



Above from left to right, Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr, Congressman Rob Bishop, Senator Orrin Hatch and Clinton Saggers wearing his newly awarded Purple Heart.

After 64 Years, WWII POW Finally Awarded Purple Heart

By Berni Davis, Editor

On August 21st, at the Utah State Capitol Building, WW II Army Veteran, Mr. Clinton Saggers Utah of Rush Valley, UT was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds he received during the Battle of the Bulge in December of 1944.

It was after this historic Battle that Private First Class Saggers was hit in the knee with shrapnel, since he was taken prisoner by the German Army and the only medical treatment he received was in the POW camp, there was no evidence in his file to show that his wounds were "a direct result of enemy action.

After nearly 10 months as a POW, Mr. Saggers was released and was able to get home. He attempted to get a Purple Heart at this time but since the evidence was not there, he was unsuccessful.

That was until his granddaughter, Pamela Kelly wrote a letter to the Governor of Utah. That letter was forwarded to the then Utah Division of Veterans Affairs and thus began a six year battle to give this Veteran

the recognition he deserved.

Letter after letter to and from Congressmen, to the Army, the Department of Defense, the President of the US and so forth when finally in August of 2008, after numerous attempts, the Department of the Army finally awarded the Purple Heart to Clinton Saggers.

To commemorate this, a ceremony was arranged to have Major General Peter S. Cook, Commanding General 96th Regional Support Command, present the medal to Mr. Saggers. Also present at the ceremony were special guest speakers Senator Orrin Hatch, Congressman Rob Bishop, and Governor Jon M Huntsman Jr.

One sad note of this otherwise happy occasion where Mr. Saggers was surrounded by his family and friends, was that his wife had died in March of 2006. "I just wish my wife could have been here," commented Mr. Saggers.

He also said, "I'm 86 now, I think, and I'm aiming for 100 . . . This Purple heart means a lot to me."

Long Awaited Ground Breaking Begins the Next Phase for Northern Utah Veterans Nursing Home

By Larry Dawson, Staff Reporter

The long anticipated groundbreaking ceremony for the new Utah State Veterans Nursing Home in Ogden was held on October 23 with Governor Jon Huntsman presiding over the event. Several hundred people attended the groundbreaking that will bring a 120 bed skilled nursing facility to Northern Utah. This will be the second nursing home in Utah to go along with the one that is in Salt Lake City.

Mr. Terry Schow, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs, detailed the long anticipated beginning of this benefit by noting that no other state has received the support of both Utah's legislative branches and the Governor in initially funding the total project. Normally, the State pays 1/3 of the cost while the Federal VA pays the remaining 2/3. The VA has promised to pay their part to the state once the project is complete. The State has already approved to fund the entire project, with the promise that the Federal Government will reimburse those costs back to the state. According to Mr. Schow, Big D Construction, who was awarded the contract to build the facility, anticipates to complete the project by November 11, 2009, in time for Veterans' Day.

Remarks by Governor Huntsman focused on Utah's long-standing support of Veterans and Veterans issues. Along with Veterans and family members, about 100 students from Wahlquist Jr. High School came across the street to attend the ceremony. Governor Huntsman asked these students to seek out one of the many



Above from left to right: Darrell (Sarge) Loveland; Mike Baker, State Commander for the VFW; Representative Brad Dee; George Wahlen, Medal of Honor Recipient; Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr.; Pat Brunsvik, Commander DAV Auxiliary, State of Utah; and Dave Estey, State Commander of the DAV begin the ground breaking for the Northern Utah Veterans Nursing Home.

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Dear Editor:

As we approach the commemoration of Veterans Day, it is appropriate to pause, reflect, and remember the sacrifices of those who have served in defense of our country. In a time when the public's attention is rapidly diverted from the news of one moment to the breaking headline of the next, it becomes easy for us to lose sight of those truths only made evident over time. I am grateful that we as a nation have set aside a day when we can consider the lessons our veterans have taught us.

I am always impressed by those things that cannot be taught but must be learned. On the many occasions that I have spent time with our troops and the veterans of past wars, I have found that among their ranks there exists such a mutual understanding. I sense that this understanding, which some have described as their 'common virtue,' is not received at the mere donning of a uniform. Rather, it is a noble inheritance passed from one generation on to the next, with the implicit agreement that it shall be passed on once again. It explains how the veterans of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam are inextricably linked to those who—having recently borne the burden themselves—now return from Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite the distance of time and space, they all share a belief that freedom is an ideal worthy of sacrifice, and that the good of self must sometimes be postponed to ensure the liberty and safety of the many. They know the commitment to service does not end at the close of a tour of duty, but continues manifesting itself in tireless years spent as a parent or a teacher, faithfully filling a job, or providing countless unrecognized hours laboring in the community. It is in these choice interactions that I gain a sense of the common virtue that makes the veterans of our nation so uncommonly good.

Particularly on Veterans Day, we humbly recognize the presence of this common virtue in the lives of the fallen. It is carried on today in the words and deeds of those we are fortunate to have here with us. As words alone cannot give an adequate tribute to those who lost their lives and paid a price in sacrifice for what we enjoy today, it is my hope that our holiday observance this year will lead to a better public appreciation of the common virtue that veterans share. Borrowing from the words of General Douglas MacArthur in his commendation of the American soldier: *He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism; he belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom; he belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and by his achievements.*

Together we as a nation thank our veterans, both for their heroism then and for their instruction now. May we as a people never forget.

Sincerely, Senator Bob Bennett

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Email your suggestions
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USE YOUR VOICE!!!

Send Letters to:

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Utah Department of

Veterans Affairs

PO BOX 58897

Salt Lake City, UT

84158-0897

Dear Editor:

I am blessed to be a spouse of a former Special Forces Solider. I desire to congratulate and pray for others who have served and are presently serving in the military.

Whenever November is fast approaching, I am excited to see how the nation and the general public will show recognition and appreciation of the servicemen and women who helped freedom's cause.

Family and friends are vital support and care givers of our beloved Veterans. The spouses, for the most part, gladly sacrifice their time and resources so they may support their loved ones. These duties can be increasingly demanding during the retirement years as time goes by and the injuries that occurred in active

Bugles Across America

By: Travis V. Gividen, Bugler

I wish to introduce myself as a member of Bugles Across America. The mission of our non-profit organization is to provide a live bugler for the sounding of Taps at the closure ceremony for every veteran, and other appropriate occasions.

By Public Law, every veteran shall be provided military honors, if requested. The absolute minimum that is to be provided for these honors is a two-man flag detail and the sounding of Taps. Due to a critical nationwide shortage of available buglers, this tribute has too often been relegated to a recorded version. In order to restore the dignity and to demonstrate the rightful honor due our veterans, Bugles Across America was founded in 2001 by a USMC veteran, Tom Day. As of this time the organization has almost 6,000 registered buglers nationwide. We are listed in the Funeral Director's 'Red Book' and book-

Operation Give

Dear Friends and Faithful Supporters:

As you know, over 100,000 of our fellow American Citizens, serving in the Armed Forces in the Middle East, will be away from home again this Christmas. I know it is only the first part of September but it is time again to think about sending Christmas Stockings to those men and women serving our country in the Middle East.

I know firsthand what it is like to be away from home and loved ones during the holidays. But, I am sure as I was they are right where feel they should be, fighting for our freedoms, as they battle our enemies on the front lines of this war on Terrorism.

I also know what it is like to receive a Christmas present or a Christmas stocking on Christmas Day, when you are so far away from home. It is an incredible feeling to know that someone is thinking and caring about you. A Christmas stocking is a small thing but it sends a much larger message of support and concern for our Troops, as they put themselves in harms way and risk it all every day.

Let's not forget our troops and let's show our continual support by sending as many stuffed Christmas Stockings as we can and let's do it now so they can get these stockings in time for Christmas. The ocean containers of stockings need to leave our warehouse no later than Nov. 1, in order to arrive in Iraq or Afghanistan before Christmas.

Last year we were able, with all of your support, to send over 50 tons of Christmas stockings and presents to our service Men and Women. This year we want to even do more. But we need your help now. If we don't act now the next couple of months will slip by without us even noticing but then it will be too late. They need to know we are thinking about

Letters to the Editor

duty become more debilitating. Their physical and emotional well being can be sorely tested in the retirement years. Family members are the best at care-giving to our Veterans, but they provide more than that: they provide acceptance and affirmation with love of their sacrifices for this county.

This Veteran's Day, let us celebrate not only the unselfish acts of the Veterans, but also give kudos to spouses, family and friends who are behind their Vets. Let's also encourage our honored Veterans to endure the trials they will in the upcoming years.

Lilian P. Hosfeld, lover of freedom fighter,
West Valley City

marked by the military units responsible for filling Honors Detail requests.

If you ever need a qualified bugler, please feel free to contact me directly or go to the BAA web site at www.buglesacrossamerica.org, and open the "Find A Bugler" tab. By filling in the information on this on-line form, a request will automatically be sent to all registered buglers within a 100-mile radius of the event and also to Area, Regional and State Directors. That notification will give detailed instructions for contact information to any interested bugler. They will respond with their availability as instructed. Please note that neither method of requesting a bugler will add any cost to the family or others paying funeral expenses, or to the event for which a bugler has been requested.

It is an honor to serve in this manner, and the least I can do for those who have sacrificed their lives for the freedoms I enjoy.

them during the Holidays. You can call me directly if you have any questions, in Utah at (801) 259- 6336 or email me at operationchristmasstocking@gmail.com.

Please go to our website at operationgive.org and look at Operation Christmas Stocking to check out the list of items that are needed by our troops. You can make stockings, buy stockings, or create gift bags or decorate boxes. Pre-filled Christmas Stockings and Gift Boxes can also be purchased from our website starting September 15th.

*Contact us directly to get the details of how to ship your Christmas stockings to us for free through FedEx. FedEx supports us by enabling you to ship your stockings to our warehouse for free, but you have to contact us directly to get the instructions. Please don't contact FedEx directly about this. The individual operators or station employees won't know what you are talking about.

We would also appreciate your monetary support to help us pay for the Ocean Containers that we ship to the Middle East. Each container costs us about \$5,000 and we hope to ship 4 or 5 of these. So, you can do the math. It does cost and we do need your help. All of us at Operation Give are volunteers and our warehouse space has been donated by Mesa Systems which is part of United Van Lines, so all of your money goes to help paying for the shipping or to purchase additional much needed items for the troops. We really need your monetary assistance. Please send all monetary donations to our office at 2363 Scenic Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109.

This is a great program and we need your help Love you all,
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VA To Deploy Mobile Counseling Centers across America: 50 Motor Coaches to Bring Services Closer to Veterans, One to go to Salt Lake City

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – The first of a fleet of 50 new mobile counseling centers for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vet Center program was put into service today with the remainder scheduled to be activated over the next three months.

“Our widespread distribution of this fleet from coast to coast marks a new chapter in VA’s innovation to reach rural and underserved veterans with high-quality readjustment counseling,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

Each vehicle will be assigned to one of VA’s existing Vet Centers, enabling the center to improve access to counseling by bringing services closer to veterans.

The 38-foot motor coaches, which have spaces for confidential counseling, will carry Vet Center counselors and outreach workers to events and activities to reach veterans in broad geographic areas, supplementing VA’s 232 current Vet Centers, which are scheduled to increase to 271 facilities by the end of 2009.

Vet Centers, operated by VA’s Readjustment Counseling Service, provide non-medical readjustment counseling in easily accessible,

consumer-oriented facilities, addressing the social and economic dimensions of post-war needs. This includes psychological counseling for traumatic military-related experiences and family counseling when needed for the veteran’s readjustment.

The team leader at each Vet Center will develop an outreach plan for use of the vehicle within that region, not being limited to the traditional catchment area of a particular Vet Center.

These vehicles will be used to provide outreach and direct readjustment counseling at active-duty, reserve and National Guard activities, including post-deployment health reassessments for returning combat service members.

The vehicles will also be used to visit events typically staffed by local Vet Center staff, including homeless “stand downs,” veteran community events, county fairs, and unit reunions at sites ranging from Native American reservations to colleges.

While most of their use will be in Vet Centers’ delivery of readjustment counseling services, the local manager may arrange with VA hospitals or clinics in the region to provide occasional support for health promotion activities such as health screenings.

KUED Airs 2008 Veterans’ Day Live Concert

The Utah National Guard will hold its 53rd annual Veterans Day concert Tuesday, Nov. 11, at the University of Utah’s Jon M. Huntsman Center at 7 p.m.

Airing live on KUED-Channel 7, the event will include performances by the Utah National Guard’s 23rd Army Band and a 700-voice Granite School District high school combined choir, performing a concert of patriotic songs to honor Utah’s veterans. **The program repeats Sunday, November 16, at 3 p.m.**

Alex Boye, a local singing artist, will headline the program, entitled “Forward March! The Way Ahead”, which will feature a variety of music that spans the eras of today’s living military veterans.

Admission is free and the public is invited. Veterans of all ages and their families are encouraged to attend.

IMPORTANT PHONE

NUMBERS:

Utah Dept of Veterans Affairs: 326-2372
 Toll Free: 1-800-894-9497
 VA Regional Office: 1-800-827-1000
 VA Medical Center: 1-800-613-4012
 Local: (801) 582-1565
 VA Education Line: 1-888-442-4551
 VA Home Loans: 1-888-244-6711
 DAV: (801) 326-2375
 VFW: (801) 326-2385
 American Legion: (801) 326-2380
 Military Order PH: (801) 326-2471
 Veterans Cemetery: (801) 254-9036
 Veterans Nursing Home: (801) 584-1900
 Transition Assistance
 Advisor: (801) 523-4937
 VA Vocational Rehab: (801) 326-2431

UPCOMING

VETERANS’ EVENTS

- Nov 10: Celebrating the Sisterhood Women Veterans, VA Medical Center MPC, Noon-1:30 pm
 Nov 11: Veterans Day Ceremony, State Capitol Rotunda 2 pm
 Nov 11: University of Utah Veterans’ Day program, at the student Union Building, from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm.
 Nov 11: Fort Douglas Museum, lecture on the History of the US Army Medical Corps at 3:00
 Nov 17: Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night, Free meal at all locations for Veterans and military, 5-9 pm



From left to right: Senator Allen Christensen, Senator Jon Greiner, Representative Kerry Gibson, Representative Curtis Oda, Representative Richard Greenwood, Representative Gage Froerer, Senator Scott Jenkins. Next row, Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs Dennis McFall, Frank Maughan Military Order of the Purple Heart, Greg Buxton, Director Division of Facilities Construction Management and Bob Ramos, WWII Veteran and long time advocate of the Northern Utah Nursing Home Project.

Ground Breaking Continued from page 1

veterans in the crowd, shake their hands and thank them for their service to our country. After the ground breaking, these students were busy meeting and greeting the veterans, particularly George H. Walhlen, Utah’s only living recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The event recognized various individuals who have, over the years, worked to make the Nursing Home a reality. Many of these people were on hand to assist by manning a shovel. Among those to take the first shovel of dirt were: Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr., Representative Brad Dee, VFW State Commander Mike Baker, DAV State Commander Dave Estey, Medal of Honor Recipient George Wahlen, Frank Maughan, Norm Nelson, Bob Ramos and many other Veterans and supporters of this project who have devoted time and energy into this project.

The new Nursing Home is accepting names for the waiting list. Veterans who met the criteria for Veterans Nursing Home care can be added to this list by contacting the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs and providing their information, name, date of birth, dates of service and social security number. 1-800-894-9497.

EXPANDED HEALTH BENEFITS

As of January 2008, medical and dental benefits have been expanded for Veterans of OEF/OIF. Previously, these Veterans were eligible for 2 years of medical care and a one time dental treatment that had to be applied for within 90 days of discharge. The new benefit has expanded that coverage to 5 years and the time to apply for the dental treatment to 180 days. To apply for your medical benefits log on to <http://www1.va.gov/health/index.asp> or call 1-800-613-4012.

Lioness Premiers on PBS

Lioness is a documentary that tells the story of a group of female Army support soldiers who became the first women in American history to be sent into direct ground combat. Without sufficient training but with a commitment to serve as needed, these young women ended up fighting in some of the bloodiest counterinsurgency battles of the Iraq war. *Lioness* makes public, for the first time, this hidden history.

Told through intimate accounts, journal excerpts, archival footage, as well as interviews with military commanders, the film follows five *Lioness* women who served together for a year in Iraq. With captivating detail, this probing documentary reveals the unexpected consequences that began by using these Army women to defuse tensions with local civilians, but resulted in their fighting alongside Marine combat units in the streets of Ramadi. Together the women’s candid narratives describing their experiences in Iraq and scenes from their lives back home form a portrait of the emotional and psychological effects of war from the female perspective.

Lioness will be on PBS on Thursday November 13th, check local listings for time or visit www.LionessTheFilm.com.

Salt Lake Community College Opens Utah's First Collegiate Veterans Center

Submitted by: Salt Lake Community College, Institutional Marketing Department

Salt Lake Community College recently opened a new Veterans Center, Utah's first collegiate center and one of just several across the nation. SLCC's new Veterans Center took the resources of a one-room Veterans Office and moved into an accommodating, spacious new location in the Student Center on the Taylorsville Redwood campus. Full- and part-time staff members, as well as six veteran work study students, provide personal, individualized attention to SLCC's veteran students. The new center provides veteran students and their families a wide range of support services in one convenient location. Students have access to tutoring, counseling, computer access, and job support, as well as services from Salt Lake City's V.A. Hospital at SLCC.

"We wanted an open and inviting place for our veterans to conduct their business—a single, convenient place where they can receive the services they need and deserve," said Eric Weber, Dean of Enrollment Services at SLCC. "The new Veterans Center is tremendously helpful to our veterans and their families. It gives them a place to study, relax, and provides all the essential support services they need to be successful students, employees and family members."

The Veterans Center at SLCC is meeting the demand in the community. It is busy. More than 700 veterans attend SLCC each semester. The Veterans Office certifies classes taken by, and attendance of, most of SLCC's veteran students to the Veterans Administration. All veterans attending SLCC are welcome to use the center free of charge. The amenities at the new center include a lounge with couches, a television and microwave, a study area with tables, computers, and a printer in order to make the college experience more enjoyable for SLCC veterans.

The new Veterans Center facilitates cooperation with outside Veterans Service agencies that provide support to students including Veterans Upward Bound, the Utah Department of Workforce Services, Bart Davis—the State Transition Advisor, and the Veteran's Administration Hospital. The outside agencies fully participate with the

SLCC center. The Department of Workforce Services and Veterans Upward Bound send representatives to meet with students twice each week in the office; Math, English, and a Computer Information Systems tutor assists students twice per week; once a month, the State Veterans Affairs Transition Assistance Advisor meets with veterans; VA Hospital professionals are currently working with SLCC staff to hold a focus group for veterans and counseling on benefits available; and counselors from Veterans Rehabilitation Services meet two times each semester with about 200 veteran students using VA - Vocational Rehabilitation assistance to help them complete their education.

Students love the increased services and opportunities the new center provides. "I am very appreciative of all that has been given here to those of us who are veterans," said Air Force veteran and SLCC student Shawn Whitney. "It is nice to know this college cares about us to give us so much. I have attended a few other schools and there is nothing like this anywhere I've ever been."

Darlene Head-Goldman, SLCC Veterans Office Supervisor and Certifying Official, believes it necessary to always look for better ways to help the veterans she sees. And the new center gives her and the college community an array of options to help that didn't exist before. "The space we have now is almost like a mini-USO for our students—they receive just about everything here they need to take full advantage of their GI educational benefits," she said. "With this new center, and our continued efforts to support veterans, we are sending a clear message to our students that they matter and we appreciate their service to our country. Salt Lake Community College has always been supportive of our veterans and we are grateful for this wonderful new space."



Veteran Nursing Home residents try their luck on catching a fish on one of the fishing trips up Provo Canyon. The fishing trips are one of several activities the residents of the Salt Lake Nursing Home are able to participate in. Quality of life is one of the top priorities of the staff of this facility, doing what they can to make these Veterans happy.

Patrick Dwire, another SLCC student retired from the U.S. Army agrees, and points to the synergy developed between veterans in this special place specifically designed for and devoted to their needs. "This center provides an area for those of us who are veterans to draw strength from one another," Dwire said, "because only another veteran understands what a fellow veteran has gone through and continues to go through."

"Many people working with veterans, especially those working in college or university settings, marvel at what we're doing here. I have been contacted by colleagues from other colleges and universities across the nation asking how we were able to get our center approved by the college," said Darlene Head-Goldman. "I am always so pleased to tell them that Salt Lake Community College has always supported its veterans by having a dedicated Veterans Office. Honestly, I did not have to fight to get this space. I have shared our experiences with them; I let them know anything's possible, especially with a cooperative, enthusiastic, and progressive administration. That we could go from having one tiny room with one employee to everything we have here today to help students is truly amazing."

As important as the center's work is in making sure students are receiving the benefits, the education and training, and the support services they need, SLCC's student veterans get another benefit that is every bit as valuable from the center: a sense of belonging. U.S. Marine and SLCC student Corbin Motter articulated what many of his student and veteran peers felt upon seeing the new center, "Just looking at this place, just being here today, makes me feel like my service to our country is valued by others, that it's all been worth it".

Shoebboxes for Homeless Veterans

Veterans Upward Bound invites you to participate in its 7th Annual SHOEBOXES PROJECT. Donations go directly to homeless veterans in the Ogden and Salt Lake areas.

A small donation goes a long way!

Please stop by our office, MA 103, and pick up an empty shoebox, or use one of your own, so you too can make a difference in the life of a veteran, someone who has already sacrificed to make a difference in yours.

Instructions are on the back. Please return filled shoeboxes to our office no later than Friday, December 11th

VETERANS: Need Help?

Have Questions?

Contact a benefits advisor at the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs

- 1-800-894-9497
- (801) 326-2372

Visit us on-line at veterans.utah.gov

VA Opening 10 Rural Outreach Clinics: One in Montezuma Creek, Utah

From the Office of Public Relations,

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will open 10 new Rural Outreach Clinics by 2009 to increase the convenience of care for thousands of veterans living in rural areas.

“VA’s commitment is to provide the best quality care to veterans, regardless of their address,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “These clinics are a major step toward fulfilling that pledge to increase access to care for veterans living in rural areas.”

The clinics provide primary care services, case management and mental health services. Each outreach clinic will be part of a VA network, maintaining VA’s quality standards and access to larger VA facilities for specialized needs.

The 10 new clinics include a facility recently put in operation in Aroostook County, Maine.

Scheduled to begin operation this October are facilities in: Houston County, Ga.; Juneau County, Alaska; and Wasco County, Ore.

Clinics to be operational by August 2009 are in: Winnemucca, Nev.; Yreka, Calif.; Utuado, Puerto Rico; Lagrange, Texas; Montezuma Creek, Utah; and Manistique, Mich.

“VA is constantly monitoring our veteran population. Where we see a need to improve access to care, we act on it,” said Dr. Michael J. Kussman, VA Under Secretary for Health.

The Department’s recent outreach to veterans in rural areas includes: Creation of a 13-member Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee to advise Peake on issues affecting veterans in rural areas; Announcement of the roll-out in early 2009 of four new mobile health clinics to serve veterans in 24 predominately rural counties; Announcement of three new Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers — in White River Junction, Vt.; Iowa City, Iowa; and Salt Lake City — to develop practices and products that will improve health care for veterans in rural areas; Nearly tripling the mileage reimbursement — from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile — paid to veterans who travel significant distances to receive VA health care; and Creation of a “Travel Nurse Corps” to augment existing nursing staff in needed areas.



Above, from left to right, Senator Orrin Hatch, Clinton Sagers, MG Peter S. Cooke, Congressman Rob Bishop and John Edwards, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army.

VA, DoD Electronically “Hand Off” Records of Wounded Patients

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – Instant electronic medical information from the Department of Defense about severely wounded troops soon will be transferred to four Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) special treatment centers. The two departments completed a successful pilot project sharing patient information between Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Polytrauma Unit at the Tampa, Fla., VA Medical Center.

The pilot’s expansion will share enhanced data between VA’s four polytrauma centers in Tampa, Fla.; Richmond, Va.; Minneapolis; and Palo Alto, Calif. and all Army medical treatment facilities.

The patient information to be shared between DoD and VA involves electronic notes on the patient’s situation and background, an assessment of his or her condition,

and recommendations for future care. This uniform, standard method of communicating patient information will ensure veterans receive high quality care immediately after being transferred and the information is available and accessible at all times.

“I’m proud to announce the launch of this partnership,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “Because it is targeted at severely wounded veterans transferring directly from DoD to VA, it enhances their care.”

The VA-funded project is the result of collaboration among VA and DoD nurses and information technology professionals. The departments are working to make all of their electronic patient records interoperable. Peake said the announcement represents a significant step forward in those efforts.

Custer and His Troop Continue On- St. George, Utah

Donald Custer, who’s father was a 5th Great Cousin to General George Armstrong Custer, is Chairman of the Veterans Group for the Elks Lodge #1743 known as the Dixie Lodge of St. George that heads up a troop of volunteers from the Elks Lodge and various Veterans groups of the St. George area. Custer and his troop of volunteers conduct monthly visits to Veterans and/or spouses residing in Assisted Living Centers, Nursing Homes, and Rehabilitation Centers in St. George and Hurricane.

The troop begins its visit with a brief introduction of its purpose and the introduction of the volunteers and their military background and a *Pledge of Allegiance* to the Flag of United States of America. The volunteers have varied military backgrounds and represent several branches of the United States Military and Veterans groups. Donald Custer, known as the general to the troop served in the United States Army for three years and was the brunt of hundreds of jokes about General Custer while on active duty. Lee Warren, who coordinates the monthly visits, served in combat in the United States Navy during World War II and the Korean Conflict and is a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. Terry Dunn is a United States Army Combat Veteran of Vietnam and is a member of the Vietnam Veterans of Southern Utah and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Dick Focht served two years with the United States Army and is a member of the Elks. Jim Warrick, from the Hurricane area served and retired from the Submarine Service of the United States Navy and is a member of USS Patrick Henry Submarine Ship Ballistic Missile 599 Alumni Association and is a Lifetime Member of the Submarine Veterans. Bill Toole served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps and retired from the Marine Corps Reserve and is a member of the Utah Dixie Detachment #1270 of the Marine Corps League, American Legion, and Color Country Chapter of the Military Officers’ Association of America. Fred Reske retired from the United States Air Force and is a Lifetime Member of the Disabled American Veterans.

The Veterans and/or spouses being visited are each provided with a copy of the *Utah State Veterans Benefits Fact Sheet* and *The Utah Veterans Voice* published by the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, the Veterans are informed that Veterans information can always be found in Friday editions of the local newspaper, *The Spectrum* under the heading of the *Veterans’ Roll Call* updated by the Veterans’ Coalition of Southern Utah weekly. The Veterans are also reminded about the importance of having their DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, available to themselves and family members and to keep legal documents such as wills and powers of attorney updated. Each Veteran and/or spouse is then asked to speak about their own time in the military and pass on a little story if they have one. At the end of the visit, each Veteran and/or spouse is presented with a United States Flag for posting in their individual rooms and thanked for the service provided to the United States of America.

Custer and his troop of volunteers have been providing visits to Veterans and spouses residing in Assisted Living Centers, Nursing Homes, and Rehabilitation Centers in St. George and the Hurricane Valley area for over ten years. If during the visit a Veteran and/or spouse require individual assistance of more information they are provided points of contact within the State of Utah Department of Veterans Affairs or the Veterans Administration to assist them.

HAVE YOU HEARD? VA Rural Health Resource Center set up Salt Lake

Exploring how best to extend telehealth services to veterans living in rural areas will be one of the key missions of three Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers to be opened by the Veterans Affairs Department on Oct. 1. The centers, to be located at the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont, at the Iowa City VA Medical Center, and at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center, will serve as satellite offices for VA's Office of Rural Health. The centers will not provide direct services but will conduct policy studies and analyses of data and develop pilot projects to improve access to existing telehealth and telemedicine services. The centers will be VA "repositories of information and facilitators of information exchange within the Veterans Health Administration nationwide, as well with other government agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Indian Health Service, and with nongovernmental entities," said Patricia Vandenberg, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

The VA is planning to capture and disseminate insights from center studies through a Web site. "In that way, we will have real-time communication of information across the three centers and across the system at large," Vandenberg said. Vandenberg said the centers will spotlight, not only what diverse rural communities have in common, but also how they are distinct, as far as delivering health care services to veterans

VA Announces \$36 Million in Grants for Homeless Programs: Ogden Based Program one of the recipients

WASHINGTON – Homeless veterans in 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will get more assistance, thanks to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) grants providing \$36.7 million to community groups to create 1,526 beds for homeless veterans this year. The Homeless Veterans Fellowship in Ogden was one of several recipients of this grant, receiving \$113,607 for a new building and eight new beds.

"These grants provide a helping hand to veterans who have served our nation in uniform," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Our partnerships with community-based organizations provide safe, temporary housing while these veterans return to productive lives."

VA has identified public and community nonprofit groups eligible to receive payments for housing and supportive services to homeless veterans, including 49 grants for vans that will transport homeless veterans to health care and training programs.

The grants are part of VA's continuing efforts to reduce homelessness among veterans. VA has the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country. In many cities and rural areas, VA social workers and other clinicians working with community and faith-based partners conduct extensive outreach programs, clinical assessments, medical treatments, alcohol and drug abuse counseling and employment assistance.

VA's Grant and Per Diem program helped reduce the number of veterans who are homeless on a typical night last year by 21 percent to about 154,000 veterans. VA also provides health care to about 100,000 homeless veterans, compensation and assistance in obtaining foreclosed homes and excess federal property, including clothes, footwear, blankets and other items.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.va.gov/homeless>.

Enhanced VA Mortgage Options Now Available for Veterans: Of Potential Benefit to Those in Financial Distress

From VA Office Media Relations

WASHINGTON — Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. These new options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, which the President signed into law on October 10, 2008.

"These changes will allow VA to assist a substantial number of veterans with subprime mortgages refinance into a safer, more affordable, VA guaranteed loan," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Veterans in financial distress due to high rate subprime mortgages are potentially the greatest beneficiaries."

VA has never guaranteed subprime loans. However, as a result of the new law VA can now help many more veterans who currently have subprime loans.

The new law makes changes to VA's home loan refinancing program. Veterans who wish to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so for up to 100 percent of the value of the property. These types of loans were previously limited to 90 percent of the value.

Additionally, Congress raised VA's maximum loan amount for these types of

refinancing loans. Previously, these refinancing loans were capped at \$144,000. With the new legislation, such loans may be made up to \$729,750 depending on where the property is located.

Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount will allow more qualified veterans to refinance through VA, allowing for savings on interest costs or even potentially avoiding foreclosure.

Originally set to expire at the end of this month, VA's authority to guaranty Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) and Hybrid ARMs was also extended under this new law through September 30, 2012. Unlike conventional ARMs and hybrid ARMs, VA limits interest rate increases on these loans from year to year, as well as over the life of the loans.

Since 1944, when home loan guaranties were offered with the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18 million home loans worth over \$911 billion. This year, about 180,000 veterans, active duty servicemembers, and survivors received loans valued at about \$36 billion.

For more information, or to obtain help from a VA Loan Specialist, veterans may call VA at 1-877-827-3702 or visit www.homeloans.va.gov.

Fisher House Update October 2008

By Phillip P. Know

The building of a Fisher House in Salt Lake City is moving ahead. Since May of 2007 this project has steadily grown and is taking root. This past summer the donations have continued and more interest in Utah's own Fisher House has grown.

The Fisher House Campaign has received the public support of the various Veterans' organizations as well as other non military organizations. Support has been widespread and has originated nationally and even from overseas. Support has been received from individuals in Iraq, Afghanistan, France, Australia and the Philippines.

Ray Bachiller, the local spokesperson for the Fisher House has carried the news of the Utah Fisher House throughout Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Nevada, California and Maryland. It was in Maryland that Bachiller visited the Fisher House Foundation Headquarters just outside Washington DC. There he met with the David Coker the President of the Fisher House Foundation and James Weiskopf, Executive Vice President, Communications to discuss the future of the Salt Lake City facility. Many issues were discussed as a solid relationship developed and reassurances surfaced.

Among the most promising was the adding of Utah Fisher House to the webpage list of online donations. This listing allows donations over the internet utilizing credit cards, checks, and even securities which will be directed specifically to Utah's Fisher House. This site is located at <http://www.fisherhouse.org/contribute> and provides information on various methods of donating.

Fisher House uses a nonprofit service that specializes in secure transactions to process our online credit card transactions. The name "GIVEDIRECT" will appear

on your credit card statement - not Fisher House™ Foundation.

Those seeking alternative channels to donate may prefer web sites at <http://www.charitynavigator.org> or <https://www.networkforgood.org>.

Don Willis, the local Champion for Fisher House since the establishment of the Fisher House Utah Project spends countless hours to push this project towards success. The staff at Fisher House Foundation has been impressed with his diligence and ability to keep them informed. A tireless worker, Willis has sought support from a wide range of organizations and a diverse list of individuals. The dynamic duo of Willis and Bachiller has done well over the past year and made the possibility of a Utah Fisher House an eventuality which will significantly improve the already stellar reputation of the Salt Lake Veterans Affairs Center.

The campaign will move forward in hopes of putting a shovel in at the VA Center in early 2009. As stated previously the success of the fund-raising campaign is dependent upon the contributions of those "who are the portrait of patriotism in giving thanks to the vets and their families for their unselfish sacrifices in both peace and conflict."

If you are interested further information or in participating in the Fisher House Utah campaign or if your group would like to receive a presentation please contact Ray Bachiller at bachiller1@aol.com or 801-430-8762. Show your patriotic support and keep the momentum going towards building our Fisher House. Show the world that Utah cares for its Vets.

VA Announces Changes to the Disability Rating Schedule for Traumatic Brain Injuries and Burn Scars: *Increased Compensation Possible for Some Veterans*

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced changes in the way VA will evaluate traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and burn scars for purposes of determining the appropriate level of compensation veterans receive for these injuries.

“These important regulatory changes will allow VA decision makers to better assess the consequences of these injuries and ensure veterans are properly compensated for their residual effects,” stated Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

VA has revised the Disability Rating Schedule in light of current scientific and medical knowledge in order to provide VA employees with more detailed and up-to-date criteria for evaluating and compensating veterans with these injuries.

Two groups of veterans may be affected by these changes. The first group includes veterans who will be awarded disability compensation for TBI and burn injuries in the future. The second group includes veterans already receiving compensation for these injuries whose disabilities are reevaluated under the new criteria.

The effects of blast injuries resulting from roadside explosions of improvised explosive devices have been common sources of injury in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and appear to be somewhat different from the effects of trauma seen from other sources of injury.

As of September 2008, there are more than 22,000 veterans being compensated for TBI, of whom more than 5,800 are veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Traumatic brain injuries result in immediate effects such as loss or alteration of consciousness, amnesia and sometimes neurological impairments. These abnormalities may all be transient, but more prolonged or even permanent problems with a wide range of impairment in such areas as physical, mental, and emotional/behavioral functioning may occur.

More than 90 percent of combat-related TBIs are closed head injuries, with most servicemembers sustaining a mild TBI or concussion. Difficulties after TBI may include headache, sleep difficulties, decreased memory and attention, slower thinking, irritability, and depression.

To view the entire regulation published today in the Federal Register, go to: www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2008-22083_PL.pdf. For more information about VA disability compensation, go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.



Veteran Nursing Home residents Dale Boyington and Oliver Willoughby enjoy eating tomatoes off of the large plants they helped grow this summer in the courtyard garden.

VA Clarifies Voter Registration Regulations

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it has clarified its policy on assisting veterans' voter registration activities, with particular focus on inpatients and residents of VA community living centers, domiciliaries and patients with limited access to community voter registration resources.

The Department will welcome state and local election officials and non-partisan groups to its hospitals and outpatient clinics to assist VA officials in registering voters at VA facilities. Such assistance, however, must be coordinated by those facilities in order to avoid disruptions to patient care.

“VA has always been committed to helping veterans exercise their constitutional right to vote, which they defended for all Americans while serving their nation,” said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “We’ve now established a uniform approach to helping those of our patients who need assistance to register and to vote.”

The policy requires that information about the right of VA patients to register and vote, and other patients' rights, be posted in every VA hospital, and that all VA patients be provided a copy of these rights when they are admitted to a VA facility.

Every hospital is now also required to publish a written policy on voter assistance, allowing patients to leave the hospital to register and vote, subject to the opinions of their health care providers. Patients unable to leave the facility must be assisted to register and to vote by absentee ballot.

In their written policies, VA hospitals are required to establish the criteria they will use to evaluate requests from outside agencies to register voters, and to determine where, when, and how such registration activities will be conducted. They will also develop procedures to coordinate offers of assistance from state and local governments and from non-partisan organizations, and how to work with VA's Regional Counsel offices to determine whether or not groups offering registration help are non-partisan, as required by law.

Voluntary Service Program Managers at each of VA's 153 hospitals will be responsible for implementing the new policy, and for providing timely and accurate voting information to veterans cared for at their facilities. They will also obtain and maintain materials that are needed to assist veterans with voter registration requirements.

The Utah Veterans Nursing Home in Salt Lake, under the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs has a wheelchair designed for a quadriplegic. This wheel needs some work but will be given to a Veteran in need.

If you know of a Veteran who could benefit from this type of device, please contact the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs toll free at 1-800-894-9497 or (801) 326-2372.

A Study of Treatments for Veterans with Sleep Disturbances: Veterans Needed

Would you like to participate in a research study examining how two different treatments help you manage sleep problems?

Over a period of 2 weeks, study participants will be treated under one of the following conditions: take two 2-hour mind-body bridging classes *OR* take sleep medication daily for two weeks and two 15-minute sleep hygiene classes

Study participants will need to complete questionnaires at the beginning and end of the study (about 60 minutes each) and will be compensated for their time.

To qualify for this study, you need to be:

- a US Veteran,
- 18 - 65 years old,
- diagnosed with sleep disorder by a VA physician in the Primary Care Clinic,
- not currently taking sleep medications

To learn more about the study, please speak to your VA primary care physician or call (801) 585-7754.

VA Loans Remain a Strong Option for Veterans: Agency Sees Significant Increase in Loan Volume over Past Year

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – More servicemembers and veterans are using their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty benefit, as VA's loan program remains a strong option in today's housing market.

VA is experiencing a significant increase in home loan volume, with more than 162,000 home loan guaranties provided this year, an increase of more than 31 percent over the same period last year.

“VA attributes this increase to the favorable terms traditionally offered with VA loans and the elimination of many no-down payment products in the conventional mortgage market,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

No-down payment loans are increasingly difficult to obtain with conventional financing. Under recently enacted legislation, VA now uses a locality-based approach in determining ceilings on its no-down payment home loans. VA no-down payment loans are available for as much as \$729,000. Larger VA loans may be obtained with relatively small down payments.

Not only is the VA program one of the few remaining no-down payment programs in the market today, but lenders and veterans using the program are finding that it provides a timely and user-friendly product.

Focus in recent years on improvements in information technology has helped streamline the loan process and has made the program more accessible. Veterans no longer need to obtain a VA Certificate of Eligibility prior to contacting a lender.

Lenders can access the program's web portal to use VA's on-line Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) system and obtain the certificate for the veteran. Many times, lenders can receive the certificate within seconds.

VA lenders have the authority to process and approve veterans' loan applications. Lenders can order appraisals on-line, review and determine the appraised value of the property themselves, electronically submit the information VA needs to process a loan guaranty, and then receive the guaranty electronically within 24 hours.

VA's is also revolutionizing its loan servicing activity through implementation of a new web-enabled and rules-based 'smart' system called VALERI (VA Loan Electronic Reporting Interface). Standardized servicing criteria on par or ahead of industry norms and instant access to acquisition and claim payment status make it easier for services to work and communicate with VA. It also allows services to help veterans who are experiencing financial difficulty to avoid foreclosure.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made to eligible veterans, servicemembers, and surviving spouses through private mortgage lenders throughout the United States. Since 1944, when home loan guaranties were first offered with the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18 million home loans worth over \$965 billion.

Last year, about 135,000 veterans, servicemembers and surviving spouses received loans valued at nearly \$24 billion. More than 90 percent of VA loans were made without any down payment.

To obtain more information about the VA Loan Guaranty Program, veterans can call VA at 1-877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

To obtain your certificate of eligibility for the VA home loan program, call 1-888-244-6711.

MEDICAL FOSTER HOME PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

From George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Office of Public Affairs

The VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) is pleased to announce the development of the Medical Foster Home program to reach the growing needs of the veteran population.

“The Medical Foster Home is a unique partnership of adult foster home and Home Based Primary Care,” said Josh Brown, VASLCHCS Licensed Clinical Social Worker and coordinator of the Medical Foster Home Program. There are many veterans who live alone and independently for years through the support of assistive devices and home care services. Eventually the veteran may decline to the point that it is no longer safe to remain living alone. Traditionally, this situation is resolved by nursing home placement; however, the veteran may refuse nursing home care, instead accepting serious risks. “This is where the Medical Foster Home program steps in to offer a safe, favorable, and less costly alternative to the veteran,” said Brown.

Medical Foster Home finds caregivers in the community who are willing to take a veteran into their home and provide 24-hour supervision as well as needed personal assistance. The expectation is that this is a long-term commitment, where the veteran may live for the remainder of his or her life. The caregivers are paid \$1,500 to \$2,500 based upon the level of care needed by the veteran. For example, a cost of \$1,500 for someone with mild dementia who is independent in

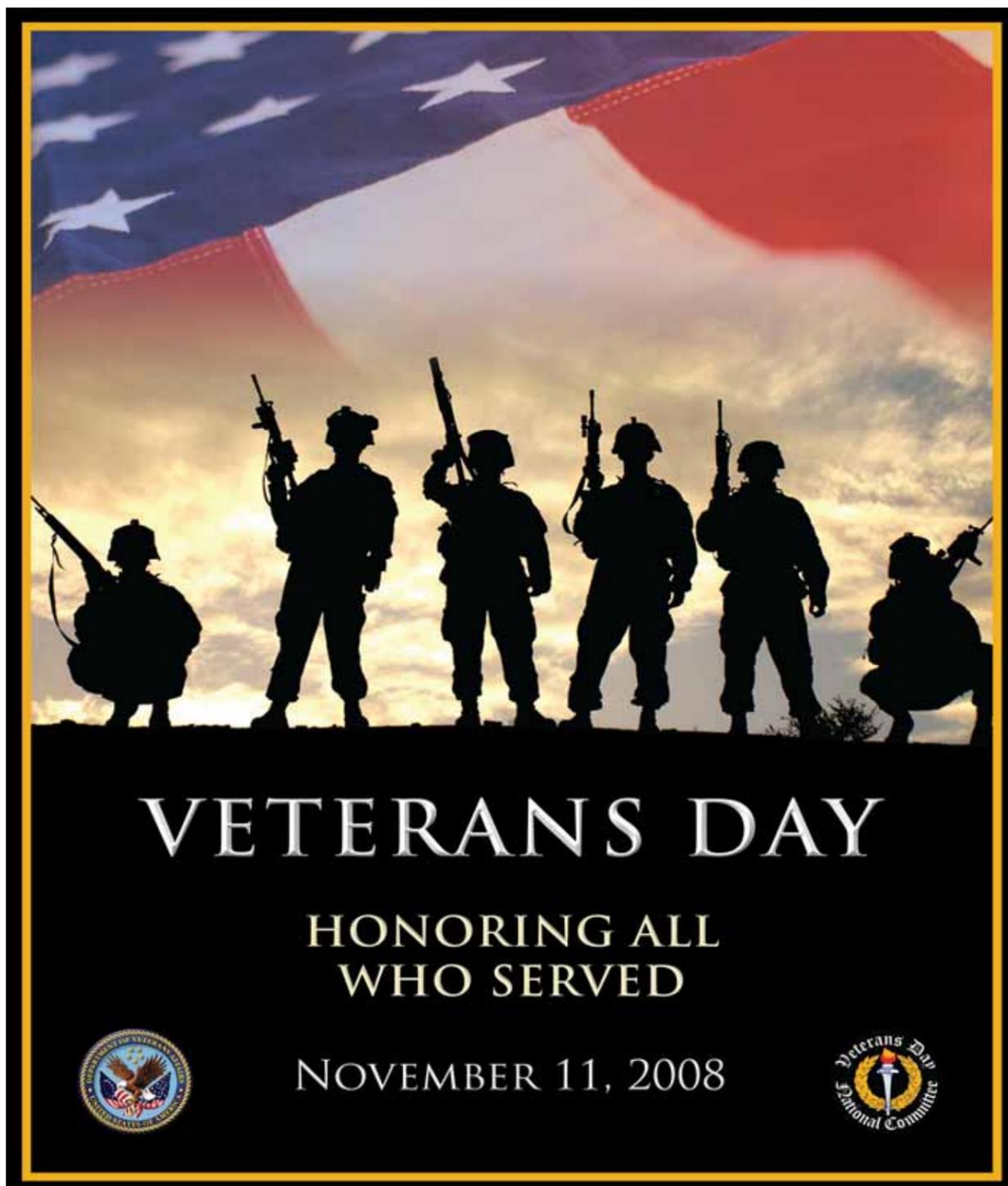
activities of daily living but requires supervision, to \$2,500 for someone who is incontinent, bed-bound, and needs to be turned every four hours. This is a very cost-effective alternative to nursing home placement and allows for a safe home type environment for veterans.

This payment is made by the veteran directly to the caregiver monthly. This includes room and board, 24-hour supervision, assistance with medications, and whatever personal care is needed.

“We are currently searching for individuals who are interested in becoming future Medical Foster Home caregivers,” said Brown. Potential caregivers must be:

- Over the age of 21
- Own or renting a home
- Read, write, and speak English
- Complete a Criminal Background Check (BCI)
- First Aid and CPR are certified
- Allow an Interdisciplinary Treatment Team into your home for monthly visits
- Willing to accept, participate in, and follow the veteran's treatment plan

“The Medical Foster Home program allows community members an opportunity to serve our veterans who have served us in maintaining and ensuring our freedoms,” said Brown. If you or someone you know is interested in receiving more information about this exciting program, please contact Josh Brown, coordinator, Medical Foster Home Program, at (801) 582-1565, extension 2180.



2008 Scholarship Winners



Each year, the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs teams up with Veterans Upward Bound to offer \$500 scholarships to Veterans attending a college or university and using the Veterans Upward Bound Program. This year there were three winners, Jinyi Bae, Christopher Bowman and Jason Kleinschmidt. Each of these Veterans Attend Weber State University.

Photo left: From Left to right, Jim Shepherd, Math Tutor from Veterans Upward Bound; Donna Rigby Director, Veterans Upward Bound and Jason Kleinschmidt, Veterans and scholarship Recipient.

Photo top right: Jim Shepherd, Math Tutor from Veterans Upward Bound; Donna Rigby Director, Veterans Upward Bound, Jinyi Bae Veteran Recipient and Terry Schow, Executive Director, Utah Department of Veterans Affairs.

Photo bottom right: Terry Schow, Executive Director, Utah Department of Veterans Affairs hands the scholarship check to Veteran Christopher Bowman



Donna Rigby Named New VUB Director

On September 15, Weber State University announced the selection of Donna Rigby as Director of Veterans Upward Bound (VUB). Ms. Rigby replaced James Kopecky who retired in June after more than twenty years as director of the program. She was originally hired to work with the VUB program in 1999 as the English and computer applications instructor. For the past three years, she has also served as Assistant Director to Mr. Kopecky.

The VUB program is administered through Weber State University and funded by the Department of Education to assist low-income/first-generation military veterans to enter and succeed at the postsecondary level. VUB personnel assist with admission and financial aid processes, as well as provide academic assessment and advisement, career selection services, and free instruction in math, English, and computer software applications. Even though the program is administered through Weber State University, VUB offers services to veterans in Weber, Davis, and Salt Lake Counties and provides tutoring both at Weber State University and SLCC.

Ms. Rigby is excited about her new position and looks forward to continuing to assist veterans with their educational goals. "Education is the single, best way for veterans, or anybody for that matter, to provide a better life for themselves and their families," she said. "As a society, we have an obligation, and I have a personal desire, to help veterans access the higher socioeconomic status that a college degree always brings. A veteran who earns a baccalaureate degree is assisting his family, not only for his lifetime, but also for many generations to come."

Ms. Rigby feels that one of the great benefits VUB offers is an opportunity to be tutored by adults who respect and appreciate veterans and see their life experiences as enhancing their learning potential.

If you have served at least 180 days active duty and could be considered either low-income or neither of your parents earned a 4-year degree, you qualify for the program. If you are not sure if you qualify, please contact the VUB office to find out. Interested veterans can call 801.626.7173 or 1.800.626.6000 ext. 7173 or e-mail vub@weber.edu.

This program is available for Veterans attending school in Davis, Weber and Salt Lake Counties.

Are you using your GI Bill?

Remember that the Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty, Chapter 30, expires 10 years after discharge from Active Duty.

Reserve GI Bill Chapter 1606 and 1607 (REAP) expire once your service in the National Guard/Reserves is complete.

Don't let this benefit slip away from you. Call 1-888-442-4551 to check on the status of your benefit.

Are you eligible for the new GI Bill, Post 9/11 Education Benefits? Find out at www.gibill.va.gov



Utah State Approving Agency for Veterans Education

By Bob Welsh

It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a Free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it. - George Washington

Education and / or vocational success for our veterans are the principal advocacies of the Utah State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (SAA). The ability to receive a solid education beyond that of high school, whether it is a certificate in a vocation, an associate degree, a four-year degree, or a graduate degree must be available and easily accessible for veterans who have earned benefits through the GI Bill. We all know that a well-educated citizenry benefits society at large by encouraging civic service in the community. The many who have proudly served and sacrificed for our nation through military service bring to the community and to the workplace a unique set of experiences and skills developed while serving the nation at war. This agency is the newest edition to the growing Utah Department of Veterans Affairs.

About The Utah SAA Staff

The current Director of the Utah State Approving Agency is Ben Guile. Ben earned a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Behavior and Management from Brown University and completed the Pricewaterhouse Coopers financial academy at the University of Texas at Austin's Executive MBA program. He has six years experience in the New England area as an Auditor and Financial Analyst. He is currently enrolled in the MPA program at the University of Utah. Ben also has 15 years of honorable service with 19th Special Forces Group as a Special Forces Medic. This led to his activation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in the War on Terror. Ben

served a tour in Afghanistan earning the Purple Heart and other commendations. He is married and has 2 children.

The Veterans Education Officer / Program Specialist is Robert (Bob) Welsh. Bob grew up in Pennsylvania mostly, but was an "Army Brat" most of his life. He earned a Bachelor and Master of Arts in History and Classical Languages, and is currently researching his PhD dissertation topic, "The Treatment of Psychological Battle Casualties during the World Wars." He is currently an Associate Faculty and Adjunct Professor at the University of Utah and Westminster College where he teaches history and Latin. Bob's military service was during the Vietnam War where he served combat duty with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, earning the Purple Heart and other commendations.

Both Ben and Bob are disabled veterans who have been smacked around a lot as a result of the wounds received in their respective wartime experiences.

Maureen "Mo" Coble is the newest addition to the Utah SAA staff. Mo graduated from Naples American High School, Naples, Italy, and is currently completing her college degree under the Montgomery GI Bill while working part-time as the Administrative Assistant for the SAA office. She has worked with several large corporations and entities (Home Depot, Cabela's, etc.), but most recently with the United States Marine Corps. Mo spent a tour of duty in Iraq with the 2nd FSSG H&S Battalion prosecuting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This country does not forget God or the soldier. Upon both we now depend. -John F. Kennedy

VA Secretary Establishes ALS as a Presumptive Compensable Illness- *Cites Association between Military Service and Later Development of ALS*

From VA Office of Media Relations

WASHINGTON – Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) may receive badly-needed support for themselves and their families after the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that ALS will become a presumptively compensable illness for all veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military.

“Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake said.

Secretary Peake based his decision primarily on a November 2006 report by the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine (IOM) on the association between active-duty service and ALS.

“We are extremely grateful to Secretary Peake, Congressman Henry Brown and Senator Lindsey

Graham for standing on the side of veterans with ALS across the country,” said Gary Leo, president and CEO of The ALS Association. “Thanks to their leadership, veterans with ALS will receive the benefits and care they need, when they need them. Thanks to their efforts, no veteran with ALS will ever be left behind.”

The report, titled *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in Veterans: Review of the Scientific Literature*, analyzed numerous previous studies on the issue and concluded that “there is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between military service and later development of ALS.”

“ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly, once it is diagnosed,” the Secretary explained. “There simply isn’t time to develop the evidence needed to support compensation claims before many veterans become seriously ill. My decision will make those claims much easier to process, and for them and their families to

receive the compensation they have earned through their service to our nation.”

ALS, also called Lou Gehrig’s disease, is a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States, is often relentlessly progressive, and is almost always fatal.

ALS causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that leads to muscle weakness, muscle atrophy, and spontaneous muscle activity. Currently, the cause of ALS is unknown, and there is no effective treatment.

The new interim final regulation applies to all applications for benefits received by VA on or after September 23, 2008, or that are pending before VA, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit on that date.

VA will work to identify and contact veterans with ALS, including those whose claims for ALS were previously denied, through direct mailings and other outreach programs.

For more information on VA’s disability compensation program, go to www.va.gov or contact 1-800-827-1000.

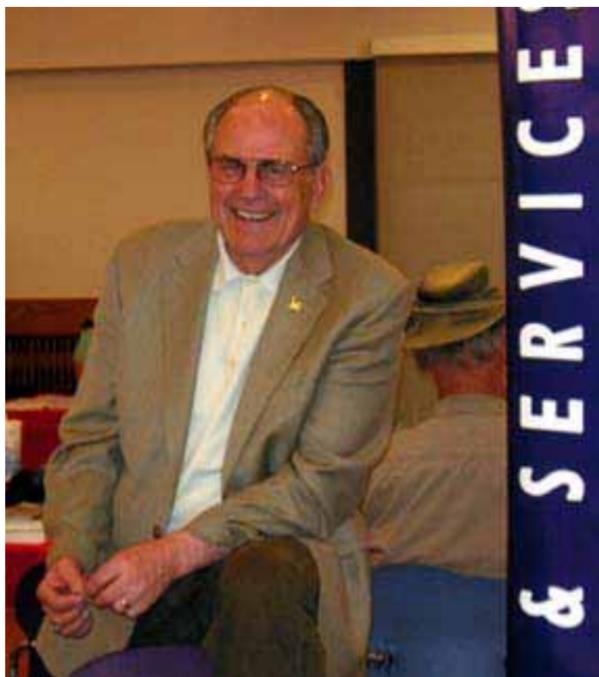
Bart O. Davis Appointed New ESGR Utah Field Chair

Salt Lake City, Utah — James G. Rebholz, national chairman of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, appointed Bart O. Davis as chairman of the Utah Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

The oath of office was administered to Davis by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas G. Hall, in Arlington, Va. Davis succeeds James G. Martin who completed six years of distinguished service as the field chairman of the Utah committee.

Davis, a military retiree, is well known throughout the state and has a history of supporting the military and veterans.

“I am honored by this opportunity to lead the volunteers serving in the Utah committee who unselfishly give their time helping employers and members of the National Guard and Reserve understand their rights and obligations under federal and state laws,” Davis said. “I am proud to say that many Utah employers go above and beyond in support of their employees who are National Guard or Reserve members by supporting them with pay differential and the extension of employee benefits coverage during mobilizations.”



Bart Davis, at a Veterans Outreach Event.

The mission of ESGR is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflicts through mediation.

More information about ESGR employer outreach programs and volunteer opportunities is available at www.esgr.mil or by calling Kim Watts 801-432-4492.

Department of Utah, Marine Corps League

By Joe Surace

New Charter in Cedar City- Cedar City Detachment #1315 received its Charter Saturday, October 4th at Sulli’s Steak House in Cedar City. Once again, Department Commandant Joseph P.C. Surace presented another Charter here in Utah.

Marine Chuck Hoepfer the Detachment Organizer, was the driving force for the Detachment. It is the first time a Detachment filed and received its incorporation documents before actually receiving its charter. It is the eighth detachment in Utah and more are planned for the future. An auxiliary unit is also planned for this area.

The following Marines will hold office this coming year: Commandant C.E. Chuck Hoepfer; Senior Vice Steven H Cantowine; Junior Voice James J La Cagnina; Judge Advocate Sherry L Timmons, Adjutant Leo P David; Paymaster Chester Simpson, Chaplain Robert D Hughes and SGT At arms Colby W Bryant.

The Marine Corps League is also searching for Viet-Nam Era Utah Marines

Marines that were members of three Marine Recruit Platoons that marched in the Days of 47 Parade in 1968, 1969 and 1970. These platoons were sworn in on the following dates: Tuesday July 21st, 1968, Wednesday July 23rd 1969 and Thursday July 23rd 1970. After they were sworn in they marching in the parade the following day. They followed the US Marine Corps Colors which led the parade in each of those years. Marines of those three platoons are asked to contact the Department Commandant Joseph P. C. Surace at (801) 281-6101 or email at pimarine_56@sisna.com. He can also be reached at the George E Wahlen VA Medical Center on Monday morning at the information desk in the main lobby area.

Volunteers Needed: Donations Also Being Accepted

By Berni Daivs, Editor

This time of year, in particular, there is strong need for volunteers. Conveniently, there is also a strong desire on the part of individuals to help. Veterans Day, in conjunction with the other holidays, creates a spirit of giving. Giving of time, of money and of thanks.

Many organizations are in the need of volunteers to assist with many different projects. One such project is Military Honor Guards. Volunteers are always needed to assist with funerals and ceremonies. Please contact the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs if you are interested in participating in a local honor guard.

There are also several other opportunities for volunteers including outreach events, fund raisers, programs and events, just to name a few. The VA

Medical Center, Ft. Douglas Museum and Service Organizations can all use volunteers on a regular basis for their day to day operations.

However, there are a lot of people who do want to assist in whatever way they can but do not have the luxury of spare time. In this case, there are a myriad of organizations that accept tax deductible donations. One new area open to donations is the Northern Utah Veterans Nursing Home, since it is in the beginning stages there are many items needed. Those interested in donating money or items to furnish the new facility should contact Tonja at the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs 32-2372 or toll free at 1-800-894-9497.

If you would like more information on organizations looking for volunteers of donations please call the numbers above. Thank you for your support.

**Be Our Messenger:
Volunteer at the George E.
Wahlen VA Medical Center
for Info Call (801) 584-1241**

The Disabled American Veterans sponsors a van that runs throughout the region transporting Veterans to their appointments at the George Wahlen VA Medical Center and then back home. To schedule an appointment with the Van call the following number: 1-800-613-4012 EXT: 2003

VAN TIMES AND LOCATIONS

NORTHERN ROUTE

02:15 AM—**SAGE JUNCTION** (EXIT 33 OFF FREEWAY 1-15)
 02:45 AM—**ASHTON** (DAVE'S JUBILEE GROCERY STORE)
 03:15 AM—**ST. ANTHONY** (MAVERICK STATION) (S. BRIDGE ST. AND 3RD S.)
 03:45 AM—**REXBURG** (MAVERICK STATION) (MAIN ST. AND SECOND WEST)
 04:15 AM—**RIGBY** (MAVERICK STATION MAIN AND CLARK ST.)
 04:45 AM—**IDAHO FALLS** (CHEVRON and McDONALDS) (BROADWAY AND SATURN)
 05:15 AM—**BLACKFOOT** (FLYING J) (228 PARKWAY DR)
 05:30 AM—**FORT HALL** (GAS STATION BY CASINO)

SOUTHERN ROUTE

05:45 AM—**POCATELLO** (VET CENTER 1800 GARRET WAY) (WESTWOOD VILLAGE MALL)
 06:15 AM—**McCAMMON** (FLYING J) (BY FREEWAY 1-15)
 06:30 AM—**DOWNEY** (FLAGS WEST TRUCK STOP) (OFF FREEWAY 1-15)
 06:45 AM—**MALAD** (CHEVRON STATION) (EXIT 13 OFF FREEWAY 1-15)
 07:15 AM—**TREMONTON** (SINCLAIR STATION) (EXIT 40 OFF HIGHWAY 84)
 07:35 AM—**BRIGHAM CITY** (FLYING J EXIT 362 OFF 1-15)

ARRIVAL AT VA HOSPITAL IS BETWEEN 08:30 TO 09:00 APPOINTMENTS MUST BE BETWEEN 09:00 TO 14:00

THE VAN DEPARTS HOSPITAL WHEN THE LAST VETERAN IS DONE

2008 VAN SCHEDULE FOR IDAHO, PRICE and ST. GEORGE

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

IDAHO: (208) 221-0362

PRICE, ST. GEORGE : 1-800-613-4012
x. 2003

NOVEMBER: 4, 6, 10, 12,
14, 18, 20, 24, 26, 28,
DECEMBER: 2, 4, 8, 10, 12,
16, 18, 22, 24, 26, 30,

2008 VAN SCHEDULE FOR LOGAN, VERNAL, ELKO, ELY, AFTON, ROCK SPRINGS

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

LOGAN AND VERNAL: 1-800-613-4012
x2003

NOVEMBER: 3, 5, 7, 9,
13, 17, 19, 21, 25, 29
DECEMBER: 1, 3, 5, 9, 11,
15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 29, 31

YOU CAN ALSO SEE A NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER FROM THE DAV AT THE VA MEDICAL CENTER SIX TIMES PER MONTH. THESE REPRESENTATIVES ARE AT THE HOSPITAL TO ASSIST VETERANS WILL CLAIMS AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE VA BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND PENSION. THEY ARE AVAILABLE AT THE MEDICAL CENTER EVERY THURSDAY AND EVERY OTHER TUESDAY.

THE DATES ARE: NOVEMBER: 6, 13, 20, 25. DECEMBER: 4, 9, 11, 18, 23 JANUARY: 6, 8, 15, 20, 22, 29

OUTREACH REPRESENTATIVES, FROM VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ACROSS THE STATE AT VARIOUS WORKFORCE SERVICES OFFICES. CITIES INCLUDES: BEAVER, BLANDING, BRIGHAM CITY, CEDAR CITY, CLEARFIELD, DELTA, FILLMORE, KANAB, LOGAN, MANTI, MIDVALE, MOAB, NEPHI, OGDEN, PANGUITCH, PRICE, PROVO, RICHFIELD, ROOSEVELT, SALT LAKE METRO, DOWNTOWN, SOUTH, ST. GEORGE, TOOELE AND VERNAL.

PLEASE GO TO VETERANS.UTAH.GOV FOR AN UP TO DATE SCHEDULE, OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WORKFORCE SERVICES OFFICE FOR A DATE AND TIME A SERVICE OFFICER WILL BE AVAILABLE.