

THE DENTON COUNTY VETERAN

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

County Judge Mary Horn, Commissioner Cynthia White, Precinct 1;
Commissioner Sandy Jacobs, Precinct 2; Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, Precinct 3;
Commissioner Jim Carter, Precinct 4

Serving the Veterans of Denton County



Department of Veterans Affairs

Bereavement Counseling for Surviving Family Members @ VHA Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers

What is Bereavement Counseling?

Bereavement counseling is assistance and support to people with emotional and psychological stress after the death of a loved one. Bereavement counseling includes a broad range of transition services, including outreach, counseling, and referral services to family members.

Does VA Have Bereavement Counseling for Surviving Family Members?

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) offers bereavement counseling to parents, spouses and children of Armed Forces personnel who died in the service of their country. Also eligible are family members of reservists and National Guardsmen who die while on duty.

Where Is Counseling Offered?

VA's bereavement counseling is provided at community-based Vet Centers located near the families. There is no cost for VA bereavement counseling.

How Can You Obtain These Services?

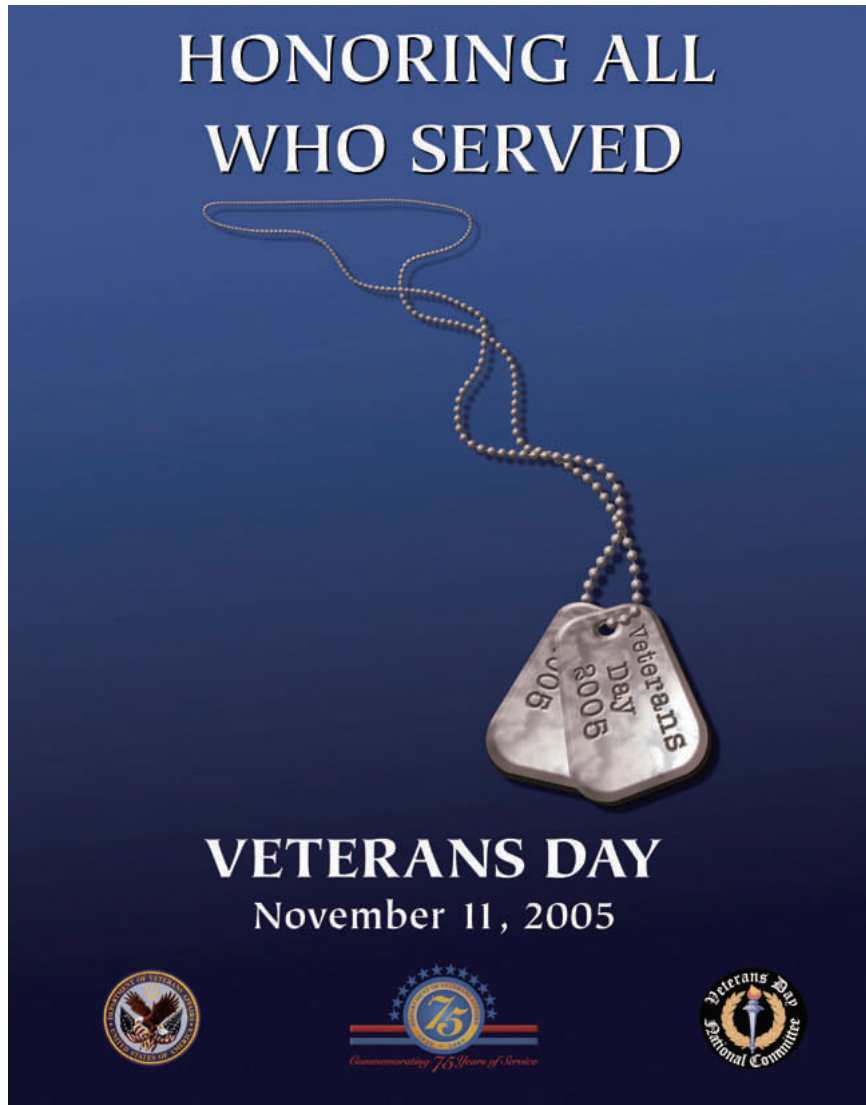
Services are obtained by contacting Readjustment Counseling Service at 202-273-9116 or via electronic mail at vet.center@hq.med.va.gov both of which are specific to this specialized service. RCS staff will assist families in contacting the nearest Vet Center.

VFW Offers Financial Assistance through Military Assistance Program

(Texas Veterans Commission Journal, Vol.28,No.5 September/October 2005)

Financial assistance is available for active duty military personnel and their families, to include activated Reserves and National Guard, through the Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Military Assistance Program offers one-time grants of up to \$1,000 to service members in need of emergency financial assistance. Examples of emergency situations include assistance in preventing utility disconnection or help in buying groceries or other necessary items. The need cannot be caused by financial mismanagement or because of extravagant expenditures.

Since the program's inception in 2003, the Texas VFW has approved more than \$54,000 in emergency financial assistance. Family member and troop support programs are also available. For more information contact your local VFW post, visit the Texas VFW website at <http://www.texasvfw.org/> or contact Texas VFW Military Assistance Program Chairman Roy J. Grona at 512-834-8535 or email him at roy@texasvfw.org.



Veterans Day Ceremony
November 11, 2005
11:00 A.M.
Courthouse-on-the-Square

Special Guest will be Lee R. Keith

Purple Heart Medal Presentation



THE PROBLEM: WHY IS VETERANS AND FAMILIES NEEDED?

Increase in suicides. *The Army reports that 23 soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan have committed suicide in the past year. At least 7 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have committed suicide since returning home. In 2003, the US Army reported that the suicide rate among soldiers increased from an 8 year average of 11.9 per 100,000 to 15.6 per 100,000.*

“The Army’s study found that only one-third of soldiers who wanted help actually got it.” (Associated Press on Army’s first-ever survey of mental health in a combat zone, March 26, 2004.)

Increased strain on VA system. *According to a 2004 VA study by 31 veteran service organizations, Veterans Affairs (VA) programs are failing to keep pace with inflation and the growing needs of veterans. For example, the number of veterans using the VA system has risen from 2.9 million in 1995 to 5 million in 2003.. Inflation adjusted spending for VA mental health services has declined by 25 percent over the past seven years. Now a downsized VA system is faced with the additional burden of trying to help the hundreds of thousands of soldiers returning from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.*

“If we’re going to commit them to fighting for the nation, we need to commit to providing every resource for them when they come home. It’s a covenant,” said Steve Robinson, Executive Director of the veterans’ National Gulf War Resource Center.

Increase in employment difficulties. *Successfully integrating with civilian employers is a long documented challenge that faces active duty soldiers who separate from the military. This challenge is compounded for those exposed to the psychological trauma of combat, and further complicated by the mass mobilization of citizen soldiers (National Guard and Reserve) who are being deployed to combat theaters. More than 355,000 Guard and Reservists have been mobilized since 9/11/01, and these units are currently logging five times more duty hours than they did in the 1990s. The employment difficulties these units are encountering upon their return home, helps illustrate the problem. U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that more than 3,500 demobilized Reservists and Guardsman have filed complaints against their employers in the past year. And according to the Secretary of Defense Office of Family Policy, 41 percent of Activated Reserve families experience financial stress.*

Brandon Ratliff, survived a nine-month tour in Afghanistan, but faced job difficulties when he returned and committed suicide on March 18, 2004. “He’d seen horrific things,” said his mother, Susan Coats. “He saw a buddy blown up by a landmine. He carried body parts....then he learned his job had been given to someone else. He was very upset.” (USA Today, 6/29/04).

“Work related difficulties...are likely to be a major focus among veterans of the Iraq War. Part-time military employees or reservists face unique employment challenges post-deployment. Employers vary significantly in the amount of emotional and financial support they offer reservist employees...” (“The Returning Veteran of the Iraq War: Background Issues and Assessment Guidelines,” Brett Litz, PhD, and Susan M. Orsillo PhD, as published on www.ncptsd.org).

“There is a major concern about how guard and reserve troops are going to fare, particularly now that their tours are being extended,” Mathew Friedman, director of Department of Veterans Affairs at the National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (7/1/04 NY Times).

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Research is Needed: While there are thousands of organizations dedicated to serving and supporting our military, veterans, and their families, the available empirical and statistical data tells us that significant obstacles and service gaps continue to confront homecoming veterans and their families. There is currently no national organization dedicated to studying the full continuum of psychological and emotional readjustment needs of veterans, their families, and employers following separation from the military. The actionable research to be produced by Veterans and Families will greatly assist existing providers in ensuring “no one falls through the cracks.”

“More research is...needed on the return of service members from deployment and the reunion and reintegration of families. This includes the long-term effects of and the best ways to assist families during these phases, especially during and after repeated deployments”-*National Military Families Association Study, “Serving the Homefront: An Analysis of Military Family Support from Sept. 11, 2001-March 31, 2004.”*

A True Homecoming This Time

Let’s not make the same mistakes we did during the Vietnam era, when we didn’t understand the devastating effects of PTSD or the comprehensive needs of veterans attempting to re-integrate into civilian life. With the prospect of fighting a long-term War on Terror, the challenge for veterans and their families is likely to become greater. Veterans and Families directly addresses these challenges, by thoroughly researching the post-military re-socialization needs of those who sacrifice for our freedom, and by providing accessible support resources that connect veterans, their families, and employers with the help they need. The Veterans and Families organization asks you to embrace the motto of all our soldiers in the field: “No one left behind.”

“Mental health professionals say they fear the system is not moving fast enough to treat the trauma. They say slowness to recognize what was happening to Vietnam veterans contributed to the psychological devastation from that war. "When we missed the boat with the Vietnam vets, we didn't get another chance," said Jerry Clark, director of the veterans clinic in Alexandria, Va. "When they left the service, they went away not for a month or two but for 10 years. And they came back addicted, incarcerated and all these things. We can't miss the boat again. It is imperative" (LA Times, 11/14/04).

In an effort to perpetuate the rapid development of local support and resources for Veterans and their families we have initiated [The Veterans and Families Community Support Network](#).



For Local Help

Denton County Veterans Service Office
1505 E. McKinney St. #183
Denton, TX 76209
940-349-2950
Fax: 940-349-2951
Monday through Friday
8:00 am to noon
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

We have moved to
1505 E. McKinney St. Suite 183
Denton, TX 76209

You are invited to attend our

Open House
November 10, 2005
2 to 4 PM

