

THE DENTON COUNTY VETERAN

April/May 2007



Denton County was established by the Texas legislature on April 11, 1846

County Judge Mary Horn, Commissioner Cynthia White, Precinct 1;
Commissioner Ron Marchant, Precinct 2; Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, Precinct 3;
Commissioner Andy Eads, Precinct 4

Serving the Veterans of Denton County

Federal Task Force Launches Web Site *Secretary invites feedback on services*

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/docs/OIFTF.doc>

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, head of the new inter-agency task force examining the processes for combat veterans seeking services and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other federal agencies, announced the creation of a dedicated Web page to solicit input on the ease of accessing federal services.

“As the task force moves forward in studying how we can enhance services and cut red tape, we believe it’s important to provide veterans, their family members and others with the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences,” said Nicholson.

People can email their comments to the task force at TFHeroes@va.gov or fax comments to 202-273-9599. Task Force information and mailing address can be obtained on the VA home page, www.va.gov/taskforce.

The Web page allows active duty service members, veterans, family members and others to comment directly to the task force on the accessibility, timeliness and delivery of services. Comments will be studied by the task force, used in the panel’s evaluation of gaps in service and form the basis of recommended solutions.

Called the “Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes,” the panel consists of the secretaries of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education, plus the administrator of the Small Business Administration and the director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Under the terms of the executive order creating the task force, the group has 45 days to identify and examine existing federal services for returning Global War on Terror service members; identify gaps in such services; seek recommendations from federal agencies on ways to fill those gaps and ensure that appropriate federal agencies are communicating and cooperating effectively.

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly.
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

This was the poem written by World War I Colonel John McCrae, a surgeon with Canada's First Brigade Artillery. It expressed McCrae's grief over the "row on row" of graves of soldiers who had died on Flanders' battlefields, located in a region of western Belgium and northern France. The poem presented a striking image of the bright red flowers blooming among the rows of white crosses and became a rallying cry to all who fought in the First World War. The first printed version of it reportedly was in December 1915, in the British magazine *Punch*.



VA Weight Control Campaign Ramps Up Obesity, Diabetes Major Health Threats: Secretary Nicholson

WASHINGTON – By the start of Healthy Weight Week (Jan. 21-27), more than 41,000 veterans were participating in a weight management program designed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reduce the high rates of illness among VA’s patients caused by obesity.

“There is a growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes in the nation, especially among veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson.

“Seventy percent of the veterans VA cares for are overweight and one in five has diabetes, both of which increase the risk of many diseases.”

The MOVE! program – “Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere” – not only encourages veterans enrolled in VA care to get in shape but also offers information to family members and anyone trying to lose weight through an Internet link.

VA started MOVE! to encourage veterans to increase their physical activity and improve their nutrition.

Through individual and group counseling, physicians, nurses, dieticians and recreational therapists help enrol-

lees change their eating behavior and increase their exercise. Primary care teams at all VA medical centers stay in touch with participants to track their progress.

Increasing numbers of VA community-based clinics also are enrolling veterans.

Among activities they promote are competitions in fitness challenges, joining community exercise programs that partner with VA medical facilities, and leading families and friends into movement and nutrition routines.

Anyone can log onto www.move.va.gov, where a questionnaire helps identify personal barriers to weight control. The questions link to about 100 informational materials on the site. People not enrolled in VA health care can take the information about themselves to their personal health care providers.

Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway is promoting the VA campaign. He began appearing in television public service announcements (PSAs) nationwide in early January. In the 15-, 30- and 60-second PSAs, Elway is seen at the playing field of the Denver Broncos, encouraging veterans to become more active and improve their nutrition habits. The Elway PSAs can be viewed at www.healthierUSveterans.va.gov

General Order # 11

HEADQUARTERS GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC WASHINGTON, D.C.—MAY 5, 1868 GENERAL ORDERS NO. 11

I. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or other decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but Posts and comrades will, in their own way, arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, Comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose among other things, “of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion.” What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead? We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic. If other eyes grow dull and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain in us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledge to aid and to assist those whom they have left among us as a sacred charge upon the Nation’s gratitude – the soldier’s and sailor’s widow and orphan. (continued on page 4)

Secretary Nicholson Honors VA Volunteers 88,000 VA Volunteers Recognized During National Volunteer Week

WASHINGTON – More than 88,000 volunteers at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities – who worked 12.5 million hours last year – are being recognized across the country in conjunction with National Volunteer Week, April 15-21.

“Volunteers are one of VA’s most valuable assets, sharing the same spirit of compassion and dedication as our employees in helping our veteran patients,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “The theme of this year’s volunteer week, ‘Inspire by Example,’ expresses exactly what these volunteers do, and I hope their example will encourage even more people to give of their time at local VA facilities helping those who have defended our nation.”



VA has the largest volunteer program in the government and one of the largest in the country. Using a formula developed by a coalition representing hundreds of charities and non-profits, it is estimated that in 2006, VA would have needed more than 6,000 full-time employees to replace the time donated by volunteers. VA estimates the time volunteered to VA equates to nearly \$225 million annually. In addition, VA volunteers and their organizations contributed an estimated \$54 million in gifts and donations last year.

More than 350 national and community organizations support VA’s Voluntary Service program, organized in 1946.

Nicholson traveled to Baltimore on Monday to present the President’s Volunteer Service Lifetime Achievement Award to Clifford Stoffel, a veteran who contributed more than 4,000 hours of service in the VA Maryland Health Care System as a volunteer with the Disabled American Veterans transportation network at the Glen Burnie, Md., VA Outpatient Clinic. Nicholson also gave awards to other volunteers who have served at the Baltimore VA Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center and regional outpatient clinics.

For several years, President Bush has proclaimed National Volunteer Week as a time to thank volunteers for their service and to call the public’s attention to what volunteers can do to improve communities. National Volunteer Week is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation.

For more information on how to volunteer at a VA facility, contact your local VA hospital or visit www.va.gov.

Other ways to volunteer:

Student Volunteer Program—<http://www1.va.gov/volunteer/studentprgm.cfm>

Volunteer Transportation Network—<http://www1.va.gov/volunteer/vtn.cfm>

Corporate Volunteering—<http://www1.va.gov/volunteer/corporate.cfm>

For other ways to volunteer visit: <http://www1.va.gov/volunteer/otherways.cfm>

General Order # 11

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II. It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades. He earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this Order, and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

Department Commanders will use every effort to make this Order effective. By Command of:

N.P Chipman
Adjutant General

John A. Logan
Commander-in-Chief

HEALTHIERUS VETERANS: *FIT FOR LIFE*

VETERAN VOLUNTEER CORPS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have joined forces in an unprecedented manner in an effort to improve the health of the nation. The focus of this joint initiative, HealthierUS Veterans, is to educate veterans, their families, and communities about the health risks of obesity and diabetes.

By focusing on these conditions and the population of veterans and their families, these two federal agencies can reach up to a quarter of the entire U.S. population, about 70 million people.

The Corps consists of volunteers made up of veterans, their families, friends, and anyone interested in supporting the effort. Volunteers will serve as community-based ambassadors to encourage veterans and their family members to establish and maintain behaviors that promote health and minimize risk of illness related to obesity and diabetes.

This is where you may help as a member of the Fit for Life Veteran Volunteer Corps.

The goals of the Fit for Life Veteran Volunteer Corps are to:

- Support the overall mission of the HealthierUS Veterans by encouraging veterans and their family members to prevent obesity and diabetes
- Provide volunteer resources to help realize the mission of the HealthierUS Veterans
- Develop partnerships with local non-profit agencies to promote health and wellness in the veteran community
- Generate a significant positive impact within the veteran population and the local community through health and wellness programs
- Establish measurable outcomes that will demonstrate the impact of the HealthierUS Veterans Corps
- Develop positive outreach and networking opportunities with veterans service organizations and local community groups
- Initiate a successful program through the development of detailed action and communication plans

- Celebrate, encourage and promote diversity throughout the program

Below are volunteer opportunities available in the program. Click on an opportunity heading to request additional information.

[Partnership Liaison](#)

- meet with local nonprofit health organizations to establish partnerships for the sharing of resources, training opportunities and staffing support; and
- develop a repository of health and wellness information (i.e. brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, flyers, etc.) from local nonprofit health organizations, VA and HHS for use at community health and wellness outreach activities.



[Health & Wellness Event Coordinator](#)

- identify all local community walks/runs to support various nonprofit causes;
- establish a yearly calendar of available events (community walks/runs);
- establish a VA presence in community walk/runs by encouraging VA staff and volunteers, in addition to veterans and the local community, to participate on VA sponsored teams;
- represent the VA team at all planning meetings sponsored by the nonprofit event coordinator and successfully relay pertinent information to all team members;
- work with the Public Affairs Officer to promote each walk/run throughout the organization/medical center;
- work with the Public Affairs Officer and the Health Information Coordinator to recruit members for the VA team; and
- establish team coordinators within each service throughout the organization/medical center to promote VA team participation.

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Health Information Coordinator

- work in conjunction with the Public Affairs Officer and subject matter experts to coordinate health and wellness educational displays, bulletin boards, flyers and newsletters for the organization/medical center;
- prepare health information and promotion materials utilizing various communication resources (i.e. bulleting boards, displays, flyers, brochures, newsletters, etc.); and
- work with the Public Affairs Officer to develop a communication strategy to maximize the visibility of all health and wellness promotion materials.

Volunteer Recruiter

- establish relationships with local organizations and institutions to recruit qualified individuals to serve as volunteers within HealthierUS Veterans running/walking clubs, etc.);
- develop recruitment materials to solicit qualified professionals to assist with program implementation; and
- work with Voluntary Service Offices and HealthierUS Veterans Coordinators to develop a volunteer orientation for all wellness programs and activities that are a part of the campaign.

Volunteer Coordinator

- responsible for volunteer placement at various wellness programs, events and initiatives;
- work in conjunction with Voluntary Service Office to properly screen and place suitable candidates for HealthierUS Veterans; and
- provide general oversight for volunteers within HealthierUS Veterans, in conjunction Voluntary Service and other program areas.

Seminar and Event Scheduler

- identify and schedule subject matter experts to speak about a variety of health and wellness issues both internally and externally (i.e. veterans service organization meetings, community functions, medical center/CBOC wellness programs, senior living facilities, reserve units, etc.);
- identify and schedule appropriate meeting areas/classrooms to hold internal and external health and

wellness programs/events that will feature subject matter experts; and

- establish contacts with community/veterans service organizations to schedule health and wellness programs that will be coordinated by HealthierUS Veterans.

HealthierUS Veterans Ambassadors

- responsible for promoting HealthierUS Veterans activities and initiatives to veterans service organizations and other local community groups;
- distribute health and wellness information from subject matter experts to attendees during meetings with veterans service organizations and local community groups; and
- encourage veterans and their family members to establish and maintain behaviors that promote health and minimize risk of illness related to obesity and diabetes by sharing information from subject matter experts.

Health & Wellness Buddies

- will serve as a workout partner for members of HealthierUS Veterans to help motivate them to continue with their workout plan;
- will be on-call to help motivate their HealthierUS Veterans buddy to assist in preventing them from eating the wrong foods or missing a planned workout; and
- will be responsible for providing their buddy with health and wellness materials from various subject matter experts in an effort to help them lead a healthy lifestyle.

Event Support Volunteers

- responsible for assisting health and wellness event coordinators with logistical support, mailing campaigns, distribution of promotional materials, follow-up phone calls and data base management;
- register participants for all health and wellness events; and
- provide assistance with the set-up and tear down for all health and wellness events and programs.

