



George E. Wahlen is awarded the Medal of Honor by Pres. Harry Truman.

George E. Wahlen Gives a Lifetime of Service, Leaving a Lasting Impression

By Ashley Gober

George E. Wahlen was a man who hated to be called a hero, yet no one can deny that he was truly that. He was a man who gave tirelessly of himself to all he came into contact with. He has left a huge impression upon hundreds of veterans who he worked to serve on a daily basis.

From the age of 17, Wahlen began to serve his country. He started as an aircraft mechanic with the United States Army Air Corps before becoming a Navy Corpsman. In 1945, he volunteered for combat duty with the Marine Corps where he participated in the Battle of Iwo Jima. On February 26, while he was treating a wounded Marine, Wahlen was hit in the face with shrapnel as an enemy grenade exploded near

him. He didn't let that stop him from continuing on with his job. Throughout heavy fire and explosions, Wahlen treated as many Marines as he could, even going so far as to carry a wounded Marine to safety on his back. When he had done all he could for his own unit he moved to help as many other units as he could, treating at least fourteen others.

In the week following his first injury, Wahlen was hit by enemy fire twice more while in the midst of treating Marines. Once again, he refused treatment and continued to treat others instead. By the time the battle of Iwo Jima was finished, his company had only five of 240 men who did not become wounded or was killed.

Following Iwo Jima, Wahlen was hospitalized until his release from the Navy in December of 1945. He was awarded with two Navy Crosses before being sent to Washington to receive the Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman.

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Disabled Veterans Given Easier

Path to Benefits

By Arthur Raymond, The Deseret News
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Disabled veterans facing bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining property tax exemptions in Salt Lake County should have an easier path following a policy shift approved by the County Council Tuesday.

Terry Schow, executive director of the Utah Department of Veteran Affairs, said Tuesday that his office has been besieged with complaints from vets running into trouble securing benefits from the county.

"We've received more complaints from veterans with disabilities in Salt Lake County than the whole rest of the state combined," Schow said.

Disabled veterans are eligible for a break on property taxes, collected by the county treasurer, based on the percentage of their disability — a number that is determined by the Veteran's Administration. Schow said the benefit is offered to vets who have been determined to have a 10 percent or higher level of disability. Each 10 percent increment represents about a \$25,000 decrease on the taxable value of their property, up to about \$230,000, a number set by the Utah Tax Commission.

The problems vets have run into, according to testimony Schow offered the council

Tuesday, is being required to provide multiple verifications for their disability rating, especially in the case of documents that may show different numbers. County treasurer, Larry Richardson said his hands have been tied by statute, notably in cases where there's conflicting or dated information.

"If their information wasn't current ... or wasn't clear ... we needed to ask for current information," Richardson said.

Another requisite of the treasurer's office, as required under the upcoming implementation of SB81, is the verification of legal presence for those who receive state and municipal benefits. To this end, Richardson's office has sent out requests for this verification to the more than 3,000 disabled veterans who qualify for the property tax break in Salt Lake County.

This form, Schow said, has led some vets to believe if they didn't provide adequate documentation, they would lose their tax break.

Council Chairman Joe Hatch peppered Richardson with questions on this policy, particularly to why those who had served, and been wounded, in service to the country where now being asked to verify their legality.

"They fought for this country and they have the right to be here," Hatch said. "Don't they?"

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Northern Utah Veterans

Home on Schedule

By Dennis McFall, Deputy Director

The highly anticipated and much needed Utah State Veterans Nursing Home currently under construction in Ogden, Utah is right on schedule. This 120 bed Skilled Nursing Care facility will be ready to accept residents in November of this year, barring any unforeseen difficulty or delay, and will be a welcome addition to Utah's health care community.

A waiting list is currently being compiled and veterans, or family members, are encouraged to contact the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs and complete some preliminary information for any veteran for whom long term care services may be needed. In nearly all admissions the VA will pay for approximately one half the cost of care provided to the veteran. In some instances the entire cost of the residents care will be paid, specifically for those veterans with a disability rating of 70% or greater.

Admissions will be processed on a first come first served basis, with priority given to those veterans who reside in the northern Utah counties. Although the facility is open to all Utah veterans it is anticipated the need for long term care for those in the northern portion of the state will fill the facility in just a few months. We encourage you to investigate potential admission now,

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New GI Bill Overview

By Bob Welch, State Approving Agency

The new GI Bill (Chapter 33) offers the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill was signed into law at the end of World War II.

The new bill goes well beyond helping to pay for tuition; many veterans who served after 9 / 11 / 01 will have tuition and fees paid for, a new monthly housing allowance, and a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies. The new bill also gives Reserve and National Guard members who have been activated for more than 90 days since 9/11 access to the same GI Bill benefits.

The following is what is known at this juncture (21 July 2008) about the Post 9 / 11 GI Bill.

BENEFITS START DATE

This new GI Bill is set to go into effect on 01 August 2009. However, as with any new legislation, it may take some time for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to begin paying benefits.

(Note: Benefits will not be paid for any training or education programs completed before 31 July 2009.)

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE NEW GI BILL

An individual who has served a total of at least 90 days on active duty in the Armed Forces is eligible. However, the amount of benefits he or she will receive under this program is determined by the actual amount of accumulated post 9 / 11 service.

To be eligible for the **full benefit**, one must have three years of active duty service after 9 / 11 or have been discharged due to a service-connected disability.

Officers who graduated from a service academy or received ROTC scholarships also qualify for the new GI Bill benefits. However, the ROTC/service academy associated obligated active-duty service time does not count toward the three years necessary to qualify for the full benefits.

(Note: It is not necessary to have opted for the Montgomery GI Bill "buy-in" to be eligible for this program.)

NEW GI BILL PAYMENT RATES

The Post 9 / 11 GI Bill will provide up to 100% of tuition. In addition, the program provides a monthly housing stipend and a stipend of up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies. Less than full-time status will be a pro-rated portion of the payment based on the number of units of study.

The amount of tuition and stipends paid under the Post 9 / 11 GI Bill will vary depending on the state of residence, number of units taken, and amount of post 9 / 11 active-duty service. Following is a preliminary quick-reference showing the percentage of total combined benefit eligibility based upon the periods of post 9 / 11 service:

36 or more total months	100%
30 or more consecutive days	
w/ disability-related discharge	100%
30 total months	90%
24 total months	80%
18 total months	70%
12 total months	60%
6 total months	50%
90 or more consecutive days	40%

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Medal of Honor Winner Drops in on Salt Lake City Patients

By VASLCHS

He is picture of humility and honor as he marches through the front doors of the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center in his dress blues. SFC Sammy Davis's mission is clear: reach out to as many Salt Lake City veterans as possible. He wants to shake their hands, look into their eyes and thank them for their service.

Sergeant Davis is one of only 97 Congressional Medal of Honor winners living today. Almost 42 years ago in the jungles of Viet Nam Davis forever changed the lives of the young men around him. It is because of his heroic actions that many of these men are alive today. On November 18th, 1967, Davis then just 21 years old, almost single handedly held back over a thousand Viet Kong from his remote fire support base. Sgt. Davis seized a machine gun and provided cover fire for his gun crew, as they attempted to bring direct artillery fire on the enemy. Despite his efforts, an enemy scored a direct hit on the artillery piece. The blast hurled the gun crew from their weapon and blew Sgt. Davis into a foxhole. He struggled to his feet and returned to the burning howitzer disregarding a hail of enemy fire and ignoring repeated warnings to seek cover. Sgt. Davis rammed another shell into the gun.

His first encounter in the lobby is with an OEF/OIF employee veteran who now suffers from Traumatic Brain Injury. The exchange was brief, but the bond instant. It's a bond only two combat veterans can understand. It's a bond that endures decades, even half centuries. It needs no explanation, and most of the time no words are necessary.

As he limps down the hall of 2 East, SFC Davis stops to talk to a cancer patient. The sparkle returns to the old veteran's eye. He touches the medal proudly displayed around SFC Davis's neck as they travel back in time and talk duties, rank and divisions.

Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division. It's 2 o'clock in the morning and another enemy mortar round just exploded within 20 meters of Sgt. Davis's position. Pain shoots through his body and schrapnel riddles

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SFC Davis visits patients at the George E. Wahlen Medical Center.

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Assistant Secretary Duckworth Honored at Women to Watch Awards

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

WASHINGTON - On May 5, the Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, L. Tammy Duckworth, was honored by Running Start at their annual Women to Watch Awards in Washington, DC. She spoke to a crowd of 300 young women at a ceremony at the National Press Club.

"We make our Nation stronger by supporting the 200,000 women currently serving in the armed forces and the approximately 1.7 million women Veterans in our country that need our help," Assistant Secretary L.

Tammy Duckworth said. "It's time to stop being surprised that America's daughters are fully capable of doing their jobs and fighting for our freedoms. I recognize that I am here today because I stand on the shoulders of the

men and women who opened the doors for women to serve."

Running Start is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring young women to run for political office. It offers high school and college women the unique opportunity to hear from today's leaders. By educating young women about the importance of politics and giving them the skills they need to become leaders, they give them the running start they need to reach their aspirations.

Assistant Secretary Duckworth was introduced by State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia from the state of Illinois. She was recognized as a "Woman to Watch" by Running Start along with Erin Issabelle Burnett, CNBC Television Anchor; Betsy Fischer, Executive Producer of Meet the Press; Julie Gilbert, Founder and CEO of Wolf Means Business; and Mona Sutphen, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Obama Administration.

VA Reopening Health Care Enrollment to Thousands of Veterans

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which now has nearly 8 million Veterans enrolled in its award-winning health care system, is poised to welcome nearly 266,000 more Veterans into its medical centers and clinics across the country by expanding access to health care enrollment for certain Veterans who had been excluded due to their income.

"This incremental approach to expanding enrollment ensures that access to VA health care for a greater number of beneficiaries does not sacrifice timely access or quality medical care for those Veterans already enrolled in VA's health care system," Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health, said. "Over the next four years, we hope to provide enrollment to more than 500,000 Veterans."

Under a new regulation effective June 15, VA will enroll Veterans whose income exceeds current means-tested thresholds by up to 10 percent. These Veterans were excluded from VA health care enrollment when income limits were imposed in 2003 on Veterans with no service-connected disabilities or other

special eligibility for care. There is no income limit for Veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities or for Veterans being seen for their service-connected disabilities.

Veterans who have applied for VA health care but were rejected due to income at any point in 2009 will have their applications reconsidered under the new income threshold formula. Those who applied before 2009, but were rejected due to income, must reapply. VA will contact these Veterans through a direct-mail campaign, Veterans service organizations, and a national and regional marketing campaign.

Information about enrollment and an income and assets calculator are available at www.va.gov/healtheligibility. The calculator provides a format in which Veterans enter their household income, number of dependents, and zip codes to see if they may qualify for VA health care enrollment.

In addition to applying online, Veterans may also contact VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222 VETS (1-877-222-8387). Each VA medical center across the country has an enrollment coordinator available to provide Veterans with enrollment and eligibility information.

Secretary Shinseki Announces \$215 Million in Projects for Rural Veterans

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided \$215 million in competitive funding to improve services specifically designed for Veterans in rural and highly rural areas.

"This funding signals a substantial expansion of services addressing the health care needs of our rural Veterans," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki said. "These funds will allow VA to establish new outpatient clinics, expand collaborations with federal and community partners, accelerate the use of telemedicine deployment, explore innovative uses of technology, and fund innovative pilot programs."

The selection process was competitive and transparent. Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), VA's regional health care networks, and Veterans Health Administration Program Offices were allowed to submit up to eight proposed projects each. These proposals were prioritized and then sent to the Office of Rural Health (ORH), where they were evaluated based on, methodology, feasibility and intended impact on rural Veterans.

After careful review, ORH selected 74 programs, many of which were either national in scope or affected multiple states. Program offices validated these proposals to ensure that projects and programs were consistent with the VA mission, strategic direction, program standards, and did not duplicate existing efforts.

The new funding is part of an ambitious VA program to improve access and quality of health care – both physical and mental - for Veterans in geographically rural areas, with an emphasis on the use of the latest technologies, recruitment and retention of a well-educated and trained health care workforce, and collaborations with non-VA rural health community partners.

To address the unique issues facing rural Veterans, the Department created an Office of Rural Health in February 2007. In the past two years, VA formed a 16-member national committee to advise on issues affecting rural veterans, opened three Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers to study rural Veteran issues, rolled out four new mobile health clinics to serve 24 predominately rural counties, announced 10 new rural outreach clinics to be opened in 2009.

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Utahns in Iraq: Faces From the Front

The **Fort Douglas Military Museum** is opening a new exhibit on April 18, 2009. It will feature photographs by **Rick Egan** who, as a *Salt Lake Tribune* photographer, was embedded with Utah troops deployed to Afghanistan recently. The exhibit also includes narrative and artifacts from the men and women who have been actively involved in OPERATION FREEDOM as well as the people of Afghanistan and Iraq.

See the faces of your family, neighbors and friends as they meet this struggle in conditions and situations that cannot be imagined

Consumer Protection joins Federal Trade Commission “Operation False Charity”

From the Utah Department of Commerce, Consumer Protection Division

Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Division of Consumer Protection is participating in a federal-state crackdown on fraudulent charitable fundraisers and charities claiming to help police, firefighters, and veterans. The Division joined the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Attorneys General, Secretaries of State, 48 states and the District of Columbia today to launch “Operation False Charity.” Federal and state enforcers announced 76 actions against 32 fund raising companies, 31 individuals and 22 non-profits or those who claimed to be non-profits in order to solicit funds. While Utah does not have any pending enforcement actions against these types of charitable organizations and fundraisers, the Division of Consumer Protection’s aim is to help educate consumers by focusing on this type of fraud through “Operation False Charity”.

“Charity fraud is often a silent scam where consumers hear a pitch, send a check and never really know what happens to their money,” said Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, “We want Utah consumers to protect their hard earned money from charities who cheat to ensure their donations are really helping those in need.”

The following tips will help consumers ensure their donations go to a legitimate charity;

1. Recognize that the words “veterans” or “military families” in an organization’s name don’t necessarily mean that veterans or the families of active-duty personnel will benefit from your donation.
2. Donate to charities with a track record and a history. Charities that spring up overnight may disappear just as quickly.
3. If you have any doubt about whether you’ve made a pledge or a contribution, check your records. If you don’t remember making the donation or pledge, resist the pressure to give.
4. Check out an organization before donating. Some phony charities use names, seals and logos that look or sound like those of respected, legitimate organizations.
5. Call the Utah Division of Consumer Protection at (801) 530-6601 to see whether the charity or fundraising organization has to be registered in Utah.
6. Do not send or give cash donations. For security and tax record purposes, it’s best to pay by check made payable to the charity.
7. Ask for a receipt showing the amount of your contribution.
8. Be wary of promises of guaranteed sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution. You never have to give a donation to be eligible to win a sweepstakes.

VA Film Aims to Help Veteran’s and Families Cope with Post-Deployment Issues

By Ashley Gober

The Utah Department of Veterans Affairs is filming a video in an effort to educate veterans and their families about current post-deployment issues and how they can prepare themselves for those problems. Written and directed by Darin Farr, the video is called “Transmission in Transition” and is broken into three parts. The first part focuses on the symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how that affects a veteran. The second part focuses on the experiences female veterans experience as well as the frustration of unemployment which a lot of veterans face when they get home. Finally, the third part is about Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and the difficulties veteran’s face when they suffer with TBI.

Obviously, these issues affect more than just the veterans themselves. These problems also put a strain on the family and friends of veterans and it is often difficult for them to understand what the veteran is going through or how they can help.

Recognizing the issues that are arising post-deployment and witnessing the strain it puts on families, the VA is hoping to use this video to help combat these problems as well as prevent some of the frustrations that arise with them. The video will be released on July 15, 2009. 1,000 copies will be made available to any veteran or family member who requests them. For more information or to request a copy of the film, call Darin Farr at 1-800-894-9497 or (801) 326-2372.

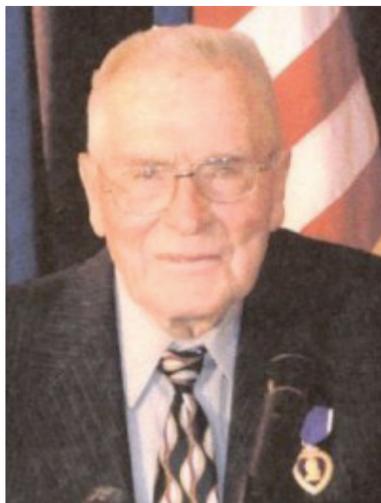
WWII POW Veteran Passes Away a Year After Receiving Purple Heart

By Ashley Gober

While fighting in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, Clinton Sagers was hit in the knee with shrapnel before being taken prisoner by the German Army. After 10 months in prison he was released and sent back to the United States, only to be told that he was unable to receive the Purple Heart because there was not enough evidence that his wound was “a direct result of enemy action.” It would be 64 years before he would be awarded the Purple Heart for his sacrifice.

In 2000, Sagers was invited to attend the Freedom Festival Parade and ride on the Utah’s Formers Prisoners float. In 2007, he was the Grand Marshall for Murray City’s Veteran’s Day Parade. Finally, in 2008, he was awarded the Purple Heart. After the ceremony he expressed how much this day meant to him. His only regret was that his wife was no longer alive to celebrate the moment with him and his family.

On Sunday, July 5, 2009, just one year after finally being rewarded for his actions, Clinton Sager passed away peacefully in his home in St. John, Utah. He was a man who continually gave back to others, a man who loved horses, and a man who will be missed.



Clinton Sagers



Darin Farr and his team filming at Camp Williams.

Photo By Milo Quiroz

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VA Working to Help Veterans Prevent Homelessness

By HVAC Chairman Filner

On June 3, 2009, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Filner conducted a hearing to address America's commitment to end veterans' homelessness. The hearing focused on four specific programs operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Grant and Per Diem, outreach to veterans, Special Needs Grants, and prevention efforts. According to recent VA reports, approximately one-third of the adult homeless population served in the Armed Services. Population estimates also suggest that about 131,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year. Male and female veterans continue to be over-represented in the general homeless population. Specifically, male veterans were 1.4 times as likely to be homeless as male nonveterans while female veterans were between two and four times as likely to be homeless as their nonveteran female counterparts. Studies have shown an indirect connection between combat exposure and homelessness.

"Most of the VA's existing programs are targeted to veterans who are currently homeless, by providing employment opportunities and housing assistance to help prevent repeat episodes of homelessness," said Chairman Filner. "There is an urgent and immediate need to address homeless prevention, target high risk veterans with early intervention programs, and provide on-going evaluation and support. We need to strengthen our efforts nationally to prevent our heroes from becoming homeless in the first place."

VA's largest program involving local communities is the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program. GPD was authorized in 1992 to provide grants and per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate supportive transitional housing and service centers. Eligible grantees are those who operate programs with supportive housing (up to 24 months) or service centers which offer such services as case management, education, crisis intervention, counseling, and services targeted towards specialized populations including homeless women veterans.

Today, VA partners with more than 500 community organizations and has authorized 15,000 beds through the GPD program. Witnesses discussed the need to increase the annual authorization for the GPD program in order to increase the number of beds available for veterans as well as to enhance the supportive services offered. Service providers also reported that the current mechanism used to determine the per diem amount is outdated and inequitable. The current per diem rate is \$34.40 per veteran per day. This number is

significantly insufficient and does not take into account regional cost issues. Also, per diem payments are made months after the services are provided, which creates a financial strain for the non-profit and community organizations providing services.

In the area of prevention, VA works with other Federal agencies to prevent repeat episodes of homelessness. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides Section 8 vouchers for homeless veterans with severe psychiatric or substance abuse disorders to rent apartments in the private rental market while the VA medical centers provide case management and clinical services. Since 1992, the HUD VA Supported Housing (HUD VASH) program has received funding for about 1,753 Section 8 vouchers.

The Department of Labor also operates the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) to help veterans gain meaningful employment and to help develop a service delivery system to address the problems facing homeless veterans. In 2006, HVRP grantees served a total of 13,346 homeless veterans, of whom 8,713, or 65%, were placed in employment.

Finally, the 2009 Appropriations Act provided \$10 million for HUD to conduct a demonstration program on preventing homelessness in coordination with the VA and DOL. The demonstration project will provide housing and services to prevent homelessness or reduce the length of time veterans are homeless. Up to three of the pilot sites will have a high number of service members separating from military service and up to four of the sites will be located in rural areas with veterans who served in the National Guard.

To improve VA's effectiveness are partnering with the University of Pennsylvania and the University of South Florida to create the first Center that will give the research capacity to improve programs and become more effective in the future. The new Center will allow VA to use much of the data systems within VA and across the country to improve VA and community service providers' effectiveness in reaching out, treating and improving long term discharge outcomes of the Veterans we serve. Filner concluded: "There remains an unknown number of veterans who are considered near homeless or at risk for homelessness because of poverty and lack of support from family and friends. An increasing number of veterans of Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq are falling into this category and we must be vigilant in providing support to this population. I am heartened by President Obama's zero tolerance policy for homelessness among veterans. We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude - and it will take a bold national commitment to make sure that the words 'homeless' and 'veterans' never appear in the same sentence again."

New website assists in finding federal employment

The Military Order of the Purple Heart launched a new website at www.VetJobs.net to assist Veterans in obtaining Federal employment. TheVetsJobs website offers a video, "How to Get a Federal Job," that walks Veterans through the process of applying for federal employment. The site also includes links to USAJOBS, the official website for federal jobs, the Department of Labor and the Office of Personnel Management. For more information, visit the www.VetJobs.net website.

Veterans Nursing Home: Continued from page 1



Artistic rendering of future George E. Wahlen Ogden Veteran Home.

rather than later, to avoid disappointment. The Salt Lake Veterans Nursing Home for example has a waiting list, as of June 30th, of one hundred eighty nine (189) persons. The Salt Lake facility is an 81 bed unit as opposed to the 120 beds being built in Ogden. However, we already have a waiting list for the Ogden nursing home in excess of seventy (70) persons, so it is not difficult to see the potential for this location to completely fill in a relatively short period of time. Some veterans who reside in the northern part of the state, and who are on the Salt Lake waiting list, will be given the opportunity for admission to the Ogden home.

Support by all citizens in the northern communities, not just veterans, has been overwhelming. Numerous opportunities still await those individuals and groups, businesses, and organizations that would like to be a permanent part of this tribute to our veterans. We currently have eleven (11) donors who have contributed to furnish a room at a cost of \$3500, and others who have contributed various amounts that can be used for additional or upgraded furnishings. Some other ideas however could include contributing one or more big screen TVs for each of the five community areas in the facility, computers for the resident's use, perhaps a billiards table, audio-visual equipment, art work and various display pieces, exercise equipment such as treadmills, elliptical machines, etc. These are all items that are not included in the regular construction budget but that do contribute greatly to the overall quality of life for the resident.

This state of the art, \$19.7 million dollar building will be paid for with state funds (35%) and federal VA grant funds (65%) but will be entirely owned by the citizens of Utah. Additional facilities are planned for the southern portion of the state and in Utah county, sites for both yet to be determined. Both of these buildings will consist of 100 beds and will be similar to the Ogden nursing home, utilizing design that closely mimics the home like atmosphere that is relaxing and inviting. Nursing homes are no longer designed with long sterile hallways, but now incorporate the VA's Transformation of Culture guidelines which highlight enhanced privacy for all residents.

If you have questions about the facility or would like to find out more about how you or your group or business can contribute to this beautiful facility please contact the Utah Department of Veterans' Affairs at 801-326-2372 or e-mail the Project Director, Dennis McFall at dmcfall@utah.gov with questions or comments. Please plan to attend the dedication and opening ceremonies in November, exact time and date to be announced in this publication as well as in local newspapers.

“Blue Water” Claims Up Before Congress Once Again

By William R. Levesque, St. Petersburg Times

A bill in Congress provides a seemingly straightforward answer to a question that has vexed tens of thousands of Americans who served in the U.S. military. Who is a Vietnam veteran? The answer is vitally important to Navy personnel who served in Vietnam’s territorial waters. For now, the Department of Veterans Affairs’ definition of a Vietnam veteran does not include these men and women. Legislation introduced in the House would change that, clearing the way for Navy veterans to get disability payments and free health care for ailments linked to the herbicide Agent Orange, from type II diabetes to a variety of cancers. At stake: \$3 billion in benefits. The VA says the pool of veterans who would become eligible for benefits under the bill is 800,000, a number critics accuse the VA of exaggerating to inflate costs that may scare Congress. Before 2002, sailors with the Vietnam Service Medal — given to those who served in the theater of war on land or sea — automatically got benefits, whether they were ground troops or in the Navy. But the VA, which did not return repeated calls for comment, changed its policy in 2002, saying common sense dictated that Agent Orange was used on land alone and therefore couldn’t harm Navy personnel.

Bart Stitchman, co-director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, said the VA simply changed its definition of who was

eligible without notice. The VA is required to advertise any rule change impacting benefits in the Federal Register, allowing a period of public comment before making a change. The VA, Stitchman said, violated federal law by ignoring that requirement. In a 2005 article in the Journal of Law and Policy, Dr. Mark Brown, director of Environmental Agents Service at the VA, made a surprising admission: Science did not back up the VA’s policy on the Navy. Calling Navy veterans “non-Vietnam veterans,” reflecting the VA’s policy that sailors don’t qualify, he wrote, “There is no obvious scientific or public health basis for excluding these non-Vietnam War veterans” from the presumption that their illnesses are caused by Agent Orange. To address that “apparent inequity,” Brown wrote, the VA paid benefits to those Navy veterans who could prove they were exposed to Agent Orange, which ground troops need not do. But proving exposure 40 years after the fact is often an impossible hurdle, Navy veterans say.

In 2004, a Navy veteran appealed the VA’s denial of his Agent Orange claim in a veterans court set up to handle appeals of VA cases. The case became a precedent-setter. In 2006, that court ruled in favor of the veteran, saying the VA’s exclusion of Navy veterans was too restrictive. But last year, the VA won the case on appeal to a higher court, which decided its rules on Agent Orange were reasonable. The VA then changed its rules one more time,

closing another avenue for Navy veterans seeking benefits. After long holding that Navy veterans who served on inland waterways, like harbors and rivers, could get benefits, the VA decided a harbor did not qualify. The VA has argued it was not the intent of Congress to include the Navy when it adopted a law in 1991 providing compensation for Agent Orange. Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, has introduced the Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009 (H.R.2254) to include Navy veterans. He has more than 40 co-sponsors.

“These guys have suffered long enough,” Filner said. “It’s going to cost money. But that’s the cost of going to war. We’re spending trillions bailing out everybody else. Let’s bail out Vietnam veterans.” The chances for passage are uncertain. Filner said lawmakers may be reluctant to add costs to the federal budget in an economic crisis. A similar bill introduced last year failed.

In the interim on May 30 the Texas House and Senate passed the Restore Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases to “Blue Water” Navy Veterans [SCR 38] memorializing Congress to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to veterans who served on the inland waterways, territorial waters, and in the airspace of the Republic of Vietnam. This is not a law as such. The Texas Legislature is telling the U.S. Congress that Texas wants the US Congress to force the VA to recognize Agent Orange as a medically causal chemical for Navy personnel who were in the theater of Viet Nam.

President Barack Obama Signs Sarbanes Vet Corps Legislation into Law

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

Washington, D.C. - Today, President Obama signed into law H.R. 1388, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which incorporated a bill authored by Congressman John Sarbanes. The Serve America Act will reauthorize our national service programs and create a new program developed by Sarbanes—the Veterans Engaged for Tomorrow (VET) Corps.

Sarbanes co-authored the VET Corps Act (H.R. 1401) with Congressman Phil Hare (D-IL) to establish a service corps of veterans dedicated to serving other veterans and the greater community. The mission of VET Corps is to provide veterans with a new means to serve their country; put veterans back to work and help train them for a civilian career; and provide services for disabled or older veterans, as well as the greater public.

“Vet Corps provides veterans an opportunity to continue their tremendous service to our nation,” said Congressman Sarbanes. “It will also help mitigate the disproportionately high levels of unemployment in the veteran population while providing disabled or older veterans with tangible benefits. It is only natural that veterans would be the first to answer President Obama’s call to community service. Vet Corps will allow them to participate in a meaningful way and help smooth their transition back to civilian life.”

“No one understands the challenges facing our veterans better than those who have walked in the very same shoes,” Hare said. “Across the country, vet to vet programs have been extremely successful. I am hopeful that the creation of a Veterans’ Corps can help us improve even more lives.”

Congressman Sarbanes attended the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act signing ceremony where the president signed the legislation into law.

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Joel Ban V.A. Accredited Attorney
801-532-2447 joel.ban@gmail.com

Easier Paths to Benefits: Continued from page 1

Deputy District Attorney Dahnelle Burton-Lee said Richardson's efforts to comply with SB81 were not unreasonable.

"Larry was caught between a rock and a hard place this year because of the statute requirements," Burton-Lee said.

To ease the documentation required of vets, the council voted to acknowledge that those who had received benefits in the past could reasonably be recognized as legally present and stipulated that, in records that might indicate different percentages of disability, the highest number be used to calculate a tax benefit. They also specified that a vet designated as "individually unemployable" by the VA automatically be granted the maximum benefit, even if his or her rating was below the 100 percent level.

After the meeting, Schow said he was happy with the council action.

"We're very encouraged by the council's decision," Schow said. "We shouldn't be making disabled veterans fight for these benefits after they have fought ... and sacrificed for our country."

Medal of Honor Winner Continued from page 2

his legs. Nevertheless, Sgt. Davis continued to aim and fire. He's knocked down by the enormous gun's recoil. In complete disregard for his safety, Sgt. Davis loaded and fired 3 more shells into the enemy. It was then Sgt. Davis made another decision. He picked up an air mattress and struck out across the deep river to rescue 3 wounded comrades on the far side. He went back and forth twice. Sgt. Davis didn't know how to swim.

During his brief visit SFC Davis wants no special treatment, he just wants to spend time with the men he served with decades ago. Sometimes they talk war stories, other times they just shoot the breeze about a bum knee or nothing in particular at all. Some of these patients have never recovered mentally or physically from the war, but today none of that seems to matter. A true American treasure is in our presence. Before Sammy left, one patient asked "Where do guys like you come from?" He answered: "We're just like everyone else. We're your neighbors."

**VETERANS:
Need Help? Have Questions?
Contact a benefits advisor at the
Utah Department of Veterans Affairs**

**1-800-894-9497
(801) 326-2372
veterans@utah.gov**

**Not in Salt Lake?
We send representatives all across
the state to assist Veterans in filing for
and understanding their benefits.
For a schedule visit
www.veterans.utah.gov**

Mr. Steven W. Young appointed as the VASLCHCS Director

Official VASLCHS Press Release



After an extensive interview process and months of wondering just who it would be, it's official the VA Salt Lake City Healthcare System has a new director. His name is Steve Young and he is already on board as of June 29th. Steve is a family man with two children and is excited to serve veterans as part of our Salt Lake City Team.

Steve was the Deputy Network Director of the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network, where he served as chief operating officer for a health care delivery system consisting of eight hospitals, eight multi-specialty outpatient clinics, 41 community-based clinics, eight nursing homes, and two domiciliaries throughout Florida, Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands. From September 2008 to February 2009, he served as Acting Medical Center Director of the VA Medical Center, Northport, New York. In this role he had executive responsibility for a 356 bed medical center providing health care to over 33,000 veterans on Long Island, New York.

Mr. Young is a native of Iowa. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Iowa, and a Master's Degree in Public Services Management from DePaul University.

Mr. Young is board certified in health care leadership and a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. He is a graduate of Leadership VA and VHA's Health Care Leadership Institute.

The George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center is hosting a welcome reception for Mr. Young on Monday July 13, 2009 at 11 a.m. in the Gem Court Garden.

"Tribute Tower" Planned for New Ogden Nursing Home

By Pauline Davies and Larry Dawson, Staff Reporters

Currently under construction, the "George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Nursing Home" in Ogden, Utah has a planned addition to honor the memory and sacrifices of our Veterans. A bell and clock tower called the "Veterans Tribute Tower" will be a reminder to "Take Time To Remember" and will stand as a physical and lasting tribute for those who have earned our commitment and gratitude for their many sacrifices.

The Wahlen Nursing Home is slated for completion in late November 2009. The "Tribute Tower" will be erected as soon as the funds can be raised. It is anticipated that the cost for the tower will be around \$320,000 and is not part of the already funded Nursing Home.

The Tower will be fabricated by The Verdin Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio as part of their efforts to erect 100 of these towers across America. Only two of these are already completed. They are in Rising Sun, Indiana and North Miami, Florida.

The Tower itself will be constructed in Ohio and transported to Ogden via truck. When it arrives onsite at the Wahlen Nursing Home grounds, the community will invited to participate in a two-day, hands-on celebration as the Verdin Company provides the nation's only mobile foundry for melting, pouring, and polishing a 250-pound bronze bell. National, state, and local dignitaries as well as veterans' organizations and the general public will be on-hand to hang dedicate and ring the bell for the first time. The Tower will be 30 feet high and have four 3-foot diameter clocks, a chamber carillon that will house the custom-cast bell that will be 24-inches in diameter.

In order to pay for them Veterans Tribute Tower, donations are being sought. One of the most innovative attempts to raise the needed funds is the purchasing of memorial bricks that will be a permanent part of the plaza in which the Tower will be placed. These paving bricks will be a "memorial" type that will be

Continued on page 11

Matheson Announces Economic Recovery Funds for Utah Military Facilities

Washington, D.C.-Congressman Jim Matheson said the Department of Defense is releasing more than \$10.7 million for improvements at Dugway Proving Ground and the Tooele Army Depot. The funding is part of Utah's share of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - HR 1-that was signed into law in February.

"This money will help with a backlog of maintenance projects such as outmoded power generating equipment and dilapidated buildings," said Matheson. "Utah's defense employees deserve to have a safe and modern workplace as they perform the important job of keeping our country safe."

Matheson said the largest expenditure - \$7.5 million-- is to repair the power plant and to replace failed generators at Dugway Proving Ground.

Other funds will be used there to re-roof the Provost Marshall Office, upgrade the electrical service at the main gate and construct a Mobile Command Post garage. Tooele Army Depot will receive \$265,000 for road repair.

Matheson said the latest announcement follows news of the release of money to Utah for highway, road and bridge construction and repair, for Utah law enforcement agencies, for community health clinics in rural Utah and for public lands agencies who have "shovel-ready" projects in the National Forests and National Parks within Utah.

Veteran's Service Organizations

American Legion (801) 326-2380
Disabled American Veterans (801)326-2375
Mil. Order of the Purple Heart (801)326-2471
Veterans of Foreign Wars (801)326-2385

Assistant Secretary Duckworth Honored with Women of Distinction Award

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

WASHINGTON - On June 5, 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs L. Tammy Duckworth was honored by AAUW/NASPA along with four other women at the University of Maryland, College Park. She accepted the Women of Distinction Award during the 2009 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders.

"Today, we have women serving in combat and being recognized for their valor and fierceness in battle. And when they return home, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki are committed to improving the care that our brave warriors receive," Assistant Secretary L. Tammy Duckworth said. "I am honored to be here today in the company of such accomplished and talented women."

Since 1985, the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders has provided a platform to help thousands of college and university women to develop leadership skills, network with other student leaders, and interact with women who hold leadership positions. The 2009 National Conference

for College Women Student Leaders, June 4-6, is expected to draw more than 300 campus leaders to the University of Maryland, College Park. The conference is hosted by the AAUW Leadership and Training Institute and the NASPA Center for Scholarship, Research, and Professional Development for Women. AAUW is among the world's leaders in philanthropic support for women's higher education and is committed to ending the underrepresentation of women and girls in leadership and key professional positions. NASPA, the leading voice for student affairs administration, policy, and practice, affirms the commitment of student affairs to educating the whole student and integrating student life and learning.

This year's Women of Distinction awardees also include Diane Rehm, host of The Diane Rehm Show; Anucha Browne Sanders, senior associate athletic director of marketing at the University at Buffalo; Martine Rothblatt, founder of United Therapeutics; and Melissa Poe Hood, founder of Kids for a Clean Environment. Nontombi Naomi Tutu, daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, will give Saturday's keynote address.

Important Phone Numbers

Utah Dept. of Veterans Affairs:
(801) 326-2372

1-800-894-9497

VA Regional Office:

1-800-827-1000

VA Medical Center:

1-800-613-4012

(801) 582-1565

Transition Assistance:

(801) 523-4937

Veterans Cemetery:

(801) 254-9036

Veterans Nursing Home:

(801) 584-1900

ID May Need to be Provided in Order to Help Prevent Medical Identity Theft

By Kim Lamb Gregory, The Ventura County Star

Unless the Federal Trade Commission adjusts its "Red Flags Rule," patients will have to show proof of identity when visiting the doctor's office beginning August 1. The rule will also affect dentists and other professionals who extend credit to clients. The idea behind the rule is to cut down on identity theft, including medical identity theft. According to World Privacy Forum, a nonprofit public interest research group, the FTC received about 19,500 reports of medical ID theft from January 1992 to April 2006 — its most recent data. About one in every four of these reports occurred in 2006 alone. "Medical identity theft is the fastest-growing form of ID theft," said James Quiggle, spokesman for the nonprofit watchdog group Coalition Against Insurance Fraud. "The biggest problem is with organized gangs stealing lists with sensitive patient data from clinics and other medical facilities." Quiggle said employees with access to patient databases are selling patient information on the black market. The buyer uses the information to get prescriptions or file for insurance, Quiggle said.

To cut down on this and other forms of identity theft, Congress passed the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act in 2003. The measure directed regulatory agencies, including the FTC, to draft rules for creditors. Last fall, the FTC implemented the "Red Flags Rule," which requires creditors — including doctors and other professionals who extend credit — to get a valid ID from clients. The rule was scheduled to go into effect November 1. Members of the American Medical Association felt

broadsided by the rule, so they lobbied and succeeded in getting the deadline pushed to May 1, 2009. The American Dental Association also protested. "The FTC gave organized medicine no warning about the Red Flags Rule, and consequently there was no participation by doctors when the rule was being considered and crafted," said Long Do, director of litigation for the California Medical Association. Just before the May 1 deadline, the FTC agreed to again delay the deadline to August 1. FTC chairman Jon Leibowitz in a news release said, "Given the ongoing debate about whether Congress wrote this provision too broadly, delaying enforcement of the Red Flags Rule will allow industries and associations to share guidance with their members," said .

Los Robles Regional Medical Center chief of staff Dr. Hannah Grossman said she hadn't heard of the new rule. But when it was described to her, Grossman had concerns. "One of the concerns would be the individual who did not have government ID," Grossman said. "We would never want to turn away a patient because of lack of photo ID." Homeless, elderly and undocumented immigrants all might fall into this category, Do noted. "The question is, are doctors supposed to start policing immigration laws when their primary responsibility is to take care of patients?" he said. And at a time when the healthcare organizations are straining under budgetary problems, the rules add one more layer of red tape that might require hiring someone to handle the paperwork, said Dr. Ardis Hoven, with the board of trustees of the American Medical Association. Linda

Foley, founder of San Diego-based Identity Theft Resource Center, said any administrative costs incurred by asking patients to show a photo ID are reasonable. "In the long run, you're going to have to absorb less loss due to fraud. You will save money," she said.

Medical professionals are not the only ones affected. Attorney Joanna Smith, of the offices of Meyers Nave in Sacramento, specializes in identity theft issues. Although attorneys are not always paid in full, they were not the ones targeted by the rules, she said. But because of the broad way the rule was written, attorneys could be affected. Smith said that when she contacted FTC lawyers for clarification, they seemed surprised at how many services their definition encompassed and seemed receptive to change. "They really do have an interest in making it flexible," Smith said.

Upcoming Events

August 5-8

Weber County Fair
Veterans Info Booth

September 10-20

Utah State Fair
Utah Department of
Veterans Affairs Info Booth

September 19

Governor's Day
Welcome to Your VA Event

New GI Bill Overview: Continued from page 2

TUITION RATES

The new GI Bill will pay for tuition up to the highest established charges for full-time undergraduate students charged by the public institution of higher education in the respective States.

(Note: An added feature of this tuition payment plan is that the tuition will be paid directly to the school. This is similar to the process used for military tuition assistance, vocational rehabilitation, etc.)

Based on 2008 in-state tuition rates, the anticipated annual tuition payment rate for 2009 will average somewhere around \$6,000. (The lowest state is Wyoming at approximately \$3,500 a year, and the highest is Michigan at approximately \$13,000 a year.)

MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND

Veterans enrolled in a traditional college program as full time or three-quarter time students will be paid a monthly housing stipend equal to the monthly amount of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents. Thus, the average housing stipend will be approximately \$1,000 a month.

(Note: Distance learning programs such as correspondence and online courses do qualify for this stipend, but at a modified rate.)

BOOK AND SUPPLY STIPEND

Student veterans will receive a lump sum payment the first month of each quarter, semester, or term to help cover the cost of books, supplies, equipment, and other educational fees for that academic term. The payment amount will be equal to either a one quarter or one half of the annual \$1,000 cap for that academic year, depending upon how the academic year is divided — quarter or semester terms.

BENEFITS EXPIRATION DATE

Unlike the Montgomery GI Bill, the new GI Bill allows veterans to use this benefit for up to 15 years after their last discharge or separation from active duty.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION PAYMENTS

This new GI Bill will provide up to \$2,000 to cover the cost of one licensing or certification test. This benefit is not charged against the 36-month entitlement.

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

Like the Montgomery GI Bill, the new GI Bill will provide up to a maximum of \$1,200 for tutorial assistance. The program will pay up to \$100 per month, for a maximum of 12 months. This benefit is not charged against the 36-month entitlement.

BENEFIT TRANSFERABILITY

One of the most significant enhancements of the new GI Bill is that veterans who have served at least 10 years on active duty will be able to transfer their benefits to a spouse or dependent child. Spouses of active duty servicemembers who have served at least six years and agree to another four-year contract can receive the money even sooner.

(Note: The transferred benefit will cover the cost of tuition only.)

Benefits may be divided as long as they do not exceed 36 months of college classes. For example, a retired soldier can use half of the benefits to pay for a two-year degree program, then transfer the remaining half to a spouse or child.

College-age children of long-serving veterans could get a free college education starting in Fall 2009, provided they attend a state-supported school.

EFFECTS ON EXISTING GI BILL BENEFITS

Veterans already enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill and who meet the criteria for the Post 9 / 11 GI Bill have the option to transfer their remaining MGIB benefits to the new program.

For many veterans this will be a good option; for others, however, due to the tuition limits set by the new GI Bill, many who are pursuing a post-graduate degree may find the MGIB better suits their needs. This is also true for those pursuing an online degree, as this new benefit will not pay the housing stipend to students enrolled in such programs.

Service Officers

Service Officers visit each city twice a month. For times and dates of their visits, call 1-800-894-9497.

Beaver- 875 N Main
Blanding- 544 N 100 E
Brigham City- 1050 S Medical Drive Suite: A
Cedar City- 176 E 2nd N
Clearfield- 1290 E 1450 S
Delta- 44 S 350 E
Fillmore- 75 West Center
Kanab - 468 E 300 S
Logan- 180 N 100 W
Manti- 55 S Main
Midvale- 7292 S State Street
Moab- 457 Kane Creek Blvd
Nephi- 625 N Main
Ogden- 480 27th Street
Panguitch- 665 N Main
Price- 475 W Price River Drive
Provo- 1550 N 200 W
Richfield- 115 E 100 S
Roosevelt- 140 W 425 S
Salt Lake Metro- 720 S 200 E
St. George- 162 N 400 E
Tooele- 305 N Main Street
Vernal- 1050 W Market Drive
West Valley- 2750 S 5600 W

Schedules are subject to change at any time.

Service Officers will occasionally experience conflicts in scheduling due to unforeseen events and the Federal Dept. of VA scheduled hearings and conferences.

All questions regarding the schedule should be directed to the Utah State Division of Veterans' Affairs at 1-800-894-9497.

To schedule an appointment in or Moab or Blanding call 1-800-894-9497. All appointments must be made at least 2 working days prior.

Appointments are available at the VA Medical Center in Salt Lake and the Veterans Nursing Home. Contact the DAV at 326-2375 to schedule or 1-800-613-4012 ext 2003.

House Approves Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act

From the VA Office of Media Relations, Washington

Washington, DC – House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) delivered the following remarks during the consideration of H.R. 2990, the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act of 2009. The bill includes a one-year fix to relieve the disabled veterans tax by expanding concurrent receipt, which would make more disabled veterans eligible to receive both military retired pay and veterans disability compensation. H.R. 2990 was approved in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 404 to 0.

“Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2990, the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act of 2009. The disabled veterans tax has for decades prevented retirees from receiving the full benefits they have earned in military retired pay and veterans disability compensation.

“The one group of retirees that have endured

great hardship, but have been among the last to be embraced by reform, is the disabled retiree with less than 20 years of service. This group of retirees had been ignored by even the most reform-minded advocate until the Democratic Congress acted to include them in the Combat-Related Special Compensation program when the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 was adopted. And yet this group of retirees has perhaps the most compelling story to tell. Many of these service members were on track to serve a full military career but were blocked from serving 20 years because of their disabilities. It is this group of retirees that were disabled at younger ages and often with young families. As a result, they are often the most financially stressed.

“However, President Obama took a definitive step forward in support of disabled retirees with less than 20 years of service when he proposed legislation in his budget request for fiscal year 2010. The President’s proposal would phase in full

concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation for these deserving veterans over five years.

“We share the President’s view that our veterans and their families, and particularly disabled retirees with less than 20 years service, have made tremendous sacrifices for our country, and this bill moves us closer to fulfilling the President’s pledge and the Commitment of Congress to give disabled veterans full access to the benefits they deserve.

“While H.R. 2990 is an important step, we must recognize that it is an incremental step that reaches only the most severely disabled over the first year of the President’s phased implementation plan. Congress has been working to find a way to permanently eliminate the disabled veterans tax for many years, but fixing this entitlement program is an

Continued on page 11

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julieo@ranlife.com



96th Sustainment Bde USAR Iraq deployment July 8, 2009 at Ft. Douglas, Utah.

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

Special Fun Tag Policy Change

Beginning July 1, 2009, the Special Fun Tag Policy which allows qualified veterans day use access to most Utah state parks will be changing. Only those veterans who are legally blind or non-ambulatory may now receive a Special Fun Tag for free. Cardholders who received their Tags will have their cards grandfathered in. However, any applicants needing duplicate cards must meet the new criteria. If you have any questions or concerns you can contact Mark Forbes at (801) 538-7355 or markforbes@utah.gov.

George E. Wahlen: Continued from page 1

He continued to serve in the military by joining the Army in 1948. Serving in both the Korean and Vietnam wars, he became an officer before eventually retiring as a major in 1968 after being awarded with the Purple Heart.

His dedication and service did not stop there. He worked for the Veteran's Administration for the next 12 years where he lobbied for veteran rights. He played a key role in lobbying for the Veteran's Cemetery at Camp Williams and two veteran nursing homes. His impact was so immense that Congress unanimously agreed to allow the VA Medical Center to carry his name even though government buildings rarely carry the name of a living individual.

Through all of this, however, Wahlen remained a humble servant to veterans, one who didn't want the praise that he truly deserves. The Department of Veterans Affairs would like to thank him for his years of service and dedication. He will be truly missed.



George E. Wahlen



Flag is lowered to half-mast.

Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act: Continued from page 10

immensely difficult task. I am grateful to all of my House colleagues who have worked to find the budget offsets needed to provide this temporary fix for our veterans. As we pursue this legislation, we will continue to do all we can to honor our country's debt to our veterans and their families.

"I would note that H.R. 2990 also includes a number of valuable changes that enhance Federal civilian retirement benefits. In addition the bill extends expiring authorities concerning a wide array of bonuses and

special pays that are critical to military recruiting and retention.

"H.R. 2990 is a good bill and an important bill that supports the President's initiative regarding disabled retirees and fulfills the long-standing commitment of Congress to provide for the welfare of disabled veterans. There still remains much to be done to find a permanent solution and H.R. 2990 provides the framework for future action. Our veterans have never quit on America, and you can be certain that we will never quit on our veterans. I urge my colleagues to support the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act of 2009."

Tribute Tower: Continued from page 8

laser-inscribed and will bear information about Veterans who have served their country. The bricks are of two sizes, the smaller is \$100 and the larger is \$200. For more information about the brick program, contact the Utah Department of Veteran Affairs at 1-800-894-9497.



Artistic rendering of Tribute Tower

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

**2009 VAN SCHEDULE FOR
IDAHO, PRICE and
ST. GEORGE**

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

IDAHO: (208) 221-0362

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

July: 14, 16, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30
 August: 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27,
 31
 September: 2, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 22, 24,
 28, 30
 October: 2, 6, 8, 14, 16, 20, 22, 26, 28, 30

**2009 VAN SCHEDULE FOR
LOGAN, VERNAL, ELKO,
ELY, AFTON, ROCK SPRINGS**

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

LOGAN AND VERNAL:

1-800-613-4012
x2003

July: 13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31
 August: 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 24,
 26, 28
 September: 1, 3, 9, 11, 15, 17, 21,
 23, 25, 29
 October: 1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 19, 21,
 23, 27, 29

YOU CAN ALSO SEE A NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER FROM THE DAV AT THE VA MEDICAL CENTER ON AN APPOINTMENT ONLY BASIS. THESE REPRESENTATIVES ARE AT THE HOSPITAL TO ASSIST VETERANS WILL CLAIMS AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE VA BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND PENSION. PLEASE CALL 1-800-61-4013 EXT 2003 TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT.

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 UPTO DATE SCHEDULE, OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WORKFORCE SERVICES OFFICE FOR A DATE AND TIME A SERVICE OFFICER WILL BE AVAILABLE.