



70th Annual
VA Voluntary Service

National Advisory
Committee
Meeting and Conference

May 4-6, 2016
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

by the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, we reflect with solemn reverence upon the valor of a generation that served with honor. We pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who left their families to serve bravely, a word away from everything they knew and everyone they loved. From Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon and countless villages in between, they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoon, fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans. Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

As a grateful Nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots—their names etched in black granite—who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know. We draw inspiration from the heroes who suffered unspeakably as prisoners of war, yet who returned home with their heads held high. We pledge to keep faith with those who were wounded and still carry the scars of war, seen and unseen, with more than 1,600 of our service members still among the missing, we pledge as a Nation to do everything in our power to bring these patriots home in the reflection of The Wall, we see the military family members and Veterans who carry a pain that may never fade. May they find peace in knowing their loved ones endure, not only in medals and memories, but in the hearts of all Americans, who are forever grateful for their service, valor, and sacrifice.

In recognition of a chapter in our Nation's history that must never be forgotten, let us renew our sacred commitment to those who answered our country's call in Vietnam and those who awaited their safe return. Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the Federal Government will partner with local governments, private organizations, and communities across America to participate in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War—a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging missions we have ever faced. While no words will ever be fully worthy of their service, nor any honor truly befitting their sacrifice, let us remember that it is never too late to pay tribute to the men and women who answered the call of duty with courage and valor. Let us renew our commitment to the fullest possible accounting for those who have not returned.

Throughout this Commemoration, let us strive to live up to their example by showing our Vietnam Veterans, their families, and all who have served the fullest respect and support of a grateful Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to honor our Vietnam Veterans, our fallen, our wounded, those unaccounted for, our former prisoners of war, their families, and all who served with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.





DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

300 Oceangate, Suite 700

Long Beach, CA 90802

**VA Greater
Los Angeles
Healthcare
System**
Los Angeles, CA

~

**VA Loma Linda
Healthcare
System**
Loma Linda, CA

~

**VA Long Beach
Healthcare
System**
Long Beach, CA

~

**VA New Mexico
Healthcare
System**
Albuquerque, NM

~

**VA Northern
Arizona
Healthcare
System**
Prescott, AZ

~

**VA Phoenix
Healthcare
System**
Phoenix, AZ

~

**VA San Diego
Healthcare
System**
San Diego, CA

~

**VA Southern
Arizona
Healthcare System**
Tucson, AZ

Network Director
*300 Oceangate,
Suite 700
Long Beach, CA
90802*

May 3, 2016

Dear Conference Participants:

As you gather in Albuquerque to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Voluntary Service, continue to take this opportunity to share great ideas and best practices all in an effort to better serve our Veterans. Voluntary Service is an integral part of the high-quality care that we provide for our Veterans. We are also very grateful for the time and talent provided by our volunteers and Veteran Service Organizations.

VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network is one of 18 regional Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) operated nationwide by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Our Network is comprised of eight health care systems, and 64 community clinics serving 1.5 million Veterans who reside in Arizona, Southern California and New Mexico.

Our eight hospitals are located in Long Beach, Loma Linda, Los Angeles, and San Diego, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico and Phoenix, Prescott and Tucson, Arizona. VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network provides a full continuum of health care services, including primary, acute, mental health, long term, and specialty care. We employ over 22,000 employees and train nearly 10,000 medical residents, nursing, and allied-health students each year.

Over the course of the past year, we have placed a special emphasis on expanding access to care, improving service quality, and increasing Veteran satisfaction – volunteers have made major contributions in each of these areas. We are committed to creating an innovative health care system and partnering with our Veterans to optimize their health outcomes. Staff throughout the Network will continue to utilize a personalized, proactive, patient-centered approach to improve our Veterans' health and well-being of mind, body, and spirit.

We remain committed to delivering the excellent service that has been earned by our Veterans. This is only possible with your help, our volunteer partners. I hope that you have a productive meeting and that you enjoy your stay in Albuquerque.

Thank you for all that you do in support of Veterans!

Sincerely,

Marie L. Weldon, FACHE
VISN 22 Network Director



Department of Veterans Affairs

New Mexico VA Healthcare System
1501 San Pedro Drive SE
Albuquerque NM 87108-5154

May 3, 2016

In Reply Refer To:

Dear VAVS Volunteers, VSOs and VAVS Staff:

Once again, it is an honor to welcome you back to Albuquerque for the 70th Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference. I know you had a wonderful time last year, and I'm certain this year will be just as wonderful. The staff and volunteers of the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) have worked hard to ensure your visit to the "Land of Enchantment" is a memorable one.

I know that you will spend invaluable time over the next few days setting priorities, collaborating and developing future plans toward the VAVS mission. Our staff is committed to accommodating you to ensure that you can focus on the work at hand and also have a little fun while you are here in beautiful New Mexico.

I must take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the volunteers of the New Mexico VA Health Care System. Whether they are transporting Veterans to and from medical appointments through the Volunteer Transportation Network, greeting Veterans and visitors at the Information Desk or making friendly visits to inpatients, I am always in awe of their unselfish acts of kindness. Last year, 1,293 volunteers accounted for more the 116,896 hours of service and \$440,314 in monetary and in-kind donations in support of our mission to provide quality care to our Veterans. We are very appreciative of the support of our volunteers.

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the NMVAHCS, I want to personally thank each of you for your outstanding dedication in service to our Veterans. It is our hope that Albuquerque will provide the perfect setting for you to have a wonderful and productive meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Welch", is located below the "Sincerely," text.

Andrew Welch, MHA, FACHE
Director

May 4, 2016



I send greetings and congratulations for 70 years of dynamic leadership and commitment to Veterans. The VAVS Program and its participants continue to provide outstanding volunteer service and resources in support of veterans. Congratulations are extended to the following groups for their exemplary contributions to the success of the Voluntary Service Program.

The member organizations of the VAVS National Advisory Committee, many of which have been there from the beginning, are commended for their continued partnership, valued guidance and for their dedication and support of the VAVS Program. The VAVS staff for their outstanding leadership and management of volunteers and volunteer resources. I am proud to have been a small part of the growth and development of the VAVS Program in the past and I recognize and value greatly the special talents, skills, and abilities of the VAVS staff at the local level that help to maximize the effective volunteer participation of individuals and organizations.

The army of volunteers, the heart and soul of the VAVS Program, are recognized for their generous gifts of time and service beyond measure and for their commitment to America's Veterans. These volunteers and the organizations that they represent are what make VA Voluntary Service the unique program that it is.

Sabrina Clark and the VAVS Central Office staff are commended for their leadership and stewardship of the program and for maintaining the mission of the VAVS Program and for setting a vision for a successful future.

Congratulations to all of the VAVS Program participants for 70 years of dedicated service to Veterans and best wishes for much success in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim W. Delgado'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

Jim W. Delgado
Director, Voluntary Service Office
1992-2005

May 4, 2016



The members of the National Advisory Committee, VAVS Staff and attendees of 70th VAVS NAC:

I congratulate you for 70 years of spectacular, unselfish service to Veterans. Those who came before you answered the call of Omar Bradley to welcome the service members back from World War II. They were pioneers that established the framework of what we know now as VAVS. You have carried on that mission with confidence, pride and compassion. You all have much to be proud of; your countless hours of planning events, your service to Veterans and their families, your very generous non-monetary and cash donations and your unselfishness. So hold your heads high, be proud and carry on with what you believe in... service to Veterans.

For many, many years, I have been in awe of your actions, your commitment and your dedication. As a recreation therapist, I relied on your service, dedication and commitment. And then moved on to manage local volunteers at 2 different VAs and then to working in VACO with Mr. Delgado and then in Sabrina's role as National Director of VAVS.

Now, since retirement, I have become one of you. Walking in your shoes, experiencing the same struggles with managerial decisions, but experiencing the excitement from my volunteer assignment. I currently serve as a volunteer massage therapist in Integrative Health and Wellness Program. I LOVE my assignment! I get it. I know why you do what you do... why those who occupied your positions before you, did what they did.

I applaud you and those who went before you. I ask you to do what I asked you to do for years, ASK others to join you, for the **Power Is In The Ask**. Give them the opportunity to LOVE their assignment, like you do, and like I do!

Have a great 70th VAVS National Advisory Committee Meeting!

My sincerest love and admiration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Laura B. Balun'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura Balun
VAVS Volunteer and Local VAVS Representative for United Veterans Service
Director, Voluntary Service Office
2005 - 2013

A Historical Perspective of Voluntary Service to Veterans for VAVS' 70th Anniversary

By Darlene Richardson

In the late spring of 1945, while the U.S. and its allies were turning the fate of World War II toward its inevitable conclusion against Hitler, President Harry S. Truman placed fellow Missourian General Omar F. Bradley in command of the Veterans Administration to help bring the agency into the modern era. The U.S. presidency had been forced upon Truman, who just a few months earlier was vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt. When Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, while in Warm Springs, Georgia, the no-nonsense Missourian was thrust into command of a nation at war and he wasted no time in making changes he deemed necessary.



Truman had been president for less than two months when he set his sights on replacing the VA's long-time leader, Brigadier General Frank T. Hines. Hines, who had served in the Spanish American War and World War I, was appointed by President Harding and had been in charge of federal Veterans programs since 1923. Truman, himself a World War I Veteran, believed that the VA had been set up for World War I Veterans and that to ensure the medical best care possible for the newest generation of Veterans - who, at the time, were saving the world from Hitler - big changes were needed. His appointee, General Bradley, made unprecedented changes to VA and the creation of VA Voluntary Service was one of them. Today's VA Voluntary

Service program and National Advisory Committee were formally authorized in VA Circular No. 117 on May 15, 1946 as part of VA Special Services.

The role that volunteers have played in VA's efforts to provide this nation's Veterans with health care and their other deserved benefits began long before 1946 and even before VA existed. In order to understand why the VA Voluntary Service program and its volunteers are so significant, a little background on how this federal system of hospitals and volunteers evolved is necessary.

Volunteers and Care of Veterans before 1946

Today's VA hospitals owe their very existence to volunteers of the Civil War. In June 1861, just weeks after the American Civil War began in Fort Sumter, South Carolina, President Lincoln authorized the U.S. Sanitary Commission to provide medical support to the U.S. military's medical department during the war to:

*"establish the principles and practices connected with the inspection of recruits and enlisted men; the sanitary condition of the volunteers; to the means of preserving and restoring the health and of securing the general comfort and efficiency of the troops; to the proper provision of cooks, nurses, and hospitals; and to other subjects of like nature."*¹

The U.S. Sanitary Commission originated as the Woman's Central Association of Relief in New York City after the first shots of the war were fired and they sought to channel the public's outpouring of support for the troops in a way that would help the government and military. The U.S. Sanitary Commission and its legion of volunteers, which included American poet Walt Whitman, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, and thousands of others, held "sanitary fairs" to raise money for



bandages, ambulances, combs, stationery, and other supplies for the medical department and attended to the needs of wounded soldiers.

There was no shortage of volunteers wanting to help the U.S. Sanitary Commission as many women who were left behind when their men went to war, as well as men who were unsuitable for the military, wanted to feel useful and contribute to the war effort. Volunteers provided vital services and comforts in many forms to the U.S. military: provided an ambulance service, wrote letters, combed hair, held hands, read to the bedridden, sat quietly at their bedsides so they would not feel alone, recorded burial locations for those whose wounded proved fatal, and much more.



The U.S. Sanitary Commission established convalescent “soldiers homes,” during the war, as a transitional place for soldiers who were out of immediate medical danger, but were not ready to go home or back into battle. These “soldiers homes” proved to be of great necessity, and with the increasing numbers of men having limbs amputated, concern grew for what would happen to them after the war ended. In preparation for dealing with these future issues, in 1862 the U.S. Sanitary Commission sent sociologist Stephen H.

Perkins to Europe to conduct a study to see what benefits major countries there offered to their disabled war Veterans.

Perkins’ report found that there was very little in European models to emulate in the U.S. In fact, Dr. Faure, head physician at the Hotel des Invalides in Paris, suggested that if America was to “establish an invalid hospital system, let regular occupation for invalids be the corner-stone for it.”

In 1864 two schools of thought arose to address the looming invalid soldiers/Veterans problem: let them return to their homes and provide them with pensions only or create soldiers homes for them. Reverend Henry Bellows, director of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, favored the pension-only option, but many of his sanitary commission colleagues and even General Ulysses Grant supported the soldiers’ home plan. The pension-only option was fine for men who had homes to return to, but the U.S. military had been filled by many immigrants and former slaves who had no families or homes awaiting them. Several states took the initiative and established soldiers’ homes during the war out of necessity, but they did not have the U.S. Sanitary Commission research to guide them.

On March 3, 1865, the day before his second inauguration, President Abraham Lincoln signed the law establishing a national soldiers and sailors asylum for the Union’s volunteer forces. It was the first government institution in the world established solely for disabled Veterans of volunteer forces. Based on U.S. Sanitary Commission research and advice, the first National Asylum opened in the fall of 1866 in Togus, Maine (known today VA Maine Healthcare System - Togus). The National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was renamed as the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in 1873.

The U.S. Sanitary Commission, which was the first large-scale national volunteer organization in history, at the time, could have been extended and revamped for post-war work, but it was not. There was no Red Cross or other major national social organizations in existence when the Civil War ended, so it fell to former soldiers to look after their

own. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was established in 1866 by discharged Union Veterans shortly after the war and it became the first large-scale Veteran's organization in American history.

Following recommendations from the Hotel des Invalides in Perkins' 1863 U.S. Sanitary report, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers put all of their able-bodied residents to work. A majority of the manpower at the National Homes was supplied by the Veterans living there until the 20th century. They constructed buildings and monuments, raised cattle and crops, cooked and served food, did the laundry, kept the grounds clean, ran a canteen and library, and much more, serving in every capacity. For this reason, volunteers from the community were rarely needed, although entertainers occasionally donated their services for performances to entertain the residents.



The 1865 National Asylum's organic act established a Post Fund so that they could raise money and accept donations for the Veterans' needs. Major donors were Horatio Ward, a U.S. businessman who died in London, left a portion of his estate to the National Homes which helped build theatres; Mary Lowell Putnam, sister of American poet, James Russell Lowell, established a library at the National Homes' Central Branch in Dayton and, while she was alive, donated library books, paintings, and other items for the men's enjoyment on an annual basis; and Andrew Carnegie donated funds to build libraries at two National Homes: the Mountain Branch in Johnson City, Tennessee, (known as the James H. Quillen, or Mountain Home, VA Medical Center) and the Danville Branch in Danville, Illinois (now known as VA Illiana Heath Care System). For

roughly 25 years, the National Homes operated beer halls, run by the Veterans, and all money from the sale of beer went into the Post Fund to pay for minstrel shows, fireworks for July 4th, and the like for their amusement or entertainment. Today's Post Fund under VA Voluntary Service has changed several times over the years, but is a legacy left over from the Civil War and National Home days.

By 1900 the American Red Cross had been founded (1881) by former Civil War nurse, Clara Barton, the U.S. had been in another war, and the young Civil War Veterans who first filled up the National Homes after the war and drove its expansion, were old men by then. Civilians were increasingly hired to do much of the work once performed by the Veterans who lived there because the number of Spanish American War Veterans there were not sufficient for all the work needed. Volunteers were needed and used, too, but few records of their contributions at the National Homes have survived.

The Civil War Veteran population at the National Homes peaked in 1905 with over 30,000 system-wide living at the homes. As more of them began to fill the Home's cemeteries, questions arose about the National Homes' future. In 1900 Veterans of the Spanish American War, Philippine Insurrection, and China Rebellion were eligible for admittance to the National Homes and they, like the Civil War Veterans before them, established their own Veterans support groups.

World War I

In 1914, what was known as "the World War," at the time, broke out in Europe. German submarines, known as Unterseeboot or "U-boat" for short [translates to undersea boat] had sunk numerous ships venturing into European waters, including the British passenger ship R.M.S. Lusitania which resulted in nearly 1,200 deaths. In order to protect U.S. ships and their cargoes going into the war zone, Congress created the Bureau of War Risk Insurance within the Treasury Department. The U.S. officially entered the war on April 6, 1917, and six months later Congress expanded the Bureau of War Risk Insurance's mission to include providing life insurance to military service personnel serving in the war.

In 1918, Congress tasked the Treasury Department with providing hospitals and medical care to discharged U.S. soldiers, sailors, and marines of the World War and it did so through the Public Health Service. The Public Health Service was given responsibility for providing hospitals, medical care, and services to Bureau of War Risk Insurance beneficiaries - World War I Veterans. At the time, Public Health Service only had roughly a dozen hospitals. While the Bureau of War Risk Insurance sought funds to build hospitals, Veterans received care and treatment at the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers along with private hospitals on a contract basis. The hospital building program under Treasury - administered by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance and Public Health Service - built three types of hospitals: general medical and surgery, tuberculosis, and neuro-psychiatric and was the largest federal construction program in history at the time. The Bureau of War Risk Insurance moved into its new headquarters building at the intersection of H Street and Vermont Avenue, N.W. in Washington, DC, in the fall of 1918.

World War I Veterans who received care in military hospitals were accustomed to volunteers from variety of organizations visiting them and providing comforts that made their recovery more pleasant. However, the Public Health Service was prevented from supplying such "delicacies of comfort" because of legal limitations.² As a result of this limitation, in 1919, Public Health Service's Surgeon General Rupert Blue formally requested that the American Red Cross provide supplemental comforts and recreation to the sick and disabled Veterans in its care. At that time Public Health Service operated 32 hospitals. This was the first large scale cooperative effort between Federal providers of Veterans health care and volunteer organizations in the 20th century.

The American Red Cross partnered with the American Library Association to provide patients with reading materials, books, and magazines, while the Red Cross provided daily visits, writing letters, cheering up patients, and entertainment. The Red Cross was not the only organization to visit Veterans in the hospitals and donate needed items. The Elks' War Relief Commission had donated a hospital

known as Parker Hill, in Boston, Massachusetts, to the government in 1918 for the use in rehabilitating World War Veterans and it was among the Public Health Service Veterans' hospitals at the time.



On May 15, 1919, Miss Ruth Emerson, of the American Red Cross' Medical Social Service was placed in charge of the Red Cross Home Service which would operate in all of the Public Health Service Veterans' hospitals.³ The home service provided hospitalized Veterans with comforts such as "pajamas, socks, sweaters... lively entertainment. ... moving pictures, vaudevilles, band concerts, and motor rides."⁴ The Red Cross also provided clerical, recreational, social work, psychiatric, and other volunteers to keep the Veterans hospitals operating smoothly.

In 1921 Congress merged the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, Public Health Service (only the Veteran's hospitals), and the Federal Board of Vocational Education (rehabilitation division only) in the first consolidation of federal Veterans' programs. The new merged entity was named as the Veterans Bureau. All Public Health Service Veterans' hospitals, along with their staff, were officially transferred to the Veterans Bureau in May 1922. The American Red Cross continued to provide volunteers for a wide range of services to the Veterans Bureau and its Veteran beneficiaries.

During the 1920s, the federal government operated two hospital systems for Veterans at the same time: the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, for Veterans prior to World War I, and the Veterans Bureau, for World War I Veterans. The

Naval Asylum and U.S. Soldiers Home in DC, which were established for Veterans of the Regular forces during the early 19th century, were like more like nursing homes. The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (VHA's origins) were residential institutions that contained beautiful landscapes, general hospitals with specialty wards, barracks, canteens, theatres, chapels, libraries, bands, and cemeteries, educational, rehabilitation, and work programs, and Veterans' organization offices on-site. National Home staff wore uniforms, they held reveille and taps daily, and was run by a Board of Managers that answered to the U.S. president. The Veterans Bureau, at the time, was building three types of hospitals - general, tuberculosis, and neuro-psychiatric - with few of the amenities of the National Homes. The Veterans Bureau found out that domiciliaries were an important part of meeting Veterans' needs.

In 1923 the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers opened up admittance to the first women Veterans. Women nurses who served during World War I were given the same Veterans benefits as men, but there were no accommodations for them until 1923. This meant that volunteers to assist women Veterans taking advantage of their new benefits were needed, too.

In 1924 the World War Act extended benefits for the second time in history to Veterans whose disabilities were not related to their military service. As a result, the Veterans Bureau encroached more and more on the National Homes, utilizing their beds and other services, providing funds to build additional buildings, and even suggested that they share facilities. This did not set well with the National Homes' management, which had well-established systems and processes that had worked suitably since their first facility opened in 1866.

By 1924 radio had become popular in mainstream American society and Veterans Bureau director, Gen. Frank T. Hines, authorized radios for Veterans' hospitals and patients' rooms as a form of entertainment, but relied on outside organizations to help. Civic and volunteer organizations raised money to purchase radio receivers and head phones for Veterans, while the Veterans Bureau saw to it that radio wiring was installed in its new

hospital buildings. By December 1924, 30 out of 49 Veterans Bureau hospitals had radio equipment.⁵ Radios served as key connections between Veterans and the world outside and were funded by volunteer organizations.

After the 1924 World War Act became law, the Veterans Bureau began to take over certain functions once performed by American Red Cross volunteers. In 1925 they took over the American Red Cross stenographer's branch present in Veterans Bureau hospitals; in September 1926 they took over psychiatric workers in its neuro-psychiatric hospitals, and in 1927 took over the social work branch. Many former Red Cross volunteers became Veterans Bureau employees at that time as VA established its own social work department. Volunteer organizations including the Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion continued to provide "diversional entertainments for the benefits of patients" and special programs during the holidays.⁶

When the stock market crashed in October 1929 and the Great Depression took hold, economy and efficiency became top priorities in the government as never before. As a result, the second merger of federal Veterans programs took place in July 1930 when the Pension Bureau, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and Veterans Bureau were merged together to form a new federal entity: the Veterans Administration. It brought together the oldest and newest Veterans programs, but did not merge all Veterans' programs. President Roosevelt's 1933 Economy Act reversed many Veterans' benefits, especially those whose disabilities were not attributed to military service, slashed many of them by 15%, as well as cut staff and budgets of all federal agencies. The Veterans Administration became a hybrid of both the old and new hospital systems including adoption and transfer of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers' Post Fund to VA as a permanent trust fund.⁷

The funding that had authorized new hospitals for World War I Veterans during the 1920s finally saw results in the 1930s. In 1930, VA comprised 54 hospitals; by 1940 the number of hospitals had grown to 86 and the number of volunteers grew

as well. Radios in Veterans' hospitals enabled hospitalized Veterans to tune in to President Roosevelt's "fireside chats," hear news of the Bonus Army marches during the Great Depression, and helped maintain a connection to American society. Other forms of entertainment provided to Veterans included musical concerts, vaudeville acts and actors, and baseball games. The Great Depression fueled a great interest in social work and the number of social welfare and volunteer organizations grew significantly. The number of volunteers who provided services to Veterans' hospitals during this period is largely unknown, as there was no centralized system of overseeing volunteers at the Veterans Bureau or Veterans Administration before 1946.

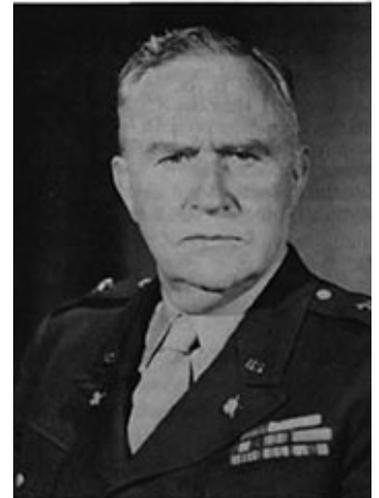
World War II and Historic Changes for VA

Hospitals for World War I Veterans were still being constructed when a new generation of soldiers went off to war after the naval base at Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. The country was still in the grip of the Depression when it suddenly had to produce weapons and fight a war. Special Services in the military services worked hard to keep up the morale of soldiers, sailors, marines during the war and social and volunteer organizations did that job in Veterans' hospitals.

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the G.I. Bill, authorized many sweeping new benefits for Veterans of World War II on June 22, 1944, and Veterans relied on volunteers to help them fill out paperwork for benefits and much more.

In June 1945, President Harry Truman appointed General Omar Bradley as Administrator for the Veterans Administration, replacing General Frank T. Hines who had been in that position for over 20 years. Truman stated in 1945 that "the Veterans Administration, as it now operates, was set up to care for the needs of Veterans of the last war, and added that he himself as a Veteran of World War I would not have wished to see the Veterans Administration operated by a Veterans of the Spanish American War."⁸ He wanted a World War II leader to look after interests of returning World War II Veterans and modernize the Veterans Administration.

General Bradley established numerous programs at VA that were modeled after successful similar programs within the War Department at that time. One of the first, prior to the transformation of VA medicine in January 1946, took place in November 1945 when he inaugurated a Special Services division within VA. The intention was to provide a properly coordinated social welfare program that would contribute to Veterans' peace of mind and physical recovery.⁹ Special Services would provide programs and staff, to include recreational leaders, chaplains, canteen workers, librarians, athletic instructors, music specialists, motion projectionists, voluntary service, and others, whose mission was to provide for patients' well-being. In December 1945, Bradley appointed Col. Francis R. Kerr to head the new Special Services division.



In January 1946 Congress authorized the establishment of a new VA Department of Medicine and Surgery so that VA could provide medical care that was second to none. Special Services was aligned under the new medical department and by June 1946 had four major services: Chaplaincy, canteen, recreation, and library. In May 1946 the Voluntary Service advisory committee was established to coordinate and integrate the supplemental assistance of volunteer organizations in the Special Services program.¹⁰ VA Circular No. 117, signed on May 15, 1946, established and defined the mission of VA's Voluntary Service and named the first eight organizations that formed the National Advisory Committee: the American Legion and its Auxiliary, the American National Red Cross, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and its Auxiliary, United Services Organizations (USO) and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Auxiliary.

James Parke, who had served with Army's Special Services during World War II joined VA's Special Service division in February 1946, was appointed as Director of VA Voluntary Service in May 1946.



In December 1946 Miss Charlotte O. von der Heyde, a former World War II Navy lieutenant, was appointed liaison officer between the VA Special Services division and national voluntary service organizations.

In 1946 the number of VA hospitals had expanded to 109 and the need for volunteers was ever-growing. VA had established special programs focusing on rehabilitation of the blind, prosthetics research and development, and paraplegics which fueled the need for more volunteers. Many VA hospitals at that time had radio stations on-site and, with the help of volunteer organizations like the Veterans Hospital Radio Guild, produced special radio programs for Veterans in the hospitals.

In February 1947 the scope of the National Advisory Committees was broadened to include integration of volunteer aid into all appropriate phases of the VA hospital program.¹¹ By June 1947 the National Advisory Committee comprised 23 social welfare and Veterans' organizations representing over 300 voluntary service groups and over three million volunteers had served in VA hospitals. B'nai B'rith Women was one of several organizations named as an agency member of the National Advisory Committee of Voluntary Service that year. With the return of World War II Veterans, came the formation of new organizations such as the American War Blinded Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America to help Veterans with particular needs.

In 1947, based largely on the success of Dr. Karl A. Menninger's "Topeka Experiment," VA greatly expanded recreational services in its neuro-psychiatric hospitals creating a need for additional volunteers. Dr. Menninger, a pre-eminent American psychiatrist, was director of the VA

hospital at Topeka, Kansas. In 1946 he asked the USO to provide dances and parties for mentally ill and emotionally disturbed hospital patients. Specially trained USO junior hostess volunteers and musicians provided the services. Dr. Menninger stated that "dancing with a pretty USO girl his own age makes a patient feel that his is not forgotten" - an important first step toward rehabilitation.¹²

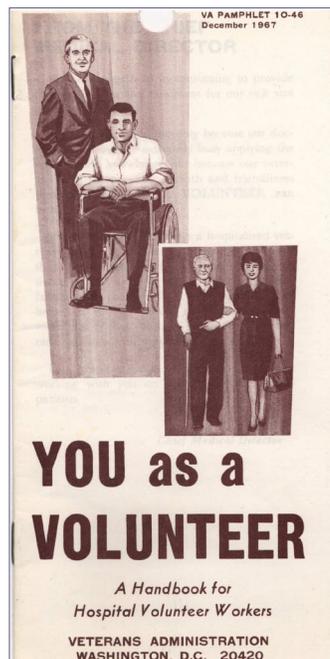
In 1950 World War II Navy Veteran Peter Miller was appointed as deputy director of VA Voluntary Service and the first directors of VA Voluntary Service were appointed in larger VA facilities.¹³ Both Peter Miller and VAVS director James Parke had backgrounds in academia and weren't afraid to try something new. In 1950 they initiated the "VA Voluntary Service Information Bulletin," a publication produced every other month for the benefit of staff and volunteers and published their first pamphlet, "Your Job as a Volunteer."

In 1952 VAVS produced its first film, "Within the Town" and President Truman lauded volunteers when he spoke to VA Voluntary Service's National Advisory Committee members in Washington, DC. He was the first sitting president to address the committee. During this period Korean War Veterans were returning and entering VA hospitals and VA began the conversion of its tuberculosis hospitals into general hospitals due to a better understanding of the disease and the use of antibiotics. Throughout the 1950s the Veterans Hospital Radio Guild, a group of more than 200 volunteers who often worked at national broadcast radio stations, visited VA hospitals and taught patients how to write, act, sing, and produce their own radio shows. Several VA facilities had their own radio station and studio.

In 1953 VA announced the first publication of "Veterans Voice," a magazine of articles and poetry written by and for patients in VA hospitals. The magazine was sponsored by Kansas City alumnae of Theta Sigma Phi, a national journalism sorority, in cooperation with the VA and the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, Inc., a volunteer group.¹⁴

In the summer of 1954 VA officially ended racial segregation in its hospitals in fulfillment of Executive Order 9981 and President Eisenhower's

goals. In 1955 a pilot project was undertaken to test the use of volunteers in VA's outpatient clinics. In 1955 a new VAVS emblem award was created to recognize volunteers who had served for a minimum of 5,000 hours - the first one wasn't awarded until 1956. A second film, "The Gift You Bring," was the first created as a recruitment tool for volunteers in 1959. The more VA programs expanded, the more volunteers were needed.



1961 saw the election of President John F. Kennedy and a shift in focus to national youth programs. In 1961 volunteer hours surpassed the 7 million mark, more than double the number in VAVS' first full year in 1947. The U.S. entered another war, this time in Southeast Asia, as VA was preparing to open its first nursing homes. In 1965 VAVS began to develop its first youth volunteer program. In 1966 a training course was developed for new or

inexperienced voluntary service officers and a two-year pilot was conducted to evaluate expanding volunteers into VA nursing homes, day treatment, and restoration centers. By 1968 field reports showed that a large number of VA youth volunteers had chosen medical or allied fields as careers as a result of their volunteer experience in VA hospitals. 1968 was the peak year for volunteers with an average of 121, 317 per month. In 1969 VA had 166 hospitals, 202 outpatient clinics, 6 restoration centers, and 65 nursing homes. VAVS began heavy recruitment of high school and college students and produced a film "Today and Tomorrow" to highlight the work of youth volunteers. During the 1960s volunteers became more visible in local and national newspapers as recognition for their service in Veterans' hospitals increased.

James H. Parke, director of VAVS since its creation in 1946, died on August 31, 1970 after suffering a heart attack. Peter Miller, Parke's long-time assistant director, was appointed as director. That year

efforts began to establish a scholarship in his honor for an outstanding youth volunteer. In 1970 over 112,000 volunteers donated more than 9 million hours of service in VA hospitals. A memorial scholarship award was founded in honor of VAVS' longtime former director, James H. Parke. The first recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Award was Dennis Bartkowiak, a 16-year old volunteer at the Leech Farm VA hospital at Aspinwall (now Pittsburgh). He received a certificate and \$400 check in 1972 in recognition for his service.¹⁵ Mrs. James H. Parke was presented with the James H. Parke silver tray achievement award in grateful remembrance of her husband.¹⁶

As Vietnam Veterans returned home from war, VAVS continued to focus on recruiting youth volunteers to work with them. VA established drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, day clinics, "vet centers," and other programs to meet the needs of Vietnam Veterans, while providing continuity of care to Spanish American War, Boxer Rebellion, Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, and Korean War Veterans, which required more volunteers.

In 1971 Carmella LaSpada founded the No Greater Love Organization to "recognize Vietnam conflict wounded and former prisoners of war" and provide commemorative events for those who had lost loved ones in service to the U.S.¹⁷ Celebrities and entertainers visited VA hospitals to lift spirits of Veterans. The National Salute for Hospitalized Veterans was one of several national tributes by the organization. Baseball home run king, Hank Aaron was the organization's president, and General Omar Bradley was its honorary national chairman under No Greater Love. The National Salute was initially started to honor Vietnam Veterans but quickly expanded to honor all Veterans. VA took part in the first National Salute in February 1974 and saw the number of volunteer hours that year



cross the 10 million mark for the first time. In 1978, VA Administrator and Vietnam Veteran Max Cleland announced that VA would take over the National Salute and be administered by VA's Voluntary Service. VAVS hosted the National Salute in its entirety for the first time on February 14, 1979 and the Camp Fire Girls adopted it as part of their national program.

The Army transferred its national cemetery system, all but two, to VA in 1973. Army retained ownership of the National Soldiers Home cemetery and Arlington National Cemetery. The role of volunteers grew exponentially when national cemeteries became part of the VA family as VA's responsibility for Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances expanded beyond its hospitals and medical centers.

America's Bicentennial was celebrated in 1976 and VA volunteers contributed to a wide variety of events and activities. Bicentennial trees were planted and plaques were erected in honor of the nation's patriots at all VA facilities. Some sites held parades and other special events that included Veterans in the national celebration. Arlington National Cemetery unveiled the first Medal of Honor headstones as part of the national Bicentennial.

Director Peter Miller retired in January 1976 and Wilson Schuerholz, assistant director of the Brooklyn VA hospital, was appointed as VAVS director. His departure two years later, in 1978, due to a promotion, saw Ed Rose appointed to the position. Under Ed Rose, the category of Associate Member was added to the National Advisory Committee for organization active in at least 20 VA facilities. The Forty & Eight organization was the first associate member to the NAC.

In 1980 President Jimmy Carter recognized 11 VA volunteers, whose combined service to Veterans totaled 637 years, at a special White House luncheon. Most had served as volunteers for at least 50 years. Mabel Patton of Wadsworth (Leavenworth) held the record at 67 years of service. VA Administrator Max Cleland presented the first Administrator's Voluntary Service Award in 1980. A new, minimally structured volunteer program was begun in Vietnam Veteran outreach centers

and uniforms for volunteers were field tested that year. In 1981 VA held the first national Veterans wheelchair games, and volunteers were a key part.

In 1982 the NAC was up to 50 members and the plans to hold NACs meeting outside of DC for the first time took place: Dallas would be the host city for the 35th anniversary meeting. Contributions to the Parke Award were doubled, for the first time, in order to recognize two youth volunteers. A VA volunteer lapel pin was developed, as was an award pin for volunteers reaching 1,000 hours.

By the mid-1980s volunteers were placed in over 150 different assignment types and special recognition for volunteers at the 750-hour and 1,000-hour levels were added. A subcommittee on membership was established as part of the NAC. VAVS began to make use of VA's growing public and consumer affairs office which helped to increase visibility for the National Salute. In 1984, 17 volunteers received the Administrator's Voluntary Service Award. Use of volunteers expanded into new areas including an "adopt-a-grandparent" program, palliative care, pet therapy, physical fitness, and yoga classes.

1987 was the first year in VAVS history where no growth was reported in the total number of volunteers, but youth volunteers were represented in higher numbers. The Parke scholarship fund reached \$100,000 for the first time in its history that year. VA partnered with the ACTION agency to allow limited stipends to senior aged volunteers whose income fell below the poverty level. Volunteer assignments expanded into VA's readjustment counseling centers, contract nursing homes, community service centers, residential care homes, and adult day health care centers. The Volunteer Transportation Network was established by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) to ensure that Veterans had transportation to VA medical centers and clinics. VA published implementing instructions for the program in February 1987. As of November 1988, 152 coordinator positions were in place and 44 vans had been donated.¹⁸

In 1988 the Veterans Administration was elevated to a Cabinet-level department within the federal government and renamed as the Department

of Veterans Affairs. The Decentralized Hospital Computer Program was implemented at 164 VA sites and Congress authorized a new homeless Veterans program. The elevation resulted in many structural and administrative changes that took several years to implement. VAVS Director Ed Rose retired in 1991, the year of VAVS' 50th anniversary, and Jim Delgado became director. Delgado set out to tap new sources, including corporations, as volunteers. He was director during Dr. Ken Kizer's transformation of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in the 1990s and through the U.S. entering additional wars in the Persian Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Many schools, colleges, and universities instituted public service requirements for students beginning in the late 1990s and, as a result, the number of youth volunteers increased.

Jim Delgado retired in 2005 and Laura Balun, a long-time VAVS employee, became the first woman named as VAVS director that year. Under Laura Balun VAVS cultivated aging Baby Boomers as potential volunteers as they neared retirement. She retired in 2013 and Sabrina Clark became the first African American appointed as VAVS director that year. Her engaging style increased visibility for VAVS and volunteers at a time when VA was recovering from a wait-list scandal that began in 2014. Since 1946, the average tenure for VA directors has been 10 years, which speaks well for the commitment by VAVS leaders to the program and its volunteers.

After VA's elevation in 1988, information on VAVS largely disappeared from VA annual reports. Part of this was due to changes in reporting implemented under the Clinton administration through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Annual reports for federal agencies transitioned into "performance and accountability reports" where descriptive details of VA programs were replaced by broad general summaries with graphs, charts, and itemized objectives that focused on dollars, numbers, and percentages. The need to capture and preserve the countless services and activities conducted by volunteers to benefit America's Veteran is an important one, especially since the number of Veterans programs and benefits continues to grow.

Since 2000, VA has expanded the number of outpatient clinics, established new fitness programs so that Veterans can be proactive in improving their own health, and evolved to meet the changing needs of a new generation of Veterans. The need to recognize volunteers and their work has been important since the beginning.

In recent years two VA medical centers have been named after volunteers, both of whom were military Veterans. Albuquerque was the first VA facility named in honor of a volunteer on July 5, 2007; it was named after Korean War Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Raymond G. Murphy who worked at the Albuquerque VA regional office for 23 years then became a dedicated volunteer after his retirement. The VA medical center in Louisville was named after World War I Veteran Robley Rex on December 16, 2009; he became a volunteer there in 1986 and went on to log more than 14,000 hours of service to Veterans.



Since the Civil War billions of volunteers have answered the call to help Veterans in need no matter where they were. Volunteers donated their time in state Veterans homes, U.S. National Homes, private hospitals and asylums, community poorhouses, city streets, shelters, and other places, providing aid and comfort. But only since 1946 has there been a centralized, unified approach, at the

national level, to ensure that Veterans' needs were met and volunteers' precious time was put to the best use.

In the 70 years since VA Voluntary Service was established, the National Advisory Committee has listened to input and observances of volunteers and VA staff, alike, and acted to meet almost every conceivable need that Veterans had. No task was too big or too small for volunteers of all ages who willingly provided the loving touch so often missing from the clinical world of medicine.

Since 1946 volunteers have contributed nearly 1 billion hours of their time to helping America's Veterans, no matter whether they were in a hospital, a clinic, at an event, or in the canteen. VAVS staff, the Veterans and social organizations that comprise the NAC excel and exceed the "gold standard" of compassion in caring for Veterans and we salute each and every one of them during this special anniversary year!



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Leading the Pack: Directors of Voluntary Service Through the Years



James H. Parke (1905 - 1970)

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 1946-1970

James Hambright Parke was born on August 14, 1905, in Dickinson, Texas, to James M. and Mary Parke. He attended public schools and was later accepted into the University of Texas-Austin. There he served on the university's publications board, was a member of the Delta Chi fraternity, was editor-in-chief of the Longhorn - the university's literary magazine - and graduated with a B.A. in 1927 and an M.A. in 1928. After graduation, he taught in the English Department at the university until 1936 when he was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Grant for advanced study at the Yale University School of Drama. In 1938 the University of Texas established

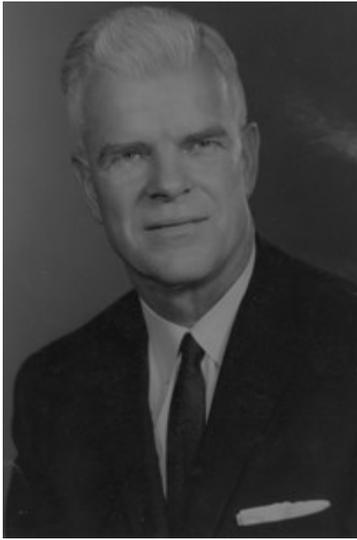
a new Department of Drama within the College of Fine Arts and Parke was named its first chairman and professor.

During World War II he entered military service in October 1942, at the rank of Captain, and served as Chief of recreation and entertainment with Army's Special Services in the North African and Mediterranean theaters of operation. Special Services helped to maintain troops' morale during the war. He was discharged with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in March 1946 and was awarded the Legion of Merit for his work.

James Parke got married and joined VA's staff in February 1946. At the time VA was being modernized under General Omar Bradley and new support services and programs were created under VA's new Department of Medicine and Surgery for Veterans returning from war. Parke was given responsibility for developing better coordination of volunteers from national organizations who provided assistance to Veterans in VA hospitals. He conducted a study and developed a plan for a voluntary service program at VA.

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) was established in May 1946 and Parke was appointed as its first director. VAVS was aligned, at the time, under the Special Services Division of VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery, along with new Chaplain, Canteen, and Medical Library Services. Parke was VAVS' longest-tenured director, serving nearly 25 years and coordinating volunteers to serve Veterans of three wars.

He died on August 31, 1970, after suffering a heart attack and is buried in Baltimore National Cemetery.



Peter Miller (1917 – 1981)

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 1970-1976

Peter "Pete" Miller was born the son of Russian immigrants on October 7, 1917, and grew up around Portland, Oregon. He received an A.B. degree from Pacific University and an M.S. degree from the University of Oregon, where he later served on the faculty before entering the Navy during World War II. He was discharged from the Navy at the rank of Seaman First Class and joined VA's new Special Services department in 1946 where he worked with James Parke to develop VA's Voluntary Service program.

In 1951 he was appointed as the VA Voluntary Service assistant director. He and James Parke were a collaborative team who together guided the volunteer program through vast expansions and two additional wars. He was awarded the VA Chief Medical Director's Commendation twice--in 1961 and 1966. In 1970 he was appointed Director of VA Voluntary Service after James Parke's death. At the time VA operated 166 hospitals where 111,000 volunteers per month (average) gave more than 10 million volunteer hours annually.

In 1971 he received the VA Administrator's Commendation and in 1976 was honored by the American Legion for his service. He retired from VA on December 31, 1975, having served VAVS for roughly 30 years, and returned to native Oregon. He died on November 23, 1981 and is buried in Willamette National Cemetery.



Wilson J. Schuerholz (1920 – 1997)

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 1976-1978

Wilson Joseph Schuerholz was born on December 13, 1920, in Baltimore, Maryland to German immigrant William Schuerholz and his Italian wife, Marie. He was one of eight children. He was attending East Carolina University when the U.S. entered World War II, so he postponed his education until after the war. He enlisted in the Navy on July 8, 1942 and served as a Pharmacist's Mate in the Atlantic fleet until October 7, 1945. After his military discharge, he used the G.I. bill to resume and complete his education at the University of Maryland and later obtained a master's degree in hospital administration from George Washington University.

His first VA job was as a recreation supervisor at the Fort Howard VA hospital in 1952. He pursued a career in hospital administration at VA and had reached the level of assistant director for the VA hospital in Brooklyn, New York, when he was appointed as director of VA Voluntary Service after Peter Miller's retirement at the end of 1975. He served as director for only two years, the least of any VA Voluntary Service director to-date, and left when he was appointed as director for the Miles City VA Medical Center. He died on September 3, 1997; his burial location is currently unknown.



Edward F. Rose (1930 – 2002)

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 1978-1991

Edward “Ed” Field Rose was born on August 20, 1930, in Emporia, Virginia, to James Blount and Alma Powell Rose. His father worked on the railroad and Ed was the youngest of four children. At the age of 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving for four years until his discharge in 1952. He used the G.I. bill to pursue his education, graduating from Virginia Tech with a B.S. in Industrial Education and later earned a master’s degree in special education from the University of Virginia.

In 1957 he was appointed as director of the George Mason Center for Retarded Children in Arlington, Virginia, where he served until 1966. He then worked for the U.S. Civil Service Commission from 1970-73, specializing in the hiring of people with disabilities, and served from 1973-78 as deputy executive director of the President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. In 1968 he received the Arthur S. Flemming Award from the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration as one of 10 young employees selected for their outstanding performance. In November 1978 he was appointed as Director of VA Voluntary Service after Wilson Schuerholz’s departure due to a promotion.

He received numerous awards in his career, including the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Virginia Governor’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and AMVETS Silver Helmet Award. He stepped down from the VAVS director’s position in 1991, but continued to work with program until 1994. He later became director for hospital visitation at the Masonic Service Association in Silver Spring until his death in 2002 from Parkinson’s disease. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Jim W. Delgado

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 1991 - 2005

Jim W. Delgado was a native of Port Lavaca, Texas, and served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. He began his VA career in 1971 as a nursing assistant after his military discharge. He attended the University of Houston and received a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. He also took some graduate courses at the University of New Mexico while he was working at the VA hospital in Albuquerque.

He served in various capacities at several medical centers in VA’s Voluntary Service program for 15 years before his appointment as Director of VA Voluntary Service in 1991. He was Chief of VA Voluntary Service at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, prior to moving to Washington, DC. He became a member of the Senior Executive Service in 1994.

He retired as Director of VA Voluntary Service in January 2005 and received the AMVETS Silver Helmet Award as Civil Servant of the Year that same year. He was credited with increasing the number of volunteers by 30% under his 14 year tenure as director. Since his retirement he has served as president of the VA Alumni Association and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association as well as remaining active with AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and the Vietnam Veterans of America.





Laura Balun

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 2005 - 2013

Laura Balun was a native of Front Royal, Virginia, and graduated from Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia, with a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation.

Her VA career began in 1981 when she was hired as a recreation therapist at North Chicago VA Medical Center and, later, Hampton VA Medical Center in Virginia. She received her Voluntary Service training at Palo Alto and afterwards was assigned as Chief of Voluntary Service and Public Affairs at the Grand Junction, Colorado, medical center. She was Chief of Voluntary Service at the DC VA Medical Center prior to her appointment as VA Voluntary Service Director in 2005.

At the time that she became director in 2005, over 88,700 active volunteers and 350 organizations, nationwide, provided roughly 12.5 million hours of service and \$107 million in gifts or donations to veterans under VA's care. She also served as the principal liaison between Veterans Service Organizations, the Veterans Health Administration, and Under Secretary for Health in that position.

She retired in 2013 after devoting more than 30 years in service to Veterans.



Sabrina Clark

Director of VA Voluntary Service, 2013 -

Sabrina Clark is a native of Zanesville, Ohio, and graduate of Ohio University. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music as well as a Certificate in Public Leadership from the Brookings Institute.

Her VA career began in February 1992 when she was hired as a music therapist at East Orange VA Medical Center in New Jersey. She continued her music career as an adjunct to her VA career, which continued to advance as she moved to VA's Maryland Health Care System to work in its hospitals and clinics. She was Program Manager for Voluntary Service at several sites in VA's Maryland Health Care System.

In 2005 she came to VA Central Office in Washington, DC, as a Learning Consultant for VA's Learning University, where she spearheaded several initiatives to build future leaders for VA. These included VA's Aspiring Leaders Program, the Leadership Development Mentoring Program, and the VALU Mentor Certification program. She served as Initiative Coordinator and launched on-line portals for VA's primary leadership development programs and facilitated cutting-edge employee training programs in partnership with FranklinCovey.

She was appointed as Director of VA Voluntary Service in September 2013 after Laura Balun's retirement.

2016 VAVS National Advisory Committee

Chairperson: Michael R. Odle
Executive Director, VHA Office of Communications

Deputy Chairperson: Sabrina C. Clark
Director, Voluntary Service Office

2016 VAVS NAC Executive Committee

Chairperson: Ron Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight
Vice-Chairperson: Colonel Charles Gallina, Knights of Columbus

American Legion, The
American Legion Auxiliary
American Red Cross
AMVETS
AMVETS Auxiliary
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
Blinded Veterans Association
Disabled American Veterans
Forty and Eight
Knights of Columbus
Marine Corps League
Masonic Service Association of North America
Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A, Inc.
National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Soldiers' Angels
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
Vietnam Veterans of America

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John Kleindienst
Kenneth Rose

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Charles Gallina, Chair
Emil Franz
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Volunteer of the Year

Ron Rolfes, Jr., Chair
Charles Gallina
W. G. "Bill" Kilgore

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Gary Thomas
Stewart Israel

Partnership Ad Hoc

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Karen O'Neal, Co-Chair
Christi Hillman
Edward Lilley
Melissa Heinlein
Jim Todd

2016 NAC Annual Meeting and Conference Host:

New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque, New Mexico

2016 NAC Annual Meeting and Conference Planners:

Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Service Office, Veterans Affairs Central Office

Lorna Hatch, Chief, VA Voluntary Service, VA Maine Healthcare System, Augusta, ME

Sonja Brown, Chief, Voluntary Service & Public Affairs Operations,
New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque, NM

VAVS Staff & NAC Planning Committee at the
New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque, NM

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Tony Burtley, Voluntary Service Specialist
Christine Feeser, Program Specialist
Tyrone Green, Program Analyst
Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist
Kevin Stanford, Health Systems Specialist

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Charles George VA Medical Center, Asheville, NC

Tabitha Ingram, Program Specialist,
Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, Indianapolis, IN

Conference Photography and Social Media Support:

William P. Armstrong, Public Affairs Specialist, New Mexico VA Health Care System

David Overson, Public Affairs Specialist, New Mexico VA Health Care System

2016 VAVS NAC Member Organizations

(As of April 8, 2016)

Service Member Organizations

Organization Name	Position	Name
American Ex-Prisoners of War	R	VACANT
American Gold Star Mothers	R	Georgian "Ann" Davis
	D	Jennifer Jackman
The American Legion	R	Louis J. Celli, Jr.
	D	Edward Lilley
American Legion Auxiliary	R	Patricia "Pat" Kranzow
	D	K. Lynne Wild
American Red Cross	R	Ruth Walters
	D	Joyce Parke
	D	Julie Myers
	D	Betty Temple
	D	Louis Wagner III
AMVETS	R	W. G. "Bill" Kilgore
	D	Beryl Love
	D	Gerard Gurnari
	D	John P. Brown, III
AMVETS Auxiliary	R	Marie Rorrio
	D	Kathryn M. Berning
	D	Leslie Nell
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	R	Mary Morgan
	D	Stewart Israel
	D	Tom Jamison
	D	Dennis McAleese
Blinded Veterans Association	R	Edward Eckroth
	D	Wade Davis
	D	James Hogan
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.	R	Anne Parker
Disabled American Veterans	R	John H. Kleindienst
	D	William C. Baumann
	D	Edward E. Hartman

Organization Name	Position	Name
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	R	Nancy O. Mooney
	D	Elizabeth Eldridge
	D	Ann Glende
Forty and Eight	R	Ron Rolfes, Jr.
	D	Roger Gowen
	D	Bernie Sampson
Jewish War Veterans of the USA	R	Jerome Berns
Knights of Columbus	R	Charles H. Gallina
	D	Gary L. Thomas
	D	James Weaver
Korean War Veterans Association	R	J. D. Randolph
	D	Arthur E. Hills
Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	R	Cheryl Perez
	D	Trish A. Rosie
Marine Corps League	R	Emil A. Franz
	D	Rex Hopper
	D	Jack Proshuh
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	R	Nancy Calleja
Masonic Service Association of North America	R	George O. Braatz
	D	Raymond J. Vanden Berghe, Sr.
Military Order of the Cootie	R	Ray Tarango
	D	Richard Bostick
	D	Dick Dickens
	D	Terrance P. "Shorty" Lyons
Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary	R	Rebecca Strauss
	D	Geraldean Hunter-Vautherot
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	R	Del "Bulldog" Turner
	D	Greg Lutes
	D	Sydney Staton
	D	William Ware
Military Women Across the Nation	R	Diane Culleton

Organization Name	Position	Name
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	R	Marjorie "Margie" S. Shelton
	D	Cynthia Allen
	D	Deborah Carlson
	D	Mary Hines
	D	Marianne Hughes
	D	Joy Linn
	D	Rani Waddell
National Society Sons of the American Revolution	R	Martin "Bill" W. Kabel
	D	Stanley A. Evans, Sr.
	D	Richard E. Friberg
Paralyzed Veterans of America	R	Christi Hillman
	D	Jacquin White
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	R	Ferdinand R. Thomas, Jr.
	D	Ralph A. Wozniak
The Salvation Army	R	Sharron Hudson
	D	Susan Ellis
	D	Marcia Smith
	D	Brenda R. Herivel
	D	June M. Carver
	D	Jennifer Queener
Soldiers' Angels	R	Vicki Sarracino
	D	Amy Palmer
Sons of the American Legion	R	Clint Bolt
	D	Duane Alexander
	D	Gary Crockett
	D	Raymond Thornton
	D	James "Jimmy" Hunter
	D	Dan O'Rourke
	D	Thomas Glander
	D	Greg Price
	D	Douglas Murphy
United Daughters of the Confederacy	R	Charlotte J. Clinger
	D	Sherry Davis
	D	Janet W. Grams
United Veterans Services	R	Mary Lee
	D	George A. Beadles, Jr.
	D	Richard Walters
	D	Frank Schleifer

Organization Name	Position	Name
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary	R	Cara M. Day
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	R D	James W. Moss Dawn Jirak
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.	R D	Judith McCombs Kenneth Rose
Associate Service Member Organizations		
Catholic War Veterans	R D D D	John R. Dubay Jose M. Garcia Joseph Raimo Susan Reith
Catholic War Veterans Auxiliary	R D	Elaine A. Diaczun Concetta Provenza
Corporation for National and Community Service	R D D	John J. Lira Joanne Newsome Theresa Long
Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, (1861 – 1865)	R D	MaryAnn Herbsleb Rolene Robinson
Fleet Reserve Association	R D D	Christopher Slawinski Jerry Butler Richard S. McKee
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	R D D D D	Arlene P. Murray Augustine Chapman Audrey Easterling Carolyn S. Edwards Susan J. Simmons
I.B.P.O. Elks of the World, Inc.	R D	Jeffry L. Wright Wanda M. Grover
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	R D	Kathy Boll Theresa Krysiak
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.	R D D	Petra C. Kaatz Marion E. Friedman Bella Westerman

Organization Name	Position	Name
National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century	R	Virginia Layman
	D	Nancy Barber
	D	Betty Fogarty
	D	Naomi Mangum
	D	Mary Neumaier
United Auto Workers	R	Joe Ashton
	D	Garry Bernath
	D	Darrel Martin
	D	Anita L. Myers
	D	Kris "Buffalo" Owen
	D	Doug Tiderington
Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association	R	Acquanetta Pullins
Donor Member Organizations		
The Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL), Inc.	R	Elizabeth Montanya
The Silver Star Families of America	R	Diana Creed-Newton
	D	Kathleen Landess
Veterans Voices Writing Project, Inc.	R	Deann Mitchell
	D	Priscilla A. Chansky
	D	Sheryl Liddle
Associate Donor Organizations		
N/A		
Honorary Member		
Sons of AMVETS	R	William "Bill" Gerry
	D	Daniel Briggs
	D	William Chiddister
	D	Charlie Summerall
Women Marines Association	R	Kay Croll
	D	Mitzi Manning

Goals and Objectives

The following are goals and objectives for the 70th Annual VAVS NAC Meeting and Conference:

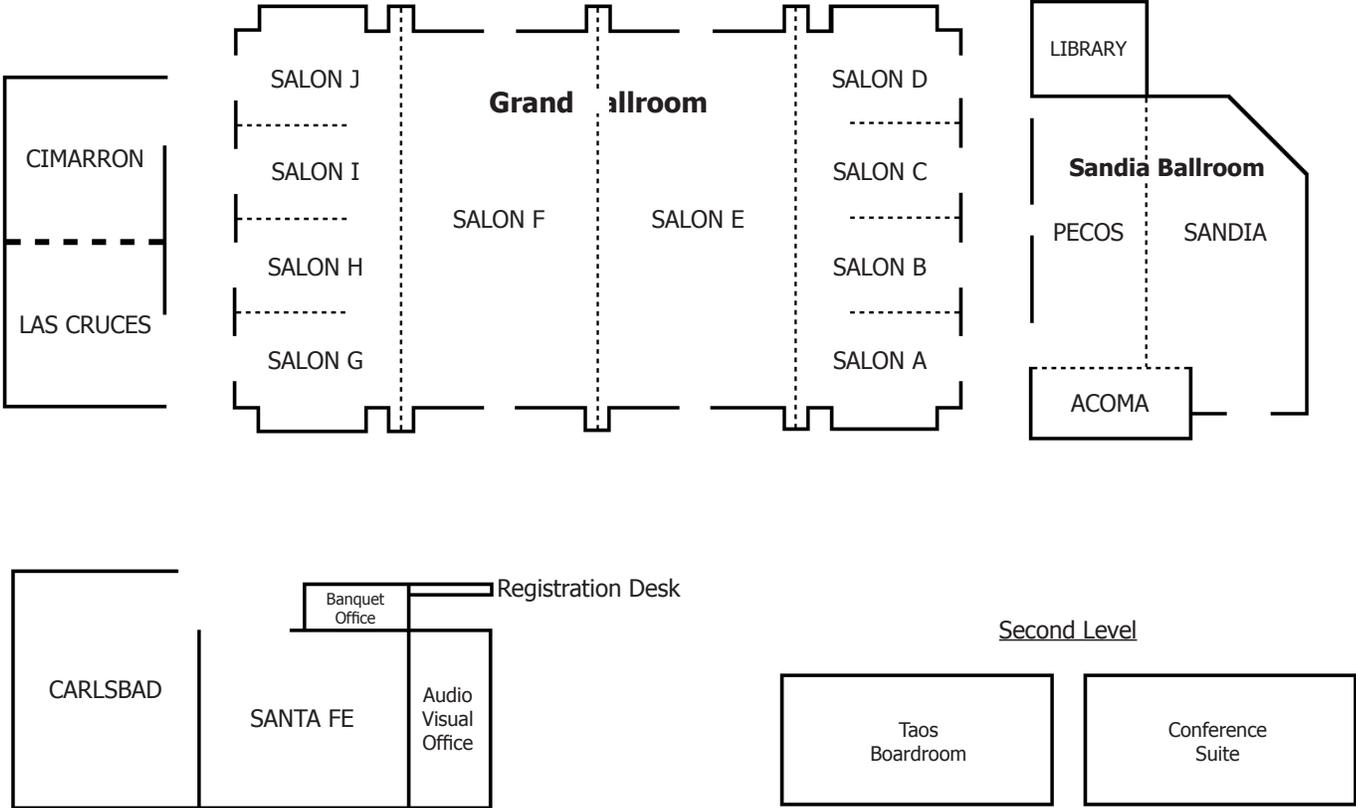
1. Provide the VAVS NAC an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
2. Provide NAC orientation to new local and national VAVS Representatives and Deputies and VAVS staff.
3. Present to all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Foster full and open communications among the member organizations, their representatives, and the Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.
5. Provide the NAC member organizations with the educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate, and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the NAC member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
7. Arrange for the NAC review of, and action on, recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, **Shane Mathew**, student volunteer at the Miami VA Healthcare System, Miami, Florida.
9. Recognize **Ruth Wheeler**, American Legion Auxiliary, VA Central Western Massachusetts Health Care System, as the recipient of the 70th Anniversary Commendation.
10. Recognize **Gus Groat**, Knights of Columbus, Battle Creek VA Medical Center, as the VAVS NAC Male Volunteer of the Year and **Julie Stranges**, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System as the VAVS NAC Female Volunteer of the Year.
11. Recognize **Deborah Brookshire**, Chief, Voluntary Service, at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson, Arizona, as the recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.
12. Recognize the following award recipients for the American Spirit Awards: **Reginald Hardy**, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple, Texas, for Student Recruitment; and **Ronni Miller**, Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina, for Corporate Recruitment.

VAVS NAC 2016 Recommendations

As submitted by the Recommendations Subcommittee

Recommendations will be handed out and processed at the NAC Business Session.

Hotel Map



Celebrate 70 Years of VAVS on Social Media

Throughout the conference, and beyond, use the hashtag:

#VAVS70Strong

on all social media platforms to share your 70th Anniversary experience.

Registration Information

The New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque, New Mexico
welcomes you to the
70th Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee
Meeting and Conference!

The Registration Desk will be open on the following schedule:

Tuesday, May 3 - 12 Noon to 4 PM

Wednesday, May 4 - 7 AM to 4 PM

Thursday, May 5 - 8 AM to 5 PM

Friday, May 6 - 8 AM to 12 Noon (Information Only)

If you have any questions or concerns during your visit, please see Rebecca Strauss, Vicki Eatmon, Tabitha Ingram, or one of the Registration Volunteers.



Many thanks to the VISN 22 and New Mexico VA Health Care System leadership, the members of the New Mexico VA Health Care System's NAC Planning Committee, their VAVS Committee, and all the VAVS volunteers for their outstanding efforts on the 70th VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting and Conference.

Thank you!

70th VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting

Daily Agenda

Pre-Meeting Activities

TUESDAY, May 3, 2016

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM **REGISTRATION** Registration Desk

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM **VAVS STAFF MEETING** Salons E & F

WEDNESDAY, May 4, 2016

7:00 AM - 4:00 PM **REGISTRATION** Registration Desk

8:00 AM - 11:30 AM **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING** Salons F-J

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM **HEALTH AND INFORMATION FAIR** Sandia Ballroom
Refreshments Sponsored By: *Disabled American Veterans, Knights of Columbus, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, and AMVETS*

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM **NEW REP/DEP & NEW VAVS STAFF TRAINING** Salons A-E
Faculty: Colonel Charles H. Gallina, VAVS National Representative, Knights of Columbus and Nathan Witt, Chief, VAVS, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM **OPEN TABLE FORUM** Salons E-J

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM **DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM **OPENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS** Salons E-J
"What's Your Why?"
Timothy E. Ernisse, Director of Development & Marketing, WGVU Public Media
Sponsored by: Fleet Reserve Association

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM **70TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION - 1940s THEME** Salons E-J
Sponsored By: Paralyzed Veterans of America, Forty and Eight, VFW Auxiliary, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Disabled American Veterans, and Local VAVS Organizations including NSDAR Charles Dibrell Chapter, Military Order of Purple Heart, American Legion Auxiliary, and AMVETS Post 7, Marine Corps League

Entertainment: Swing Dance Group, Balbuquerque! featuring Performance Team - The Incredibals

THURSDAY, May 5, 2016

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	REGISTRATION	Registration Desk
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	BUSINESS SESSION	Grand Ballroom

- Call to Order *Ron Rolfes, Jr.*
- Invocation *Steven Gribble, Chaplain, New Mexico VA Health Care System*
- National Anthem *Alfredo Bourget, Trumpeter, Korean War Veterans, NMVAHCS*
- Pledge of Allegiance *Ruby Garcia, VAVS Representative, Blue Star Mothers, NMVAHCS*
- Welcome *Andrew M. Welch, MHA, FACHE
Medical Center Director, NMVAHCS*
- Roll Call *Ron Rolfes, Jr.*
- Opening Remarks and Meeting Objectives
Ron Rolfes, Jr.
- A Historical Perspective of Voluntary Service to Veterans
Darlene Richardson, VHA Historian

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM	BREAK	Foyer
	<i>Sponsored by: Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA, Inc. and Blinded Veterans Association</i>	

- Youth Leadership through Service
*Katie Combs, Southwest Region Military Youth of the Year,
Boys & Girls Clubs of America*

- Homeless Veterans Program Update
*Lisa Pape, Executive Director, Homeless Veterans Program
Veterans Health Administration*

- VAVS Award Presentations *Ron Rolfes, Jr. and Sabrina Clark*
70th Anniversary Commendation
NAC Male and Female Volunteer of the Year
American Spirit Awards
VAVS Award for Excellence

FRIDAY, May 6, 2016

8:00 AM – 12:00 NOON **INFORMATION** Registration Desk

8:30 AM - 11:30 AM **BUSINESS SESSION** Grand Ballroom

Call to Order *Ron Rolfes, Jr.*

Pledge of Allegiance *Kay Coleman, VAVS Representative, American Gold Star Mothers, NMVAHCS*

Subcommittee Reports

Recommendations *George Braatz, Masonic Service Association of N.A.*

NAC Volunteer of the Year *Ron Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight*

Recruitment *Charles Gallina, Knights of Columbus*

Membership *Del "Bulldog" Turner, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.*

Standard Operating Procedures
Ad Hoc Committee *Patricia "Pat" Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary*

Partnership Ad Hoc Committee *Charles Gallina, Co-Chair, Knights of Columbus
Karen O'Neal, Co-Chair, VAVS Program Manager,
Erie VA Medical Center*

VA Voluntary Service Report

Sabrina C. Clark, Director, VA Voluntary Service Office

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM **BREAK** Foyer

Sponsored by: Knights of Columbus

National Advisory Committee Chair Report

Michael Odle, Executive Director, VHA Office of Communications

Veterans Health Administration Update

Vivieca Wright Simpson, VHA Chief of Staff

Human Hug Project

Ian Michael, Hug Ambassador

*Sponsored by: Dr. Neil McClymont, OSF St. Anthony Medical Center,
Rockford, IL and A Creative Touch, Inc.*

71st Annual NAC Meeting & Conference Host City Presentation

Closing Remarks *Ron Rolfes, Jr.*

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

- 1 - Maximizing Collaboration Sandia
- 2 - It's About Time: Burnout and Volunteer Resource Managers Pecos
- 3 - Don't Leave Them Hanging: Reducing Volunteer Wait Times Salons A-D
- 4 - The Social Media Dance: Where Do You Find Yourself - Wallflower or Emergent? Cimarron/Las Cruces

2:15 PM – 2:30 PM

BREAK

Sponsored by: Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

Foyer

2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

- 1 - Maximizing Collaboration Sandia
- 2 - It's About Time: Burnout and Volunteer Resource Managers Pecos
- 3 - Don't Leave Them Hanging: Reducing Volunteer Wait Times Salons A-D
- 4 - The Social Media Dance: Where Do You Find Yourself - Wallflower or Emergent? Cimarron/Las Cruces

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CRITIQUE

Salons F-J

6:00 PM

CLOSING DINNER

Salons A-E

- Invocation Diana Wong, VAVS Deputy Representative, AMVETS and 2011 NAC Female Volunteer of the Year, NMVAHCS
- Pledge of Allegiance Victoria Jensen, VAVS Representative, VFW Auxiliary, NMVAHCS
- Special Presentation Michael A. Migliara, Public Affairs Officer, National Veterans Outreach Office, VA Office of Public Affairs
Matthew Collier, Special Advisor to the Secretary, Office of Strategic Partnership

*Entertainment by: Bow Guard Singers and Dance Group
Sponsored by: Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks (Local)*

Keynote

Timothy Eernisse



As WGUV Director of Development and Marketing Timothy oversees the WGUV Development & Business Development team as well as Marketing, Outreach, Art, and Education areas. He has been with WGUV for more than nine years, three as an Underwriting Sales Representative and the last six as Development and Marketing Manager and became the Director of Development and Marketing in 2015. Timothy is a proud Air Force Veteran, having served from 1990 – 1998 working with the 439th Military Airlift Wing and the 127th Air Wing as a PERSCO Team Member and the 110th Fighter Group as a Weapons Loader on A-10 Aircraft. Timothy has been deployed domestically and overseas in support of several Air Force operations.

Mr. Eernisse has been involved in multiple WGUV community committees including the WGUV Carrier Crew as part of the PBS documentary CARRIER; LZ Michigan Committee (a Welcome Home for Vietnam Veterans); GVSU Military Appreciation Day; WGUV Engage Veterans Salute; West Michigan RDAC; and more. Timothy is a two time Michigan Emmy Nominee for his work with LZ Michigan.

Timothy is involved in several committees including the PBS Communications Advisory Committee; PBS Revenue Innovation Council; Ken Burns/WETA Vietnam Station Advisory Board; National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) Marketing Committee; PBS Stories of Service Advisory Board; NETA Development Committee; NETA Community Engagement Committee; Michigan Association of Broadcasters Awards Committee; Michigan Association of Broadcasters Marketing Committee; Veterans Coming Home Advisory Committee; R4 Alliance Advisory Board, West Michigan Veterans Coalition Employment Committee; GVSU Veterans Network; WGUV Engage Committee; Rocco's Heart, an HLHS Foundation, Board of Directors; President Ford Council Boy Scouts of America September 11th Remembrance Committee; LZ Michigan Committee and the Engage Veterans Advisory Committee.

Eernisse has received many other national and international awards for his works including:

- 2015 - MarCom Platinum Award for both Bob Ross Look-alike Contest Special Event and Promotion Categories*
- 2015 - MarCom Gold Award – WGUV is a Family Tradition Interstitial; 2015 Year in Review Corporate Image Spot; Ballooning for Education Event*
- 2015 - Vietnamese Communities of Grand Rapids and Surrounding Community Service Award*
- 2014 - PBS Development Award – Community Collaboration*
- 2014 - VFW Post 702 Veteran Community Service Award*
- 2014 - Communicator Award of Excellence – President Gerald R. Ford Celebration for Marketing/Promotion*
- 2011 - National Communitas Award for Service to the Community for LZ Michigan*

Tim is part of the WGUV Public Media Senior Leadership Team.

Vivieca Wright Simpson

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

Chief of Staff



PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Vivieca Wright Simpson serves as the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Chief of Staff in the Office of the Under Secretary for Health in Veterans Administration Central Office (VACO), Washington, DC. Veterans Affairs is one of the largest civilian employers in the federal government and VHA is one of the largest health care employers in the world with over 311,000 employees and a FY 14 budget of \$57 billion. The Chief of Staff serves as the senior staff advisor to the Under Secretary for Health.

As the VHA Chief of Staff, Ms. Wright Simpson represents and speaks for the Under Secretary in high level discussions and negotiations in order to establish or implement all policies, practices, management, and operational activities for VHA. Acting as personal representative of the Under Secretary, Ms. Wright Simpson participates in department-wide activities involving organizational alignments, functional assignments and staffing. She makes recommendations to the Under Secretary on requests for changes to the approved organizational alignments, and reviews, analyzes and proposes changes in organizational and functional responsibilities associated with changes in VHA Central Office, Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), and Medical Centers.

Ms. Wright Simpson joined the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management (DUSHOM) in 2005 and was promoted to Director in September 2008. Prior to joining the office of the DUSHOM, she worked in the VISN 9 Network office and the Tennessee Valley Health Care System. In each position, she demonstrated her ability to strengthen operations, enhance quality of care, optimize resource utilization, infuse innovative programs and services, reduce costs, and improve market positioning.

Ms. Wright Simpson received her Bachelor of Science degree from Tennessee State University followed by a Master's Degree in Health Administration, with an emphasis in Hospital Administration from Meharry Medical College in 1992. She became a member of the Senior Executive Service in September 2008. She is a native of Birmingham, Alabama.

Workshop Descriptions

New Rep/Dep & New VAVS Staff Training (Only 1 session, Wednesday, May 4, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM)

Faculty: Nathan Witt, Chief, VAVS, Bay Pines VA HCS, Bay Pines, Florida and Colonel Charles H. Gallina, VAVS National Representative, Knights of Columbus

This session is designed to provide orientation for new VAVS NAC Representatives and Deputy Representatives, and new VAVS staff, and will also offer current information to seasoned VAVS NAC Representatives and Deputies. The latest trends, statistics, and recommendations in VAVS volunteering will be presented and discussed. VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives serving on local VAVS Committees could also benefit and learn by attending this session.

Maximizing Collaborations

Faculty: Lelia Jackson, Director, VHA Office of Community Engagement

This session will provide strategies for enhancing and developing partnerships with Nongovernmental Organizations. It will provide best practice tips and tools to build and sustain partnerships and will raise awareness about current partnership initiatives.

It's About Time: Burnout and Volunteer Resource Managers

Faculty: Melissa Heinlein, PhD, MA, MS, CAVS - Chief, VAVS, Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA

Did you know that burnout is studied more often among volunteers than volunteer resource managers? In this interactive workshop, you will hear about recent research on burnout and volunteer resource managers and learn how VAVS compares with others in the field of volunteer management. This workshop provides an opportunity for volunteers to hear how they can support Voluntary Service in their VA Medical Center.

Don't Leave Them Hanging: Reducing Volunteer Wait Times

Faculty: Deborah Brookshire, M.Ed., CAVS- Chief, VAVS and Mandy Martell, MHA, Voluntary Service Specialist, Southern Arizona VA HCS, Tucson, AZ

Would you like more control of the process and reduce the time it takes to on-board your volunteers? This interactive session will give you new tools to identify barriers, improve your procedures, and implement strategies for process sustainability.

Bonus! – The tools presented can be applied to any improvement project.

The Social Media Dance: Where Do You Find Yourself - Wallflower or Emergent?

Faculty: James Todd, Chief VAVS, Richard L. Roudebush VAMC, Indianapolis, IN and Daniel Morgan, Director of Communications, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

This session will discuss how local VAVS program offices and partnering organizations can develop a collaborative proactive approach to overcome the challenges of utilizing social media.

Award Recipients

Honoring:

(1) Shane Mathew - Student Volunteer
Miami VA Healthcare System, Miami, Florida

Additional James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship Recipients

Brandon McLean	Carl Vinson VAMC	\$5,000
Durga Ganesh	VA Palo Alto HCS	\$2,000
Keith Lockhart	James H. Quillen VAMC	\$2,000
Bethany Amerman	Richard L. Roudebush VAMC	\$2,000
Ally Jacobs	VA Ann Arbor HCS	\$2,000
Olivia Schomer	St. Cloud VA HCS	\$2,000

(2) Ruth Wheeler, American Legion Auxiliary
VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System,
Leeds, Massachusetts

(3) Gus Groat, Knights of Columbus
Battle Creek VA Medical Center, Battle Creek, Michigan

(4) Julie Stranges, National Society Daughters of the American
Revolution, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System,
Los Angeles, California

(5) Reginald Hardy - Chief, Voluntary Service
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple, Texas

(6) Ronni Miller - Chief, Voluntary Service
Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, NC

(7) Deborah Brookshire - Chief, Voluntary Service
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson, Arizona

James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship

\$20,000 Scholarship Recipient



Shane Mathew
Miami VA Healthcare System
Miami, Florida

Shane Mathew has served as a youth volunteer at the William “Bill” Kling VA Outpatient Clinic for the last four years. Shane was assigned to the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service’s Polytrauma Program Coordinator and assisted Veterans in the Post Deployment Clinic. His supervisor, Robyn Bolgla, describes him as “the most dependable student volunteer [she] has ever supervised.”

Shane is currently in his first year of Pre-Med at the University of Florida and held many leadership positions in high school including Chapter Vice President of the National Honor Society, President of his school’s chapter of the Health Occupations Students of America, and was recognized by the Coral Springs Veterans Coalition for superior service to his community. His maturity was apparent by his ability to work well in a team and communicate with medical professionals from all disciplines and, most importantly, with the Veteran patients he was assisting. His supervisor notes that Shane “often surpassed the professional medical and physical therapy students with regard to his eagerness to serve and his ability to mentor others less experienced than he.”

The volunteer experience can be as rewarding for supervisors and VA staff as it is for volunteers and Veterans. Ms. Bolgla states that “Shane’s youthful exuberance, positive attitude, and concern for others inspired my Veteran patients and colleagues, since he was a pleasure to have around. Patients often commented on Shane’s unique ability to recognize the sensitive nature of the Veteran population, and empathize with them. They found him impressive, smart, and caring, and were inspired by his commitment to serve our nation’s heroes year after year, on his own time.”

Of his experience as a VA Volunteer, Shane says, “I would never trade my experiences at the VA for anything. The life lessons, encounters, and interactions I gained this summer were truly priceless. As a volunteer, I learned how to provide the best treatment and patient care. For me, it was very important to recognize that the patients coming to physical therapy are not average human beings; rather, they are heroes who have served this country wholeheartedly and undoubtedly suffered for our sake. By interacting with many patients over the course of these summers, I steadily learned how to honor and respect every Veteran I encountered. A smile, greeting, or handshake with a Veteran demonstrates to them that they are cared for and are thus inclined to pass the respect on to the next person they meet.

It was truly a pleasure to have served the patients at the VA over the past four years. Wherever life takes me, I will always look forward to continuing to serve our Veterans in the years to come. I am beyond humbled and honored to be nominated for this award, and I am thankful to the mentors, preceptors, and most importantly, to our nation’s heroes - to whom I owe the greatest amount of gratitude for this and the many other opportunities that our precious, hard-fought freedom allows.”

70th Anniversary Commendation



Ruth Wheeler American Legion Auxiliary VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System Leeds, Massachusetts

As the longest serving volunteer in the VHA system, 85-year-old volunteer Ruth Wheeler, affiliated with the American Legion Auxiliary at the VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, is currently serving in her 65th consecutive year.

“For over 65 years, Ruth Wheeler has been an unbelievably dedicated Volunteer to our VA community in Massachusetts,” said Anne Murray, Voluntary Service Officer for VACWMHCS. “We, her VA friends, are humbled every day by her sense of service, her love and affection for the Veterans we serve and are honored to recognize her as our celebrity volunteer on any occasion.”

In that time, she has accumulated over 26,450 volunteer hours, equivalent to over 12 years of full-time work. That is an extremely generous gift and she’s still accumulating hours. She jokes that her plan is to volunteer until she’s 120 years old!

Wheeler, her VA colleagues say, is an indispensable member of the Business Office staff, building information and benefits packets that go out to Veterans throughout the region that spans five counties and services 120,000 Veterans. Every new enrolled Veteran in VA healthcare in central and western Massachusetts receives a package that Wheeler builds and mails to them. Her VA colleagues estimate Wheeler prepares at least 32,000 mailings a year.

Born in Ashfield, Mass., Wheeler lived in Shelburne Falls and then later moved to Northampton where she resides today. Her work with Veterans started in high school as a way to honor her father, Raymond L. Wheeler, who was in the U.S. Army Cavalry. “My father was a World War I Veteran and my mother worked for the American Legion Auxiliary, so I joined the Auxiliary too,” she said. Immediately after World War II, when the hospital had 1,200 patients in residence, Wheeler said she helped organize about three dances a year for Veterans.

“I just stuck with it after that,” she said. “I volunteered when I could over the years, but I was working then.” When Ruth retired in 1993 after 30 years as an office assistant at Berkshire Electric Cable in Leeds, she began to serve as a full-time volunteer. “I like being involved in something; it keeps me busy,” she said. “Everybody’s friendly and there’s always something to do. And it makes you feel good, helping out the Veterans.”

Unfazed by the honor of being the longest-serving VA Volunteer in the nation and all the attributes, Wheeler shrugs modestly.

“Being a volunteer is important,” Wheeler said. “What more can you say?”

National Advisory Committee Male Volunteer of the Year



Gus Groat
Knights of Columbus
Battle Creek VA Medical Center
Battle Creek, Michigan

Gus Groat has served as the Knights of Columbus VAVS Representative for the Battle Creek VA Medical Center since 2010, following one year as the Deputy Representative. Sir Knight Groat is also the Michigan District II of the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus VAVS Director serving on the Master for the District's Staff. In this role he is responsible for developing programs to aid our Nations Veterans.

Sir Knight Groat has been instrumental in leading many programs for Battle Creek Veterans, including the "Treat Cart" Program in which Knights of Columbus Councils and Assemblies take turns taking a Treat Cart around the wards of the Battle Creek VA Medical Center. The units supply candy, fruit, workbooks, and other items to the patients at no cost. He also coordinates a project with the Ladies of Michigan District II to gather items such as socks, underwear, lap blankets, crossword puzzles, word search books, and other personal items. These items are collected at all Michigan District II functions from July to January and are taken to the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center, and those collected from January to July are taken to the Battle Creek Facility. This past year over 2,000 items were given to the Veterans.

Sir Knight Groat volunteers at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center in the Community Living Center, Inpatient Mental Health Unit, and Therapeutic Recreation Section. He also assists with the Battle Creek VAMC's annual carnival and watermelon festival in addition to attending all VAVS Committee Meetings. As the VAVS Director for the Michigan District II he led projects that provided \$5,050 in funding and resulted in the restoration and relocation of a historic fountain and reflection pool from Fort Custer to the Battle Creek VAMC where patients may go to find peace and serenity.

National Advisory Committee Female Volunteer of the Year



Julie Stranges

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System
Los Angeles, California

Ms. Julie A. Stranges serves as the Deputy Representative for the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and is a dedicated volunteer at VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center & Community Living Center. Julie began volunteering in 2002 and she continues to volunteer daily contributing over 17,140 hours of volunteer service meeting the needs of America's heroes with dignity and compassion.

Julie works closely with the VAVS Chief as her right hand go to lady, however her regular assignment is the VAVS office assistant/clerk. She assists with recording donations and making sure that the donors are acknowledged within the time frame. Julie is also instrumental in making sure that the volunteer hours are properly entered into the volunteer package as well and works with the Voluntary Service Specialist making sure that Sepulveda's volunteer recognition ceremony goes off without a hitch and that all volunteers are properly recognized. Julie takes her role as Deputy Representative for the DAR very seriously and makes sure that the DAR is represented and accounted for at all events; as well as VAVS Meetings.

Julie has also been instrumental in championing the Sepulveda's Women Veterans Luncheon Honoring Military Women for 10 years now and every year the event gets bigger and better. She regularly collaborates with Veterans Service and Community Organizations to ensure that they are aware of the needs of Women Veterans. Without a doubt the services and assistance that Julie is providing staff and Veterans is a win-win for Greater Los Angeles, the DAR, and everyone that she comes in contact with daily, especially the Veterans.

Julie is not only an asset to the staff in VAVS, she is an essential part of the Patient Advisory Council, VAVS Executive Board/Committee, the Women Veterans Committee, Patient Centered Care team, the Voice of the Veterans Chief, and the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System as a whole. VAVS Chief, Sadie Stewart, says, "Julie is indeed that phenomenal woman that we read and hear about but rarely get the opportunity to meet. It is truly a blessing to have such a wonderful, humble individual like Julie as a part of our team. Her volunteering speaks volumes about her character."

VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence



Deborah Brookshire
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
Tucson, Arizona

Deborah Brookshire keeps Veteran Care the primary consideration as she manages the Voluntary Service Program at The Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS). She expects superior performance from her staff and volunteers and is quick to recognize their accomplishments. Further, Ms. Brookshire is an active member of the Employee Empowerment Committee and assists in the maintenance of the First in Service and First in Leadership awards for the facility. Ms. Brookshire established the SAVAHCS Veteran and Family Advisory Council (VFAC) and was instrumental in developing membership which is now chaired by a Veteran. She recognizes the importance of this council in communicating the perspectives, concerns and needs of Veteran patients and their family members. Ms. Brookshire also spearheaded the efforts to bring about the highly anticipated Fisher House of Southern Arizona. Her passion for quality care for both Veterans and their family members brought together the necessary community resources that have made the building of the first Fisher House in Arizona a reality.

Ms. Brookshire challenges herself with new and innovative ways of using VAVS resources to improve the SAVAHCS experience for Veteran patients, families, volunteers and employees. She partnered with Nursing Service and Veteran Centered Care to develop and pilot the *Restful Nights Program* where patients are provided with ear plugs, nasal strips and an eye mask to address patient requests for a more restful inpatient environment. She also collaborated with Nursing, Chaplain Service, Environmental Management Service and Diagnostics to develop a Veteran Memorial Program. This program honors hospitalized Veterans who pass away in one of the acute care wards. Patriotic blankets are draped over the deceased during transport within the hospital and are then presented to the family.

Ms. Brookshire serves as the deputy chair of SAVAHCS VAVS Committee which includes 25 community organizations and manages 1,337 regularly scheduled volunteers including a volunteer escort program with 220 volunteers. In the last year, through a LEAN project, she reduced the wait time for the volunteer application process by 54%. She also established an on-call volunteer pool to address unanticipated needs. SAVAHCS voluntary service partnered with local business, Citi Inc. for the United Days of Caring of which activities benefited Women's Healthcare; Healthy Living Programs; Homeless Veterans, and McArtan Commemorative Plaza. She has worked with the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance (SAACA), to use donated funds to support alternative therapies and entertainment for SAVAHCS patient programs. SAVAHCS Voluntary Service program also participated in 2014 Tucson Mayor's Summit on Senior Options.

Ms. Brookshire is an asset to the SAVAHCS, Veterans, and Voluntary Service program as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs. She will do "whatever it takes" to benefit the Veterans and support the volunteers. She is most deserving of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.

VA Voluntary Service American Spirit Award

Student Recruitment Category



Reginald Hardy

Central Texas VA Health Care System
Temple, Texas

Reginald Hardy started as Chief, Voluntary Service at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS) in May of 2015. Upon his arrival he found that Voluntary Service Specialist, Monica Smith, had already developed the Summer Student Program. With little supervision Ms. Smith developed several new assignments to ensure that the students would receive a rewarding experience, as well as exceptional training and knowledge of a VA hospital's operational procedures.

After meeting with service chiefs and supervisors, Ms. Smith developed new position descriptions for the following assignments; student liaison, valet parking clerk, finance and accounting clerk, Voluntary Service assistant, logistics clerk, kiosk appointment clerk, and dermatology clerk. These new assignments provided valuable training, knowledge and experience to student volunteers on enhancing the Veteran Health Care Experience.

This year returning students were able to help recruit other students from their schools and church groups. The returning students used word of mouth to tell other classmates about their experience in volunteering and learning job skills at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System. With 50% of the returning students (45) coming back to volunteer this summer, CTVHCS had 138 between Temple (93), Waco (10), and Austin (35) student volunteers for our summer student program. Out of the 138 students 41 new students were added to the Temple VA Student program and 10 started new assignments at the Austin Outpatient Clinic.

The benefits for student volunteers are unlimited because each student gets to work in a variety of jobs that enhance their knowledge and skills of how the VA hospital operates. Student volunteers were cross-trained in different assignments to gain more knowledge in other work areas. Cross-training the students provided them with a broad overview of the various positions available in the organization. CTVHCS made great use of the social media applications, Facebook and Twitter, to shine a spotlight on the student volunteer program and increase the public's awareness. Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) sponsored over 25 students, interviewing them and posting the interviews in their monthly magazines to help get the word out about the experience of volunteering. Students also benefited from working with highly trained professionals in a health care environment - an experience normally only presented to interns.

Beyond the traditional methods of rewarding student volunteers hourly service award pins and certificates, students were also recognized through their sponsoring VSO as well as their service supervisors with gift cards and certificates. The students were also invited to a luncheon in their honor to receive their awards in front of Senior Leadership, Voluntary Service staff, as well as their peers, family, and friends. Six student volunteers also completed the Youth Toastmasters course.

VA Voluntary Service American Spirit Award Corporate Recruitment Category



Ronni Miller
Durham VA Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina

The Durham VA Medical Center has developed a strong corporate partnership with the United Auto Workers and General Motors over the last several years that will greatly benefit Durham's hospice patients.

In 2010 at the National Advisory Committee meeting, Durham VAMC Chief, Voluntary Service, Ronni Miller, shared with the National VAVS Representative and Deputy from United Auto Workers her frustration with the ability to raise enough funds for a Recreation Service wheelchair accessible van. After Durham formally had their Hospice Unit located on their Community Living Center (CLC), Recreation Service could only take wheelchair patients out on a limited basis. The Engineering Service would have to utilize and secure transportation with a contracted service. An evening to the movies and dinner for CLC residents could

range in excess of \$500-\$800 per evening trip a few miles down the road. A day at the State Fair could cost in upwards of \$5,000 due to the large group of Veterans.

As the Hospice Unit progressed it became evident that even though there were an abundance of donations for last minute wishes and special outings, Durham lacked a vehicle that could be utilized at the urgent request of Hospice Veterans. For example, when Sergeant Green's last wish was to have lobster, Durham's incredible volunteers were able to provide Red Lobster gift cards, but the meal had to be picked up and delivered bedside. They did not have the option to bring Sergeant Green to his favorite restaurant (at least not in a timely fashion) so instead they brought it to him. The special program to grant last minute wishes to Hospice Veterans was entitled "Sergeant Green's Lobster" as of that day.

Both the VAVS Representative and Deputy listened to Ms. Miller's suggestion "Could United Auto Workers suggest to General Motors to possibly create a matching program, similar to the DAV and Ford Motor Company's matching program for the DAV/Volunteer Transportation Network van program?" She explained the cost was out of their fundraising capabilities and with the appropriated budget a new wheelchair van was not feasible. The Representative and Deputy went back to General Motors and to United Auto Workers sharing the difficulty Durham had purchasing the van, and they also talked to another Chief, Voluntary Service who shared the same situation for their medical center.

In 2014 the first 5 Wheelchair Accessible Vans were donated to the Michigan VA's by General Motors and United Auto Workers.

On June 25, 2015 Ronni Miller, had the honor of accepting the keys from United Auto Workers and General Motors for the Durham VAMC's beautiful new wheelchair accessible van as did four other VA Medical Centers.

Thanks to the partnership with United Auto Workers and General Motors, this new donated van will provide those Veterans who do not have a tomorrow with a special wish outing today.



Cover photo by Verna Wood courtesy of the Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau