



Rep. Greg Hughes (R-Draper) speaks on the house floor. Hughes was the chief sponsor of HB 316 (Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption Amendments) which passed unanimously through both the House and the Senate.

“FREEDOM ISN’T FREE” BUT ASSISTANCE WITH VETERAN CLAIMS FOR BENEFITS IS

By Larry Dawson, Staff Writer

There have been reports about individuals employed by private companies who claim to help veterans and their dependents apply for VA benefits. Some of these individuals have targeted elderly claimants at assisted living facilities. They give claimants the impression that they are employed by VA.

The staff here at our offices have received inquiries or complaints about individuals that were paid by assisted living facilities to “represent” veterans and other claimants with their VA benefits. These individuals lead claimants and facilities to believe they have special knowledge of VA laws and can maximize claimants’ entitlement to VA benefits. Although these individuals work for private companies, they may have job titles that suggest a government connection, e.g., Veterans Benefits Analyst.

Representation before VA consists of actions associated with the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for a VA claimant. A claimant is a person who has filed or has expressed an intention to file a written application for benefits. Among other things, representation may include counseling on veterans benefits, gathering information necessary to file a claim for benefits, preparing claim forms, submitting claim information to VA, and communicating with VA on a claimant’s behalf.

Organizations and individuals that represent claimants for VA benefits are subject to specific statutory and regulatory requirements. Section 5901 of title 38, United States Code, provides, “no individual may act as an agent or attorney in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim under laws administered by the Secretary [of Veterans Affairs] unless such individual has been recognized for such purposes by the Secretary.” While VA can authorize an individual to prepare a benefit claim...

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EVEN DURING A TOUGH BUDGET YEAR, UTAH’S LEGISLATURE ADVOCATES FOR VETERANS

By Darin C. Farr, Editor

In what could only be described as a “daunting challenge”, legislators in Utah set about attempting to trim the state’s budget anywhere they could. Faced with shortfalls in revenue and the Governor’s desire to make 5% cuts across the board, Representatives and Senators from both parties were feeling the heat.

Not lost among the numerous groups who ask the legislature for help every year, were Veterans. Several key lawmakers were determined to make sure that even in a recession, veterans and their families weren’t going to be asked to wait for another year to address a few inadequacies.

First and foremost for Representative Greg Hughes (R-Draper) was to respond to various “unintended consequences” of the previous year’s approved legislation that were causing some glitches in the way that the Disabled Veterans Property Tax Abatement was being administered. Chief among the “unintended consequences” was that at least one County Treasurer was interpreting SB 081 (From the 2008 General session) to supercede the benefit of never having to refile for the abatement once you’ve already done it. Citing the bill’s requirement to:

“requires an agency or political subdivision of the state to verify the lawful presence in the United States of an individual who has applied for a state or local public benefit, as defined by federal law, or a federal public benefit that is administered by the agency or the political subdivision and provides for exceptions; requires an applicant for a state or local public benefit to certify the applicant’s lawful presence in the United States, and provides penalties for making a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in the certification”

Treasurers in various counties were again asking for disabled veterans to fill out forms to apply for the property tax abatement, even though they’d been told they wouldn’t have to refile after January 1, 2008. Rep. Hughes’ sponsored HB 316-Disabled Veterans Property Tax Abatement Amendments bill to effectively address three issues that were being interpreted by the counties as giving them the right to decide who would have to file, and ultimately who would receive the abatement. The first change that HB 316 afforded was that for all intents and purposes the State of Utah would recognize that an “honorably discharged-disabled veteran” of the United States Military was sufficient proof of United States Citizenship and or Residency. The second inadequacy that HB 316 addressed was due to a policy change at the Federal VA level. For many years the VA has always provided a form known as 20-5455 that essentially provided the total percentage of a veteran’s disability. In 2009, however

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For more information on other Veteran related bills, you can go to the le.utah.gov website.

The History of Memorial Day

Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day should be observed on May 30. It is believed that date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

The first large observance was held that year at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.

The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Various Washington officials, including Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, presided over the ceremonies. After speeches, children from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home and members of the GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

Local Observances Claim To Be First Local springtime tributes to the Civil War dead already had been held in various places. One of the first occurred in Columbus, Miss., April 25, 1866, when a group of women visited a cemetery to decorate the graves of Confederate soldiers who had fallen in battle at Shiloh. Nearby were the graves of Union soldiers, neglected because they were the enemy. Disturbed at the sight of the bare graves, the women placed some of their flowers on those graves, as well.

Today, cities in the North and the South claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1866. Both Macon and Columbus, Ga., claim the title, as well as Richmond, Va. The village of Boalsburg, Pa., claims it began there two years earlier. A stone in a Carbondale, Ill., cemetery carries the statement that the first Decoration Day ceremony took place there on April 29, 1866. Carbondale was the wartime home of Gen. Logan. Approximately 25 places have been named in connection with the origin of Memorial Day, many of them in the South where most of the war dead were buried.

Official Birthplace Declared In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, N.Y., the "birthplace" of Memorial Day. There, a ceremony on May 5, 1866, honored local veterans who had fought in the Civil War. Businesses closed and residents flew flags at half-staff. Supporters of Waterloo's claim say earlier observances in other places were either informal, not community-wide or one-time events.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation. State

legislatures passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities.

It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, as were some other federal holidays.

The crowd attending the first Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery was approximately the same size as those that attend today's observance, about 5,000 people. Then, as now, small American flags were placed on each grave — a tradition followed at many national cemeteries today. In recent years, the custom has grown in many families to decorate the graves of all departed loved ones.

The origins of special services to honor those who die in war can be found in antiquity. The Athenian leader Pericles offered a tribute to the fallen heroes of the Peloponnesian War over 24 centuries ago that could be applied today to the 1.1 million Americans who have died in the nation's wars: "Not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions, but there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men."

To ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed and the president signed into law "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," P.L. 106-579, creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission's charter is to "encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity" by encouraging and coordinating commemorations in the United States of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada states: "It's a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day."

We need to remember what Memorial Day is really all about. While it is nice to gather with friends, go to the lake or simply have a barbecue with our neighbors, it is a time to honor our fallen heroes- Editor's Opinion.

Utah Veterans Cemetery Puts on a New Face

By Craig Morgan

The appearance of the Utah Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Park in Bluffdale, Utah, near Camp Williams, has undergone some major improvements over the past year.

"The cemetery employees have worked hard to make the park really shine," said grounds and buildings supervisor, Arnold Warner. "It has been a long time since the grounds have looked this good so early in the year."

Perhaps the most dramatic improvement will catch your eye when you first enter the main gate. With the help of the State Department of Facilities and Construction Management, the old cracked and broken road was removed and replaced with new asphalt. According to project manager, Brent Lloyd, "Before we put down the new asphalt the cemetery was looking worn. But this new road gives the whole facility a fresh, well-cared-for look."

Visitors will also notice the landscaping and buildings have received additional attention. Lawns are green and freshly mown, headstones are trimmed and shrubs have been carefully manicured. Buildings have been given a good old "GI" cleaning and, where needed, a fresh coat of paint.

You may be asking yourself, "What has caused this sudden and dramatic change?" It's a lot of things, really - new management, some new personnel and great support have clearly helped. However, according to the new cemetery director, it was largely a change of attitude and priorities. "Once we all remembered we are here to serve veterans and their families, it was clear we could do better," said Morgan. "We want all veterans to be proud when they say this is their cemetery." Maybe you should make a visit and see for yourself.

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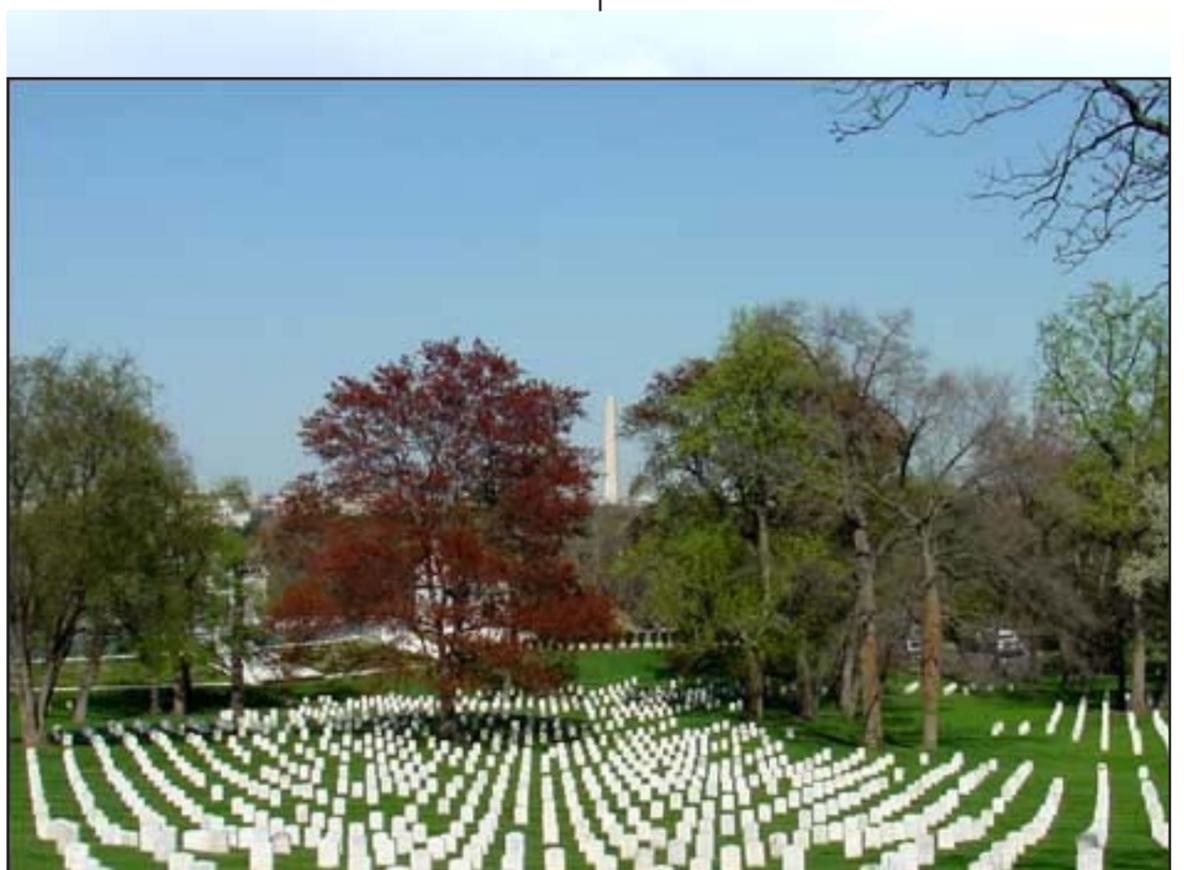
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Email your suggestions
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USE YOUR VOICE!!!
Send Letters to:
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Utah Department of Veterans Affairs Memorial Day Program



Monday, May 31st, 2010 10:00 a.m.

Utah State Veterans Cemetery & Memorial Park
1711 South Camp Williams Road
Bluffdale, Utah 84065

For more information contact us at:
www.veterans.utah.gov (801) 326-2372

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Contributed by Darlene Head Goldman,
Manager SLCC Veterans Center

Angels in Action, (501 c3 non-profit) in partnership with Salt Lake Community College, Veterans Office and Club completed their 3rd Annual Valentines for Veterans drive, February 14th 2010. The purpose in this event is to connect with and show appreciation for our



Bert Luce and Alvin Goldman, both veterans, collect valentines from the students and staff at Salt Lake Community College.

Veterans and Active Duty members around the world.

8,020 valentines and 350 pounds of candy were donated by families, school children, college students/staff/faculty, church groups and a girl scout troop from across the states of Utah and Idaho. One family made valentines while they watched the Super Bowl and school children enrolled their entire student body to get involved. The 4th grade class from Malad, Idaho made valentines to contribute. The group, Teen Angels in Action collected 3,000 valentines and 3,500 pieces of candy as their service project for the month.



Emma Padovich, Director, and members of Teen Angels in Action filled 12 boxes of valentines and candy that were sent to military servicemembers serving around the world.

Valentines were hand delivered to Veterans in the Salt Lake City Veterans Hospital and to those in the day clinics and to every veteran in the Veterans Nursing home in Salt Lake and the new Ogden Veterans Nursing home, Mid Town Manor nursing home where 80% of the residents are veterans. In addition, valentines and candy to veterans in three homeless shelters, two in Salt Lake and one in Ogden, and SL Vet Center.

The remaining valentines were put in 30 boxes, each packed with 10 pounds of candy and 250 valentines and treats and then mailed to our active duty military serving around the world. Each person receiving the box was asked to pass the valentines and candy out to those serving with them to share a little love from home.

We will conduct the Valentines for Veterans again next year. Each year our total collected valentines increases- 2008= 65, 2009= 6,500 2010= 8,020. If you would like to participate in this event or other service project, feel free to contact Darlene Head Goldman at lightworker144k@yahoo.com. Join with us to connect with veterans heart to heart and thank each one for their service to our country.



Kaitlyn Padovich, member of Teen Angels in Action, delivers a valentine at the SLC VA Medical Center. This is her third year with the project.

“FREEDOM” Continued from Front Page

for a veteran on a one-time basis, this authorization cannot be used a second time without the approval of the VA's General Counsel.

Accredited attorneys and agents are allowed to charge fees for representational services they provide after the Board of Veterans' Appeals makes a final decision in a case. VA's regulations provide a narrow exception to the general rule whereby a "disinterested" third-party may pay an accredited attorney or agent for services provided before a final Board decision, and that representation can include the preparation of claims.

Some organizations that do not qualify for VA recognition structure their business to receive payment for their services from claimants' private care providers in an effort to avoid criminal penalties. The care providers typically do not know that these organizations are prohibited by law from

preparing claims and charging fees, and are generally unaware of the services provided freely by recognized veterans service organizations.

VA currently recognizes 87 veterans service organizations consisting of 37 national organizations and 50 State and regional organizations for purposes of representing veterans before the Department. All of these organizations provide representation at no cost to the veteran, and by law may not charge any other person for representation before the Department.

If you receive reports from veterans, their dependents, or other interested parties about any individual contacting them about VA benefits or claiming to work for any group that has not been recognized by VA, please the contact the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs. Provide all pertinent information that is available, such as the individual's or the organization's name, phone number, address, and e-mail, as well as the date and place of contact and what the individual discussed.

Unauthorized representation of claimants and unlawful solicitation of fees is a serious matter. The VA and the State of Utah is interested in any individual or group that may be engaged in these activities.

Attention Veteran Students in Utah

Are you interested in part time employment while you attend school on your GI Bill or other VA education benefits? (Including Vocational Rehab)

Would you like that employment to be COMPLETELY flexible around your school schedule?

Are you attending classes at a rate of 3/4 time or higher?

Would you like to know how you can make up to an additional \$700.00 a month (tax free) while you attend school?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, an opportunity exists that you may not be aware of.

The program is called the VA Work-Study Allowance. In essence it is a PAID internship program only available to Veteran students.

To learn more about how you can augment your income while going to school and help your fellow veterans at the same time, contact Jose Lopez at the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs by calling [1-800-894-9497](tel:1-800-894-9497) or emailing jillopez@utah.gov Eligibility is restricted to veterans attending traditional university classes.

7th Annual Veterans Memorial Golf Tournament

Veterans and Non-Veterans invited

Join us for 18 holes of golf at the beautiful Hubbard Golf Course located at Hill Air Force Base on Thursday, May 27, 2010. Check-in, registration, and continental breakfast will be from 0700 to 0800 am followed by tee off at 0800 am. There will be a luncheon, prize award ceremony, and raffle at the completion of the tournament. Our speaker will be former Miss America Sharlene Wells Hawkes.

Teams will consist of four members, with one member designated as team captain. The team captain will be designated as the primary contact for your team and is responsible for check in, registration, and the purchasing of mulligans for your team on the day of the tournament. Team captains will also collect the necessary information that is needed for HAFB base security to gain access to the golf course (info about this is included on the team registration form along with base entry gate information). If you don't have a foursome singles, twosomes, and threesomes will be combined to make full teams. We are also asking for sponsors and/or donations for teams, holes, prizes, and breakfast and lunch. You don't have to be a veteran to participate.

All proceeds from this tournament - our primary fundraising event - directly benefit Veterans programs such as the Homeless Veterans Stand Down, Veterans Upward Bound, and hardship assistance to Veterans and their families in need.

We are also looking for sponsors/organizations to sponsor recently returning troops that have served in Iraq and Afghanistan to play in this tournament

To register a team or individual or for more information contact Terry Schow, Dennis McFall, or Tonja Knight at (801) 604-4257, or 1-800-894-9497. You may also register via email at, tcknight@utah.gov.

Space is limited so sign up!!!

***The deadline for registration is Friday, May 7, 2010 ***

Teams, Sponsors, Volunteers, and individual players can register by phone, mail, or email

The registration fee is \$100 per person or \$400 per team
Thank you for your support!



REGISTRATION DEADLINE HAS
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www.veterans.utah.gov

Women Veterans Summer Extravaganza & Benefits Fair

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2010
RED LION HOTEL
161 WEST 600 SOUTH
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84101
11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Join us for this open house style event featuring speakers from each era, refreshments and benefits and services you've earned. Also get a chance to mingle with other women veterans and receive free door prizes.

- Free and open to all women who have served or are still serving in the U.S. military.
- Pre-registration is appreciated. Please contact Gayle Harris at 801-582-1565, Ext. 2613 or email her at Gayle.Harris@va.gov

Sponsored by the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs in partnership with VASLCHCS Women's Clinic, VA Regional Office Women's Outreach and Utah Workforce Services

way to a permanent prisoner of war facility, he was held overnight in a small German-held French village near the front. During the night, the town was bombarded by the British, creating enough confusion to allow the pilot to escape. The pilot avoided German patrols by donning civilian attire, but all of his identification had been confiscated so he had no way to prove his identity. With great difficulty, he crept across no-man's land and made contact with a French patrol. Unfortunately for him, the French had been on the lookout for German saboteurs dressed as civilians. The French mistook the American pilot for a German saboteur and immediately prepared to execute him. Desperate to prove his allegiance and without any identification, the pilot pulled out the coin from his leather pouch and showed it to his French captors. One of the Frenchmen recognized the unit insignia on the coin and delayed the execution long enough to confirm the pilot's identity.

Once the pilot safely returned to his squadron, it became a tradition for all members to carry their coin at all times. To ensure compliance, the pilots would challenge each other to produce the coin. If the challenged couldn't produce the coin, he was required to buy a drink of choice for the challenger; if the challenged could produce the coin, the challenger would purchase the drink. Once more we would kindly like to express our gratitude for your donation and support of the completion of the George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home. Coins may be purchased through our office for \$10.00 each, all proceeds will help fund the Veterans Tribute Tower, which will be placed in front of the Veterans Home. Visit Veterans.utah.gov or call 1-800-894-9497 for more information.

FRONT OF COIN



REVERSE OF COIN



CHALLENGE COINS STILL AVAILABLE!

As a token of our appreciation the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a challenge coin commemorating the dedication of the George E. Wahlen Veterans Home on November 19, 2009.

A challenge coin is a small coin or medallion (usually military), bearing an organization's insignia or emblem and is carried by the organization's members. They are given to prove membership when challenged and to enhance morale.

Like so many other aspects of military tradition, the origins of the challenge coin are a matter of much debate with little supporting evidence. While many organizations and services claim to have been the originators of the challenge coin, the most commonly held view is that the tradition began in the United States Army Air Service (a forerunner of the current United States Air Force). Air warfare was a new phenomenon during World War I. When the army created flying squadrons they were manned with volunteer pilots from every walk of civilian life.

While some of the early pilots came from working class or rural backgrounds, many were wealthy college students who withdrew from classes in the middle of the year, drawn by the adventure and romance of the new form of warfare.

As the legend goes, one such student, a wealthy lieutenant, ordered small, solid-bronze medallions (or coins) struck, which he then presented to the other pilots in his squadron as mementos of their service together.

The coin was gold-plated, bore the squadron's insignia, and was quite valuable. One of the pilots in the squadron, who had never owned anything like the coin, placed it in a leather pouch he wore around his neck for safekeeping. A short while later, this pilot's aircraft was heavily damaged by ground fire (other sources claim it was an aerial dogfight), forcing him to land behind enemy lines and allowing him to be captured by the Germans.

The Germans confiscated the personal belongings from his pockets, but they didn't catch the leather pouch around his neck. On his



Glenn McFall and Darrell Loveland, both of Brigham City, display a few of the more than 200 military themed blankets they made and donated to the George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home.

Box Elder County Veterans take great pride in their gift

By Darin C. Farr, Editor

Recently, two dedicated veterans from Brigham City took what began as a small project and turned out amazing results.

Glenn McFall and Darrell Loveland decided, back in 2005, to buy a small surging machine and create some military themed fleece blankets. They wanted to make the blankets for the eventual residents of the (then just announced-proposed) Ogden Veterans Home. Originally, their idea was to initially make 40 blankets. The more they got into the project, combined with the construction of the home not being complete until November of 2009, they eventually made more and more until the number grew to over 220 blankets.

Fueling their passions was a deep respect for anyone who has served their country honorably, which has led them all over Utah and Idaho in search of the right colors of fleece to properly portray all five branches of the military: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and even the Coast Guard.

On January 14, McFall and Loveland delivered 222 blankets to the George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home, enough for each new resident and some in reserve.

“We just got carried away” said McFall, a 22 year veteran of the United States Navy. Darrell “Sarge” Loveland is a WWII Marine Raider and Past State Commander of the American Legion.

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Larry Dawson, Outreach Representative from the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs, speaks to an attendee at Senator Orrin Hatch's annual Senior Conference at the Little America Hotel.



April 9th, Director Terry Schow and Deputy Director Dennis McFall address participants of the Senior Conference about the latest changes in the VA.

Too Many Vets Still Leave Service Unaware of Benefits

Reprinted with special permission by Military.Com By Tom Philpott

Despite billions of additional dollars pumped into veterans' benefits in recent years, many military personnel still leave service unaware of their VA benefits or of programs set up to help them transition to civilian life, a senior Defense official and veteran advocates testified Wednesday.

Noel C. Koch, deputy under secretary of defense for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said he has visited many military hospitals and interviewed "hundreds" of service members, many recovering from wounds. "It's a constant source of partly amazement and partly disappointment at how little aware they are" of benefits and programs to help them either return to full duty or smooth their path into veteran status

Communication "seems to be the entire issue," Koch explained. Despite a lot of work being done to address this gap, the government fails to communicate effectively with departing members, particularly younger ones.

"This is partly a generational issue," Koch told the House veterans affairs subcommittee on disability assistance. Young veterans "don't communicate the way people my age communicate. They don't refer to these thick manuals we put out that are just chock full of information, which nobody reads. Even websites are becoming somewhat antiquated in the eyes of some of our younger service members." As a result, Koch said, the Department of Defense and the services "are moving into social media," such as Facebook and Twitter, to try to break through to departing members about their VA benefits.

Thomas Tarantino, director of government affairs for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, agreed that benefits information is not reaching many service members before they separate.

"When I left the Army in 2007, I had absolutely no idea of the scope and availability

of the benefits I was entitled to as a veteran," Tarantino said. "In fact, it never even occurred to me to seek benefits in health care from [VA] just for the general wear and tear of a decade of military service. If it weren't for an old sergeant major who was attending the Army Civilian Alumni Program with me, I would have never even applied."

He said DoD and VA "must integrate" their outreach programs before discharge to "ensure a smooth transition of services... Otherwise, more men and women are going to fall through the cracks."

Gerald T. Manar, with Veterans of Foreign Wars, said VA has representatives at 153 military installations to educate members on benefits. Veteran service organizations like VFW have difficulty persuading base commanders to let them fill that role where the VA can't. But often space is at a premium and many commands are wary of such arrangements.

Rep. John Hall (D-N.Y.), subcommittee chairman, held the hearing to assess effectiveness of two particular programs that give those leaving service a jump on applying for VA health care and disability benefits.

The Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program was started modestly after the Persian Gulf War. Last year it helped 51,000 separating members get a comprehensive medical examination and apply for VA disability benefits before leaving service. The program is offered 60 to 180 days before discharge. Details are online at: www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheets/general/BDD.doc

Recognizing that few Reserve and Guard members have enough active time remaining after an overseas deployment to use standard BDD, Congress in 2008 approved a Quick Start program for them. It is available from one to 59 days before separation.

Both plans cut the post-service wait for a VA disability decision. Those who use the BDD typically can get a VA disability decision within two to three months of separation versus six to seven months for those who wait until after discharge to file a claim.

These two programs are separate from the new Disability Evaluation System pilot that VA and

DoD have launched at select sites. All three, however, rely on a single comprehensive health exam while still on active duty, usually done by the VA, to replace the practice of sending members through both a military pre-discharge physical and a post-service VA exam.

Daniel Bertoni, with the Government Accountability Office, testified that both BDD and Quick Start are valuable transition tools. But GAO identified weaknesses. For instance, VA ignores time spent preparing a claim while on active duty when it calculates the average time saved by those use BDD versus the traditional path to apply for VA disability benefits.

Hall noted that only the Marine Corps requires members, before discharge, to attend a VA benefits briefing as part of their transition process. Why, he asked Koch, doesn't DoD require all of the services to do that.

"You touched on a very sore point," Koch said. He would like to see such a mandate but there are "contravening priorities." Some commanders object to these kinds of mandatory briefings, Koch said, citing limited manpower to spare the time, particularly in theaters of war. What his office requires instead is that members be told that a VA benefits brief is available and they will get time off to attend if they choose. "We have not, in every case, been able to do that," he said.

Koch reminded Hall that his focus is on wounded warriors -- making sure they know their benefits and get the support they need. The BDD, on the other hand, is available "to everybody...but not everybody needs it.

"They are not necessarily hurt in anyway that would give them access [to VA benefits]. In other instances, they just don't want to be bothered with it," he said. But in some cases, Koch conceded, "I'm sure there are people who simply don't know about it because we have failed to reach them."

FYI- THE VA Medical Center in Salt Lake City is now on both Facebook and Twitter.

Legislature continued

the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (with no prior announcement) decided to stop using the 20-5455 form. Instead, the VA began issuing a simple "eligibility" document on standard VA Regional Office letterhead.

The problem that this started was a complicated one. There exists within the VA Compensation format a way for the Federal VA to offset or "bridge the gap" for certain individuals with a service-connected disability, a disability that by itself is not considered 100% disabling, but because of the special circumstances created by that disability, may not be able to work. This particular benefit is known by the term "Individual Unemployability" or IU. So, for example, a veteran may be rated at 70% for a singular disability, but compensated to the full 100% amount because they cannot work.

Unfortunately, the new form delineated this difference, whereas the 20-5455 form did not.

County Treasurers began to deny many disabled veterans the 100% tax abatement they had been receiving and changing to the "actual" disability rating for the benefit.

HB316 fixed this second problem as well. The new bill instructs County Treasurers that they will consider the 100% IU rating level the same as being 100% disabled for tax abatement purposes. Lastly, Rep. Hughes's HB316 vested the verification of a Veteran's disability status (if questioned) with the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs.

It is with great pleasure that we announce that HB 316 was passed through both houses unanimously and the Governor signed it on March 23rd. It will become effective as State Law on May 11th.

Several other key pieces of legislation that affected veterans were passed through this term as well.

HB404-Veterans Nursing Home Reimbursement Restricted Account (Rep. Ron Bigelow) Earmarked the federal reimbursement funds coming back to Utah from the construction of the Ogden Veterans Home (funds in excess of \$12 million) to be used for seed funding to construct two more such homes in Utah County (serving a need in Central Utah) and Washington County (serving a need in Southern Utah). The Governor is slated to sign this and several other Veteran related bills in a special ceremony on May 11th at the Salt Lake City Veterans Home.

HB 208-Disposition of the remains of a deceased military service member (Rep. Jennifer Seelig) A much needed "housekeeping" bill that effectively fixed a conflict between federal and state policies when dealing with funeral laws. The current form that military members sign prior to deployment allows them to designate a family member to oversee their final wishes in terms of funeral arrangements. This form, DD Form 93, only requires one witness signature, whereas Utah Funeral codes required two such signatures. The new bill allows Utah residents and more importantly, Funeral Directors to accept the DD Form 93 in the case of a military member who dies on active duty.

The Northern Utah Veterans Information & Benefits Fair

Friday, May 14, 2010 (2-7 p.m.)



At the
George E. Whalen
Ogden Veterans Home
1102 North 1200 West
Ogden, UT 84404

Come and meet representatives from:

**The Utah Department of Veterans Affairs
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
The G.E.W. VA Medical Center
The Vet Centers of Utah
Veterans of Foreign Wars
The American Legion
The Disabled American Veterans
The VA Community Based Outpatient
Clinic in Ogden
The Wasatch North Veterans Council
The US Small Business Administration
Veterans Upward Bound (Weber State Univ.)
Ogden Homeless Veterans Fellowship
Veteran Home Loan Experts
Veteran Small Business Experts
USAA**

You have questions...

*...we've got the people with the
answers!*

*These are benefits and services you've
EARNED!*

UTAH Cardiac Transplant Program Celebrates Silver Milestone

By Jill Atwood, PAO SLCVAMC

They are eager to share their stories. Some choke back tears. Others seem almost giddy as they stand at the podium overwhelmed with emotion and appreciation. Then there is the donor family capable of such selflessness in a time of such great pain and loss. There is nothing ordinary about the bonds that are formed or the lives that are forever changed when we talk about the gift of a heart. Patients, doctors, donor families form a new family. Just ask Vietnam Veteran George Green who received his new heart two years ago. "I thank the good lord everyday for sending me here to these good doctors in Utah. They treated me like I was family."

This unique program is a cooperative effort between four Salt Lake City area hospitals – The George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, University of Utah Hospital, Intermountain Medical Center, and Primary Children's Medical Center. The VA Medical Center's Heart Transplant Director Dr. Matthew Movsesian says the dedication of the people involved enables the program to excel. "People really care about what they're doing. We really want to not let people down, so I think everybody puts in the best effort of which he's capable."

The UTAH (Utah Affiliated Transplant Hospitals) Cardiac Transplant Program celebrates 25 years of life changing care this year and is again touted as one of the nation's premier collaborative heart transplant programs. In a touching press conference on the VA campus recipients once again remind us how fragile life is, a gift that should never be taken for granted. Bamboo plants are presented to the patients; a symbol of inspiration, longevity and luck.

George Green finds his inspiration in waking up every day and thinking about the family whose loss meant a new life for him. He wishes he could thank them. "If I knew where they lived I would drive there and thank them personally. As long as I am living that person is living as well." George says it has also changed his mind about a lot of things; mainly organ donation. He now checks yes. The UTAH Cardiac Transplant Program has achieved one of the best survival rates in the country and is often cited as a model for other transplant programs. The Program has successfully performed 1,062 heart transplants since its first in 1985. That patient, Tony Shepherd, lives in Wyoming with his wife.

Afghanistan War Veteran Marlo Anderson talks PTSD, Motherhood and Becoming Whole Again on the Home Front.

By Special Permission of SLCVAMC Public Affairs Office

Before 2006 There was nothing Marlo Anderson couldn't handle. She was tough, confident, and in charge. It's why she signed on the dotted line and why she was the first one packed for deployment to Afghanistan. This highly motivated Air Force Sergeant went on mission after mission, patrol after patrol in a high stress combat environment. "You're on edge 24-7 and you are always waiting for something to happen." She served proudly for the 419th Security Forces out of Hill Air Force Base and performed at the highest level. Who would have thought coming back home would be the tough part? Haunted by things she saw and did, Marlo, like so many other female combat Veterans returning from long deployments, is struggling emotionally. "Most of the missions were uneventful but there were a few that I struggle with, the



Bamboo plants are presented to the heart transplant recipients of the UTAH Cardiac Transplant Program



PHOTO CAPTION - Above OEF Veteran Marlo Anderson is interviewed by ABC Channel 4 about her transitional experiences as both a combat veteran and a mother

ones where children were involved." Like her male counterparts Marlo saw combat too. This war does not distinguish between male and female soldiers.

Marlo is 100 percent service connected for PTSD. She battles flashbacks, aggressive behavior and panic attacks. She started noticing things a couple months after she returned home. "My friends would ask me to go out and I'd say yes, but then I would make up an excuse not to go at the last minute. I didn't want to leave the house." She also noticed aggressive behavior and knew it wasn't good for her three children. "I'd start freaking out over things. My kids were starting to be afraid of me." She finally was able to muster the same courage that took her to war and reach out for help. And she's getting it. Her therapist, Dr. Tanya Miller, notes an increase in the number of female Veterans coming in for treatment of PTSD related specifically to combat trauma. "It is hard for these women to seek help because they often feel they have to prove they are just as tough, if not tougher, than the next soldier. However, once involved in treatment, they often find that the resolve and strength they demonstrated in war also helps them move through the recovery

process. They realize they don't have to live with these painful symptoms, and that they have access to treatments that can help them reclaim their lives."

Like most women Veterans, Marlo doesn't feel worthy of all the support and attention. "I know there are others that have been through so much more." Dr. Miller's case in point, but support and attention is exactly what she needs and deserves. Marlo says she will continue to be the voice for women Veterans who remain silent, scared and alone. "Anything I can do to help..to encourage other women it's ok to reach out." She's still tough, she's still strong...even if she doesn't know it yet.

For more information about your local Women Veterans Health Care Program please contact the Salt Lake City-VAMC and ask for the Women Veterans Clinic (801) 582-1565 (ext 5423) The Women Veterans Program is available at every VA Medical Center.

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Utah Dept of Veterans Affairs:
 801-326-2372
 www.veterans.utah.gov

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 Homes:
 SLC (801) 584-1900
 OGDEN (801) 334-4300

Transition Assistance:
 (801) 523-4937

Gold Star Mother Presents Check to Syracuse Marine Wounded Warrior's Mother

Recently, the L/Cpl. Dion J. Stephenson Detachment #1014's Gold Star Mother Geri Stephenson, presented a check for \$500, to L/Cpl. Dalton Cox's mother Sherri Graham, to help defray expenses to visit her son at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Marine Cox was wounded by sniper fire on November 22, 2009 while serving with the 2nd Bn, 2nd Marines in Afghanistan. Marine Cox has gone through more than a dozen surgical procedures since being wounded. The past year the Detachment has supported the lower part of Davis County to the tune of more than \$6,000, this year it has embark on a new project called, the Utah Marines Wounded Warrior Assistance Program.

Joe Surace
 Adj/Paymaster



Be Our Messenger: Volunteer at the:

**Utah Veterans
Homes (Ogden
and Salt Lake
City)**

(801)326-2372

&

**George E.
Wahlen VA**

Medical Center

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

2010 VAN SCHEDULE FOR IDAHO, PRICE and ST. GEORGE

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

IDAHO: (208) 221-0362

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

x. 2003

May 4,6,10,12,14,18,20,24,26,28
 June 1,3,7,9,11,15,21,23,25,29
 July 1,7,9,13,15,19,21,23,27,29
 Aug 2,4,6,10,12,16,18,20,24,26,30

2010 VAN SCHEDULE FOR LOGAN, VERNAL, ELKO, ELY, AFTON, ROCK SPRINGS

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL:

LOGAN AND VERNAL: 1-800-613-4012

x2003

May 3,5,7,11,13,17,19,21,25,27
 June 2,4,8,10,14,16,18,22,24,28,30
 July 2,6,8,12,14,16,20,22,26,28,30
 Aug 3,5,9,11,13,17,19,23,25,27,31

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