, undertaking an unprecedented campaign to dramatically increase awareness of VA services available for homeless

Veterans and Veterans at risk of becoming homeless. While the number of homeless people in the U.S. dropped by less than 1 percent, according to the 2012 AHAR, Veteran homelessness has shown a more robust decline.



VA also announced the availability of \$300 million in grants for community organizations, estimated to serve approximately 70,000 Veterans and their family members facing homelessness. The deadline for applying to the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, a

homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing program, is Feb. 1, 2013.

“Homeless prevention grants provide community partners with the opportunity to help prevent and end homelessness on the local level,” said Secretary Shinseki. “This is a crucial tool in getting at-risk Veterans and their families on the road to stable, secure lives.”

SSVF grants promote housing stability among homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants can have an immediate impact, helping lift Veterans out of homelessness or providing aid in emergency situations that put Veterans and their families at risk of homelessness.

Through September 2012, SSVF has aided approximately 21,500 Veterans and over 35,000 individuals. Since SSVF is able to help the Veteran’s family, 8,826 children were also assisted, helping Veterans keep their families housed and together. Grantees provide a range of supportive services to very low-income Veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing, including case management, legal assistance, financial counseling, transportation, child care, rent, utilities and other services aimed at preventing homelessness.

The availability of SSVF funds was announced in a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) posted in the Federal Register and on VA’s SSVF website at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

A video on www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp offers guidance for community organizations interested in applying for SSVF funds. Community organizations seeking more information on the SSVF program may also contact VA at 1-877-737-0111 or at SSVF@va.gov.

North Dakota Ticket Project Jamestown

The DAV Department of North Dakota Ticket Project drawing has been completed. This year, the drawing was performed by Department Vice Commander Dave Vareberg and Chapter Officers of DAV Chapter #31 on December 4th at the All Veterans Club in Jamestown. Gross ticket sales are \$25,685.

We are pleased to report that Nearly 1400 members responded to our ticket mailing. It was a great job by all who participated in the ticket sales. Top sellers were Ron Jackson - 1074 books, Gary Skeim - 312 books, and Alton Goff - 132 books. Thanks those dedicated DAV members who took the time to sell tickets. Remember that through your work we the DAV are better able to fund our service programs.

Prize winners were as follows:

- 1st prize \$1,000 Nathaniel Sevigny, St. Mary's, KS
- 2nd prize \$ 500 William Bitz, Kintyre, ND
- 3rd prize \$ 100 Albert Hisley, Carver, MN
- 4th prize \$ 100 Kaare Gjerding, Jamestown, ND
- 5th prize \$ 100 Liz Rodriguez, Fargo, ND
- 6th prize \$ 100 Ken Englehardt, Napoleon, ND
- 7th prize \$ 100 Emilie Breiling, Fargo, ND
- 8th prize \$ 100 Stuart Lawrence, Grand Forks, ND
- 9th prize \$ 100 Ed Knuth, Austin, TX
- 10th prize \$100 Jerry Carswell, Maple, WI
- 11th prize \$100 James Peterson, Fargo, ND
- 12th prize \$100 Roger Scott, Cando, ND
- 13th prize \$100 Judy Jorgenson, Jamestown, ND
- 14th prize \$100 Betty Schimke, Bismarck, ND
- 15th prize \$100 Mark Landis, Mandan, ND
- 16th prize \$100 Brandon Aman, Dickinson, ND

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS



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Fargo, North Dakota

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of each month

VA and Indian Health Service Announce National Reimbursement Agreement

Native Veterans Able to Access Care Closer to Home

WASHINGTON -- American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans will soon have increased access to health care services closer to home following a recent Department of Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Service (IHS) joint national agreement.

"There is a long, distinguished tradition of military service among tribes," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "VA is committed to expanding access to native Veterans with the full range of VA programs, as earned by their service to our Nation."



"The President has called on all Cabinet Secretaries to find better ways to provide our military families with the support they deserve, and that is exactly what we are doing today," said Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans benefit from this agreement, which provides increased options for health care services."

As a result of the national agreement, VA is now able to reimburse the IHS for direct care services provided to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. While the national agreement applies only to VA and IHS, it will inform agreements negotiated between the VA and tribal health programs. VA copayments do not apply to direct care services provided by IHS to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans under this agreement.

"The VA and IHS, in consultation with the federally-recognized tribal governments, have worked long and hard to come to an equitable agreement that

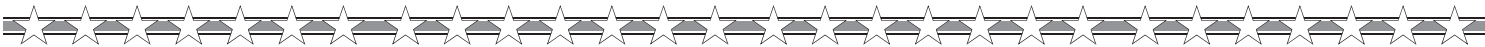
would ensure access to quality health care would be made available to our Nation's heroes living in tribal communities," said Dr. Robert Petzel, undersecretary for health, Veterans Health Administration. "This agreement will also strengthen VA, IHS and tribal health programs by increasing access to high-quality care for Native Veterans, particularly those in highly rural areas."

"This reimbursement agreement between the VA and the IHS will help improve health care services for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans and further the IHS mission and federal responsibility of raising the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level possible," said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, director of the Indian Health Service. "This IHS-VA agreement will allow our federal facilities to work with the VA more closely as we implement this critical provision in the recently reauthorized Indian Health Care Improvement Act, passed as part of the Affordable Care Act."



The agreement between the two agencies marks an important partnering achievement for VA and the IHS and is consistent with the Administration's goal to increase access to care for Veterans.

To view the national agreement, please visit: www.va.gov. To find out additional information about American Indian and Alaska Native Veteran programs, please visit: www.va.gov/tribalgovernment and <http://www.ihs.gov/>.



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VA Seeks to Expand TBI Benefits

Propose Adding 5 Diagnosable Illness Secondary to Service-Connected TBI

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs is publishing a proposed regulation in the Federal Register that would change its rules to add five diagnosable illnesses which are secondary to service-connected Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

"We must always decide Veterans' disability claims based on the best science available, and we will," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence that ensure they receive benefits earned through their service to the country."

VA proposes to add a new subsection to its adjudication regulation by revising 38 CFR 3.310 to state that if a Veteran who has a service-connected TBI also has one of the five illnesses, then the illness will be considered service connected as secondary to the TBI.

Service connection under the proposed rule depends in part upon the severity of the TBI (mild, moderate, or severe) and the period of time between the injury and onset of the secondary illness. However, the proposed rule also clarifies that it does not preclude a Veteran from establishing direct service connection even if those time and severity standards are not met. It also defines the terms mild, moderate, and severe, consistent with Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines.

Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

VA's decision is based on a report by the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM), "Gulf War and Health, Volume 7: Long-Term Consequences of TBI." In its report, the IOM's Committee on Gulf War and Health concluded that "sufficient evidence of a causal relationship" - the IOM's highest evidentiary standard - existed between moderate or severe levels of TBI and diagnosed unprovoked seizures. The IOM found "sufficient evidence of an association" between moderate or severe levels of TBI and Parkinsonism; dementias (which VA understands to include presenile dementia of the Alzheimer type and post-traumatic dementia); depression (which also was associated with mild TBI); and diseases of hormone deficiency that may result from hypothalamo-pituitary changes.

Specific information about the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center is available at <http://www.dvbic.org/>. Information about Gulf War and VA's services and programs are available at <http://www.publicheath.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/index.asp>.

Mike Vandrovec Recognized



Mike Vandrovec is recognized for his appointment to the National Interim Membership Committee.

Joe Hall Receives Award



Joe Hall receives his plaque as Department Member of the Year.

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Pictured from left to right are: Battalion Commander, Lt Col Jonathan Erickson, Command Sgt Major Alan Zimmerman, Chapter 2 Adjutant, Jim Groven, Past Department Commander Roy Fillion, Department Senior Vice Commander, Tom Saddler Jr and Andy Nomland Chapter 2 Commander, Larry Holweger.

A donation of \$ 500.00 from Chapter 2 Andy Nomland Disabled American Veterans Grand Forks ND was presented by James Groven, Chapter Adjutant Saturday December 1, 2012 to the "1-188th Air Defense Artillery Battalion Family Readiness Group" at the ND National Guard Armory Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The Battalion Family Readiness Group will be headquartered in Grand Forks, ND supporting families from all over North Dakota who have service members deployed. The main mission of the Family Readiness Group is to establish and facilitate ongoing communication, involvement, support, and recognition between military families and the North Dakota National Guard in a partnership that promotes the best in both.

The donation will be used by the Family Readiness Group to provide assistance to families of deployed soldiers from the Battalion that are in need during the upcoming deployment to Washington DC for the National Capital Region Mission from May 2013 to May 2014 and other future missions.

North Dakota Women Veterans

In 2007, the state of North Dakota legislation authorized our office to add a Women Veterans' Coordinator position. This position focuses on being an advocate for women veterans. It connects veterans, their dependents and survivors to benefits they may be eligible for at the state and federal level with the emphasis on women veterans.

A Women Veteran's Registry card was developed as a tool to register women veterans into our data base. Some ideas that are in development are; conferences, membership to the association, newsletters, and

committees. We would benefit from your input into the possibilities of this women veteran specific position.

To apply for registry into the data base, please contact the Women Veterans' Coordinator

Brenda Bergsrud,
North Department of Veterans Affairs
925 Basin Avenue, Suite 6
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-328-5465
bbergsrud@nd.gov



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS



ANDY NOMLAND
Chapter No. 2

Grand Forks, North Dakota

Meetings Held 2nd Wednesday
of each month at 6:30 pm
County Office Building - 6th Floor
September - June



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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS



CLARENCE "TOM" LEMLEY
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VA, SSA and IRS Cut Red Tape for Veterans and Survivors

New Policy Eliminates Paperwork, Allows More VA Staff to Focus on Eliminating Claims Backlog

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it is cutting red tape for Veterans by eliminating the need for them to complete an annual Eligibility Verification Report (EVR). VA will implement a new process for confirming eligibility for benefits, and staff that had been responsible for processing the old form will instead focus on eliminating the compensation claims backlog.



Historically, beneficiaries have been required to complete an EVR each year to ensure their pension benefits continued. Under the new initiative, VA will work with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to verify continued eligibility for pension benefits.

“By working together, we have cut red tape for Veterans and will help ensure these brave men and women get the benefits they have earned and deserve,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

VA estimates it would have sent nearly 150,000 EVRs to beneficiaries in January 2013. Eliminating these annual reports reduces the burden on Veterans, their families, and survivors because they will not have to return these routine reports to VA each year in order to avoid suspension of benefits. It also allows VA to redirect more than 100 employees that usually process EVRs to work on eliminating the claims backlog.

“Having already instituted an expedited process that enables wounded warriors to quickly access Social Security disability benefits, we are proud to work with our federal partners on an automated process that will make it much easier for qualified Veterans to maintain their VA benefits from year to year,” said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security.

“The IRS is taking new steps to provide critical data to help speed the benefits process for the nation’s Veterans and Veterans Affairs,” said Beth Tucker, IRS Deputy Commissioner for Operations Support. “The IRS is pleased to be part of a partnership with VA and SSA that will provide needed data quickly and effectively to move this effort forward.”

All beneficiaries currently receiving VA pension benefits will receive a letter from VA explaining these changes and providing instructions on how to continue to submit their unreimbursed medical expenses.

More information about VA pension benefits is available at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/pension> and other VA benefit programs on the joint Department of Defense—VA web portal eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov.

VA Registers “GI Bill” as a Trademark

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that GI Bill is now a registered trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and VA is the sole owner of the mark.

“We will continue to support our Veterans by helping them obtain the best education of their choosing—a right for which they have bravely served, and which they have truly earned,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We all want Veterans to be informed consumers in their educational pursuit.”

On April 26, 2012, President Obama signed Executive Order 13607, directing the VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Education to undertake a number of measures to “stop deceptive and misleading” promotional efforts that target the GI Bill educational benefits of Servicemembers, Veterans, and eligible family members and survivors. One of the key components of the order was for VA to register the term “GI Bill” as a trademark in order to protect individuals and ensure they are directed to the right resources to make informed decisions.

In addition, VA obtained the rights to the *GI Bill.com* website after the original owners agreed to give up the site. VA is taking a proactive approach in continuously taking action to eliminate fraudulent marketing and recruiting practices.

“Trademarking ‘GI Bill’ is a great step forward in continuing our mission to better serve this nation’s Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families,” said Allison A. Hickey, VA undersecretary for benefits.

VA will issue terms of use for “GI Bill” within the next six months.

“We want to ensure the right balance with these new guidelines so that our stakeholders can still promote GI Bill and we can prohibit others from using it fraudulently,” said Curtis L. Coy, deputy undersecretary for economic opportunity.

Since August 2009, VA has paid over \$23.8 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to over 866,000 Veterans, Servicemembers, and dependents. VA received over 478,000 Fall 2012 enrollments for Post-9/11 GI Bill.

For more information on GI Bill programs, please visit www.gibill.va.gov or call 1-888-GI-Bill-1 (1-888-442-4551) to speak with a GI Bill representative.

GI BILL

VA Releases New PSA Targeting Women Veterans

“The Right Place” Assures Female Vets of High-Quality VA Care

WASHINGTON (November 26, 2012) – The Department of Veterans Affairs has developed a new public service announcement (PSA) to let women Veterans know they've come to “The Right Place” when seeking VA health care.

“We want to send a very clear message to women Veterans that VA is here to meet your health care needs,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “It is important that women Veterans receive the high-quality health care and benefits they have earned through their service.”

The number of women using VA health care has doubled in the past decade and that number is expected to double again soon. The 30-second video PSA, produced by VA's Women's Health Services office, addresses key themes defined by Secretary Shinseki.

Key messages in the PSA include: assuring women Veterans that VA is ready to serve them; encouraging viewers to rethink assumptions that all Veterans are male; and reminding Americans that women Veterans are coming home, separating from service, or returning to Guard or Reserve status.

The PSA was developed for nationwide release along with a new employee awareness video created as part of VA's ongoing efforts to change its culture to be more understanding and accommodating of women Veterans. It also promotes the recognition of women Veterans around Veterans Day, honoring their service to our country.

“Not all women who served their country identify as

Veterans and many women Veterans are unaware that VA offers high quality women's health care,” said Dr. Robert Petzel, Undersecretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration. “One of the most important aspects of our efforts to serve women Veterans is to make sure each one of them knows we're here.”



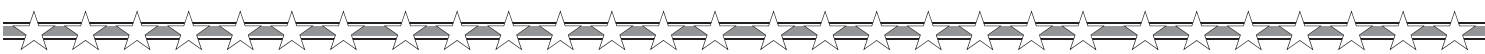
Women serve in every branch of the military, representing 15 percent of today's active duty military and nearly 18 percent of National Guard and Reserve forces. By 2020, VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population.

VA is disseminating its culture-of-change message to employees and Veterans through a multi-faceted

campaign, which includes a toolkit for outreach to women Veterans. To access additional campaign materials, visit www.womenshealth.va.gov/culture_change.asp. To access the toolkit, visit www.womenshealth.va.gov/toolkits.asp.

The PSA is available for viewing on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5FGIZ2uYiU> and www.womenshealth.va.gov. Broadcast organizations interested in obtaining a broadcast-quality version of the PSA can download it by accessing the following link: https://downloads.va.gov/files/VA_OPIA/VDPDVAPSA/, then right clicking on “VDPDVAPSA5H.mov” and selecting “save target as.”

Visit www.va.gov/womenvet and www.womenshealth.va.gov to learn more about VA programs and services for women Veterans.



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New Members Appointed to VA Committee on Women Veterans

Washington – Five new members have been appointed to the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory committee on Women Veterans, an expert panel that advises VA on issues and programs affecting women Veterans.

“VA relies on the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans to provide insight on key issues that impact the women Veteran population. The Committee’s recommendations provide guidance that direct VA’s efforts to identify and address the diverse needs of women Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “VA welcomes the newest members.”

Established in 1983, the committee makes recommendations to the Secretary for administrative and legislative changes. The new committee members, who are appointed to two-year terms, are: Gina Chandler, Bryant, Ark.; Larri Gerson, Dunedin, Fla.; Mary Morin, Raymond, NH; Charlotte S. Smith, Farmington, NM; and Mary Westmoreland, Bronxville, NY.

“Women serving in the military continue to demonstrate their dedication in defense of our great Nation,” Shinseki added. “VA remains committed to providing women Veterans with equitable, quality benefits and services that appropriately meet their needs.”

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veterans population. Of the approximately 22 million living Veterans, about 1.9 million are women. They comprise nearly 9 percent of the total Veterans population and nearly 5 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates that by 2020 women Veterans will comprise 10 percent of the Veteran population. VA has women-Veterans-program managers at VA medical centers and women-Veterans coordinators at VA regional offices to

assist women Veterans with health and benefits issues.

New Members

VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans

- Gina Chandler, Bryant, Ark.; A Veteran of the U.S. Air Force; currently serves as a Veterans service officer, women-Veterans coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs, and secretary of the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators
- Larri Gerson, Dunedin, FL; A Veteran of the U.S. Air Force; currently serves as a claims examiner for the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, and webmaster for the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators; former state women-Veterans coordinator for the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Mary Morin, Raymond, NH; A retired U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant; currently serves as the Director of the New Hampshire Office of Veterans Services, and a member of the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators
- Charlotte S. Smith, Farmington, NM; A Veteran of the U.S. Army; currently serves as a Veterans service officer, state women-Veterans coordinator for the New Mexico Department of Veterans Affairs, and a member of the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators.
- Mary Westmoreland, Bronxville, NY; A retired U.S. Army Colonel, with service in Desert Shield/Desert Storm; currently runs a pro bono consulting company that focuses on coaching, mentoring, and organizational strategic planning for government and nonprofit organizations.

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VA Offers a New Tool to Help Veterans Prevent Diabetes

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the implementation of a pilot version of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a program being promoted nationally by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, aimed at reducing the number of Veterans who develop diabetes.

“The Diabetes Prevention Program will provide Veterans with another tool to help them lead healthier, fuller lives, reducing their risk for diabetes,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The DPP was a major multi-center clinical research study aimed at discovering whether modest weight loss through dietary change and increased physical activity or treatment with the oral diabetes drug metformin could prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes.

The study enrolled participants who were prediabetic— overweight and with blood glucose (blood sugar) levels higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. Results showed those who lost a modest amount of weight through dietary changes and increased physical activity sharply reduced their chances of developing diabetes.

“Approximately 24 percent of Veterans have Type 2 diabetes,” said Dr. Linda Kinsinger, VA's chief consultant for preventive medicine. “We've monitored the DPP's results and we feel that it could be another tool to make a difference for Veterans.”

Through VA's pilot DPP, which will be offered on a strictly voluntary basis, some Veterans who are at risk for, but not diagnosed with, diabetes will attend a series of group sessions and will be given predetermined weight loss and physical activity goals.

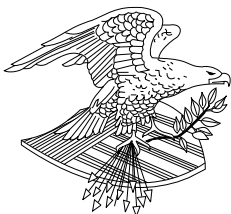
Research has shown that, while many Veterans benefit by establishing their own health goals, others show positive improvement working towards goals determined by the program.

Other Veterans at risk for diabetes will receive weight management care through MOVE! - VA's current weight management program. The program targets a broad range of patients who are obese or overweight with obesity-related conditions, whereas the DPP specifically targets those obese individuals who have laboratory evidence of prediabetes.

Because VA is eager to try new approaches to promoting health and preventing disease, it is implementing a pilot VA version of the DPP. A limited number of Veterans with prediabetes will be able to participate in this pilot clinical program at the medical centers in Minneapolis, Baltimore, and Greater Los Angeles with VA Ann Arbor serving as the coordinating center.

For more information on this program, contact Jay Shiffler (jay.shiffler@va.gov) at the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. To learn more about the VA's prevention program, visit <http://www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp>.

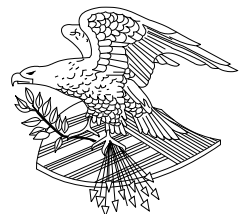
VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country. With a health care budget of more than \$50 billion, VA expects to provide care to 6.1 million patients supporting 920,000 hospitalizations and nearly 80 million outpatient visits this year. VA's health care network includes 152 major medical centers and more than 800 community based outpatient clinics.



REMEMBER OUR VETERANS

Yesterday's Military Heroes • Today's Veterans

Today's Military • Tomorrow's Veterans



Improved Access and Coordination of Care for Women Veterans

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs leads the Nation in breast cancer screening rates and has outperformed non-VA health care systems in breast cancer screenings for more than 15 years, with 87 percent of eligible women receiving mammograms in the VA health care system in fiscal year 2010.

In comparison, in 2010, the private sector screened 71 percent of eligible women, Medicare screened 69 percent and Medicaid screened 51 percent, according to Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set, a tool used by more than 90 percent of U.S. health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service.

“We're proud of our great record on breast cancer screenings and treatments,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We'll continue to work to improve access and coordination of care for women Veterans.”

Since 2000, the number of female Veterans using VA health care has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 to more than 337,000 in fiscal year 2011. As the number of women Veterans increases rapidly, VA not only focuses on improving access to breast screenings and coordination of care, but also trains providers in the latest breast exam techniques.

VA provides mammograms for all Veterans, with 45 facilities providing services on-site utilizing digital mammography. Some facilities offer mammograms to walk-in patients and same-day ultrasounds. VA also offers mobile mammography in some areas of the country. This mammogram technology-on-wheels allows women Veterans in rural areas to get screening mammograms and have their mammograms read by a VA breast radiologist, without traveling far from home. All this improves access for more than 337,000 women VA health care users.

“VA is different from other health care systems in that we serve a female population that is spread across the continental United States, located in both rural and urban areas,” said Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant for VA's Women's Health Services. “Because of that we have to be creative and innovative about the way we provide

screenings, track a woman's mammogram results and breast cancer care, and train our providers in the latest diagnostic techniques and breast cancer treatments.”

In many cases, VA is using technology to bridge the distance between providers at facilities in its 21 regions throughout the nation. VA uses simulation technology to train VA providers in the latest breast exam techniques.

VA is also developing a breast cancer clinical case registry to track when a provider orders a mammogram, the results of the test, and the follow-up care provided. The system will improve care coordination and help VA track and study breast care outcomes throughout VA. It is expected to be available in 2013.

These efforts in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment are part of a larger VA initiative to enhance all health care services for women Veterans. Women make up six percent of Veterans who use VA health care, but they are expected to make up a larger segment of all VA health care users in the future. VA is preparing for this increase by expanding access to care, enhancing facilities, training staff, and improving services for women.

Expanded outreach to women Veterans is another goal in the initiative, and VA's Women's Health Services regularly creates posters and messages to educate women Veterans about key women's health issues. In celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, VA reminds patients and providers about the importance of early detection.

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, visit: www.va.gov/womenvet and www.womenshealth.va.gov.

VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country. With a health care budget of more than \$50 billion, VA expects to provide care to 6.1 million patients supporting 920,000 hospitalizations and nearly 80 million outpatient visits this year. VA's health care network includes 152 major medical centers and more than 800 community based outpatient clinics. At each VA medical center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager is designated to assist women Veterans.



2013 Mid-Winter Conference Being Held in Arlington, VA

The Disabled American Veterans announces the 2013 Mid-Winter Conference and Commanders and Adjutants Association Meeting will be held from February 24 through 27, 2013. The highlight of the event will be the testimony of National Commander, Larry Polzin, to a joint meeting of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. Commander Polzin is scheduled to testify at 2:00 p.m. on February 26th.

Headquarters for the event is the Crystal Gateway Marriot in Arlington, VA. The conference begins with the Mid-Winter Business Session for the Commanders and Adjutants Association. At the business session, attendees receive information from senior officials at the VA and from the leadership of the DAV.

In addition to speeches, our legislative committee is scheduled to meet with Representative Cramer, Senator Heitkamp, and Senator Hoeven. Most departments meet with their representatives and senators, so it is really exciting to see hundreds of members of the DAV on the Capitol Hill.

Also, there are many seminars scheduled to help chapter and department members learn about procedures and policies of the DAV. These workshops provide the opportunity for our members to discuss DAV matters and provide feedback to the leaders of the organization.

The room rate is \$198 per night and reservations can be made at the Gateway Marriot (703) 920 3230.

DAV National Commander Encourages Attendance

The elections are finally over and a new Congress is about to begin. To get the jump on the start of the new legislative year, our annual Mid-Winter Conference begins Feb. 24. Our members will gather to obtain the latest information concerning veterans legislation, VA programs and the thorny issues that confront us.

Now is the time to educate lawmakers, especially those new to Capitol Hill, about vital veterans issues. The key to that opportunity is having our members advocate on behalf of our fellow veterans. This isn't the year to stay home. It is the year to begin forging alliances with our lawmakers.

National Legislative Director Joseph Violante takes us through the legislative process in his column (see page 14). I want to urge you to attend the Mid-Winter Conference because of the role you can fill in Washington, D.C.

Our members meet and get to know their lawmakers during the conference. They not only need our information on veterans programs, they welcome their constituents and their ideas. Most lawmakers support programs for veterans, but few, especially new ones, know what we need and how we can achieve our goals to improve care and benefits for our fellow veterans.

Meeting with elected officials and their staffs gives our members enormous opportunities to have the full attention of lawmakers directed to such vital programs as adequate compensation, vital health care, improved access to quality mental health care and the pressing issues of the claims backlog, to name a few.

Our Mid-Winter Conference seminars and workshops arm our members with the information they need to present to lawmakers – to plant the seed of an idea, as Legislative Director Joe Violante says. The legislative process begins at that point, but without strong advocates in Congress, the idea could be lost among the thousands of pieces of proposed legislation that flood Capitol Hill every session.

Making an impression on members of Congress as informed, compassionate veterans advocates enhances our clout. And it all stems from your participation in the Mid-Winter Conference and meeting with your lawmakers.

I sincerely hope you will do your best to attend and thoroughly immerse yourself in the role of veterans helping veterans. Every earned benefit we have is the result of this process, and whatever we can achieve in the future rests with you. Generations of veterans depend on you, and we never want to disappoint them.

Our advocacy in action ensures our cause will truly become a national priority. Our fellow citizens know that taking care of veterans is the right thing to do. We must double our efforts on behalf of injured and ill veterans who have earned their benefits on the fields of honor. Our fellow citizens know that fulfilling our promises to veterans is the right thing to do.

When we show our passionate commitment to those who've served and their families, we ensure our national representatives make the right decisions on our behalf.

**MID-WINTER
CONFERENCE**

Department Commander Krajewski In Action



Chapter 31 Commander Chris Wingire, Department Commander Krajewski, Chapter Adjutant Rod Olin and Department Adjutant Warren Tobin at the Commander's visit.

Department Commander Krajewski visits with Dave Vareberg (Chapter Adjutant) and Jim Drong (Chapter Commander) during his Chapter 24 visit in October.



Department Commander Krajewski, ND Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs Chairman Dean Overby, and ND Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Lonnie Wangen at a recent meeting.



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