



VETS NEWS

September / October 2009

www.oregon.gov/odva

Jim Willis, Director

WOMEN VETERANS TESTIFY TO GAPS IN THE USDVA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

By Tom Mann

WASHINGTON DC – Recognizing the need to provide appropriate gender-specific health care to the growing ranks of female veterans, the U.S. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held an oversight hearing on July 14 to identify barriers and gaps preventing female veterans from accessing their VA health care.

Sparked by a Government Accounting Officer report, Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka invited several prominent female veterans to testify regarding their experiences and ideas to improve the VA health care system for female veterans.

The GAO recently inspected nine VA medical centers, 10 community based outpatient clinics and eight Vet Centers to determine the VA's availability of health care for female veterans, the extent to which VA facilities were following VA policies regarding female veterans, and key challenges these facilities face providing appropriate health care to female veterans.

According to the GAO report entitled *Preliminary Finds on VA's Provision on Health Care Service to Women Veterans*, gaps were found in providing female veterans care in the following areas:

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) routinely referred female patients needing gender-specific care to other VA and non-VA medical facilities;

Outpatient mental health was limited at CBOCs;

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SHINSEKI'S PRIORITY: IMPROVING VETS' BENEFITS

PORTLAND – Addressing two venues in one day, on August 19, the message from Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki was clear—give America's veterans everything they have earned and deserve and do it better.

Sen. Ron Wyden, Gov. Ted Kulongoski and ODVA Director Jim Willis joined Shinseki as he addressed the national convention of Blinded Veterans Association of America. He said VA has a backlog of more than 145,000

claims with nearly 400,000 in the system. "Veterans are waiting far too long for their checks and services," Shinseki said. "I'm doing something about that."

Shinseki said VA must provide more veteran centers. VA is developing an electronic medical records database that will be tied to a veteran's military service records and available for VA use. "Using that technology will mean no lost records and fewer errors," he said.

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Director's Message

*Jim Willis,
Director,
Oregon
Department
of Veterans'
Affairs*

STOLEN VALOR: PHONIES, FAKES AND FRAUDS

President George W. Bush signed the Stolen Valor Act into law on Dec. 20, 2006. Title 18, United States Code, Section 704 prohibits the unauthorized wearing, manufacturing or selling of all military awards. Violators of this statute face a fine of up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment of up to one year.

Specific details regarding the sale or offering for sale of protected military awards are important. In the case of a person wearing unauthorized medals, specific details about the venue that was attended, other potential witnesses, and specific claims made by the imposter when questioned are key points in determining if a violation of federal law has occurred.

How do you spot imposters? When asked to verify details of their military records, phonies often say they didn't go through the normal military channels, said Mike Sandborn, a Washington D.C. FBI Special Agent and former Marine captain who works medals fraud cases. Phonies will often say they were in high demand by the military and weren't required to go through the normal training.

An imposter will often say that the details of his or her career exploits are classified. But even with awards for classified actions,

ceremonies are not classified. Veterans claiming to have received an award should be able to produce an order granting it no matter how secretive the action. Imposters may also say that their military documents were destroyed by fire or some similar disaster.

Check their decorations. Imposters often wear medals in the wrong order or in disproportion to their time in service (if they were in the service at all).

Check their birth date. When it comes to the Medal of Honor, age matters. According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the youngest living recipient is 53-year-old Gordon R. Roberts.

Just ask. Don't be afraid to test someone if you think they're faking, FBI agents say. If they're legit, they won't mind if you ask questions. Highly decorated veterans usually are very modest and rarely draw attention to their accomplishments. Imposters love to boast. Remember that true heroism is like a river – the deeper it runs, the quieter it is.

If you have reason to believe that a person or persons are wearing or selling military awards illegally, contact your local FBI Office. In Oregon that number is 503-224-4181.

You may also want to check out online databases for information about both real

and fraudulent war heroes. The site www.homeofheroes.com has a confidential online "bust a phony" form. Information submitted is turned over to the FBI.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society also maintains a list of living MOH award recipients at www.cmohs.org.

If you suspect someone may be a phony POW, it is recommended you go www.pownetwork.org/phonies/phonies.htm to see if they have already been reported. Many other sites exist that are devoted to identifying phony SEALs, Special Ops, Special Forces, etc.

The bottom line is that too many people have sacrificed too much to allow Phonies, Fakes and Frauds to steal the valor of our real heroes. Report these cowards so that they may be held accountable for their actions.

Jim Willis, Director

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

MOUNT TABOR PARK BENCH DEDICATED TO LOCAL HERO

PORTLAND – Mt. Tabor Park was one of his favorite places and often he could be seen walking through its trails. Howard Ramsey passed away in 2007; however, the memory of Oregon's last World War I veteran will remain at the Park through a memorial bench and plaque established in his and other veterans' honor on August 1.

Ramsey was born in 1898 during President McKinley's administration and once served as a driver for Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing in France during the war. Ramsey was 107 years old when he passed.

The bench dedication coincided with the Mt. Tabor Park's Centennial Celebration and park patrons immediately used the bench.



A plaque accompanying the bench reads:

*"In Memory of Howard V. Ramsey 1898-2007.
Howard Ramsey was the last survivor of many Mt. Tabor neighbors who served our country with honor in World War I, and cared for this city upon their return.
He loved Mt. Tabor Park and regularly strolled around this reservoir for over 50 Years."*



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FRANCE GIVES HIGHEST AWARD TO WWII VETS

PORTLAND - Saying they were just doing their jobs, three Oregon World War II veterans were honored for their service July 10 when the French Consul General awarded the aging trio that nation's highest award, the Legion d'Honneur.

George Insley, 87, Dale Reynolds, 88, William Tankersley, 84, stood proudly as French Consul General Pierre-Francois Mourier pinned the red ribbons and gold and white medals on their chests. He declared each a "chevalier," or knight of the Legion. Salem's Don Malarkey also received the honor, but was unable to attend the event.

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Deputy Director Paula Brown read a letter to Mourier from Gov. Ted Kulongoski. She later presented each man with a personal letter from the governor.

In his opening remarks before a crowd of nearly 100 people, Mourier extended France's sincere gratitude for the sacrifice hundreds of thousands of Americans made.

"As young men you left your country, your family and friends to risk your lives," he said. "You did your duty and France will never forget."

For Reynolds, the memory of fighting his way across France with the U.S. Army's 94th Infantry Division has been a stark reminder of that war. The 94th was part of Gen. George Patton's 3rd U.S. Army that fought all the way to Belgium and took part in combat in the Ardennes known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Reynolds was wounded there. He then returned to the front, and was wounded a second time in Feb. 1945. His right arm was shattered, a disability that was obvious as he shook the French Consul General's hand.

Like so many of his contemporaries, he has seldom spoken of his wartime experiences.

"It takes more than just one man to go into battle and I served with hundreds of great men," Reynolds said afterward. "In most cases, you



Participating in the Legion d'Honneur award ceremony were (left to right) Paula Brown, ODVA Deputy Director, William Tankersley, French Consul General Pierre-Francois Mourier, Dale Reynolds and George Insley.

were just trying to keep yourself safe and your buddy safe."

Established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the medal was presented "to reward men both for outstanding military accomplishments as well as for other distinguished service to the State."

George Insley of Roseburg had joined the Army Air Corps along with his two brothers.

As a bomber pilot stationed in England, he remembered Christmas in 1943. It was icy and rainy. During a pre-flight mission briefing, Insley and his B-24 aircrew learned their target would be Berlin.



Before he went aboard the bomber, he felt overwhelmed with fear and anxiety.

"I went outside and said, 'Lord, I need a little more help.'" The mission was later cancelled, but Insley remembered his prayerful promise. After the war, the same veteran who had earned three Distinguished Service Crosses and nine Air Medals, would spend decades as a bush pilot in South America for Wycliffe Bible Translators International "being of service."

A retired police chief and juvenile court director from Myrtle Point, Tankersley had landed with the 90th Infantry Division at Utah Beach on June 7, 1944, and fought across northern France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

"It didn't matter to the French that their villages had been bombed by allied forces after we landed at Normandy," Tankersley said.

"They gave us glasses of wine or flowers. All of them gave us the V for victory sign."

The tall, imposing Tankersley had already been wounded twice in 1944 before returning to the frontline. Then during the Ardennes battle in Jan. 1945, a German bullet severed the nerve in his left arm. While laying in the snow, another enemy mortar round hit nearby paralyzing his other arm.

A nurse later told Tankersley he had 16 separate wounds. His fighting days were over and he would spend more than a year in Army hospitals.

With the medal presentation, the men became part of an elite group of recipients joining Alexander Graham Bell, Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and George S. Patton, and film director Steven Spielberg.

Mourier said there has always been an attempt to include Allied soldiers who freed France after years of war and occupation.

As veterans have aged, military units and others have nominated them for recognition before it is too late.



You Showed Courage On The Battlefield

If you're struggling with thoughts of suicide, please show courage again by calling for help

1-800-273-TALK

1-800-273-8255

(press 1)

You're not alone - your fellow veterans care about you!

Make the call!

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

2009 LEGISLATURE PASSES DOZENS OF BILLS BENEFITTING OREGON'S VETERANS

SALEM – More than 30 bills improving benefits and protections for veterans passed during the 2009 Legislative Session that ended in June, prompting some to call this year the Veterans' Session.

“Gov. Ted Kulongoski, House Speaker Dave Hunt, Senate President Peter Courtney, House Veterans Committee Chair Jean Cowan and Senate Veterans Committee Chair Laurie Monnes-Anderson were tremendous supporters of our veterans,” said Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis. “Their leadership and support of our veterans' legislative packet ensured that the lives of Oregon veterans were improved this session.”

More than half the bills that the Legislature passed came from recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services, which had studied veterans' issues for nearly 11 months prior to the beginning of the 2009 session. “The Task Force recommendations gave us clear direction as to what issues we needed to bring before the Legislature,” Willis said.

“Every legislator read the Task Force final report and understood the importance of these issues, which is why they were eager to pass veterans' legislation,” he explained.

The following are the veterans' bills that passed during the 2009 Legislative Session:

HB 2176 – Amends the eligibility criteria to be appointed to the Governor's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee so that any veteran regardless of service era may sit on committee.

HB 2177 – Allows the Director of Veterans' Affairs to dispose of non-monetary gifts (wheelchairs, crutches, clothing, etc...) directly to needy veterans.

HB 2178 – Creates the Campus Veterans' Service Officer Program, placing veterans' service officers on campus to help student veterans with the GI Bill, disability compensation claims, VA health care and other veteran benefits.

HB 2303 – Allows for damages and attorney fees to servicemember bringing action under Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

HB 2510 – Eliminates 15-year limitation on the use of Veterans' Preference points, making the veterans' preference a lifetime benefit in public hiring.

HB 2571 – Offers out of state veterans a tuition reduction when attending Oregon Universities. Out of state veterans would receive a 50 percent reduction in their out-of-state tuition costs.

HB 2718 – Creates a Women Veterans Health Care Task Force that will examine health care issues facing women veterans, including barriers to appropriate health care, access to health care, military sexual trauma, suicide and other issues. Task Force will report findings and

recommendations to the 2011 Legislature.

HB 2744 – Requires employer with 25 employees or more to allow unpaid leave to spouse of deployed servicemember.

HB 2762 – Designates May 8 as Military Families Appreciation Day during which communities will recognize its military families.

HB 3020 – Makes knowingly taking advantage of a disabled veteran, a disabled servicemember or the spouses of either an unconscionable tactic and unlawful trade practice.

HB 3104 – Directs Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide state agencies and county governments information those entities can provide to their clients regarding veterans' benefits. Creates statewide veterans outreach program.

HB 3256 – Establishes unlawful employment practices relating to military members based on the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

HB 3480 – Directs Oregon Military Department to pay members of the Oregon National Guard who develop cancer as a result of exposure to Hexavalent Chromium while serving in Iraq.

HB 5048 – Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Budget.

HJM 2 – Memorial urging Congress to fully fund Disabled Veteran Outreach Program and Local Veteran Employment Representatives within the Employment Department.

HJM 3 – Memorial urging Congress to increase funding and simplify the rules for the VA Fee Basis program, which provides payment for medical care to veterans outside of the VA health care system.

HJM 4 – Memorial urging congress to implement a “90-day soft landing” program for National Guard and Reserve veterans returning home. Program would maintain veterans on Title 10 military pay for a 90-day period during which veteran would be assessed for medical, financial, employment, education and other reintegration needs.

HJM 12 – Memorial urging Congress to increase the travel reimbursement for veterans traveling longer distances to VA medical facilities.

HJM 21 – Memorial urging Congress to make the VA Health Administration funding permanent instead of discretionary.

HJR 7 – Oregon Constitutional Amendment eliminating the 30-year restriction on the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs home loan program and redefining the eligibility of veteran as defined in HB 3470 (ORS 408.225 Oregon Laws, 2009 SB 96). Will be on May 2010 ballot.

SB 94 – Allows Oregon Department of

Veterans' Affairs to conduct background checks on new employees and employees who are promoted or transferred within Department.

SB 96 – Consolidates the definition of veteran in statute under ORS. 408.225. Eliminates term “war veteran.” Under new statute, a veteran is defined as:

A person who served on Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States;

For a period of more than 90 consecutive days beginning on or before January 31, 1955, and was discharged or released under honorable conditions;

For a period of more than 178 days beginning after January 31, 1955 and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions;

For a period of 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions because of a service-connected disability;

For 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions and has a disability rating from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or

For at least one day in a combat zone and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions;

Received a combat ribbon or an expeditionary medal for service in the Armed Forces of the United States and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions; or

Is receiving a non-service connected pension from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

SB 97 – Allows the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to purchase Loan Cancellation Life Insurance to offer to its loan clients. Previously, Department of Administrative Services purchased this insurance for the Department according to statute.

SB 98 – Creates Veterans' Transportation Task Force to examine veteran transportation needs to and from VA medical facilities statewide.

SB 449 – Designates Highway 97 as World War II Veterans' Historic Highway. Allows private group to erect signage near World War II historic military camps. Does not eliminate Blue Star Highway designation; does not use General Fund money.

SB 479 – Gives preference to disabled veteran owned business in public contracting.

SB 595 – Provides tuition waiver based on seats available at Oregon universities

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to dependents of servicemembers killed in action and veterans rated 100 percent service-connected disabled. Does not include community colleges.

SB 618 – Protects military separation documents (DD-214s) maintained at county clerks' offices from public disclosure.

SB 700 – Creates Reintegration Task Force to examine veteran reintegration issues and implement regional reintegration program.

SB 731 – Provides that all funds that are exempt under federal law from garnishment remain exempt when deposited in debtor's financial account as long as exempt funds are reasonably identified. Establishes financial threshold for protection.

SJM 1 – Memorial urging Congress to eliminate the 25-year restriction on the use of Qualified Veterans' Mortgage Bonds so that state veterans' home loan programs can be a lifetime benefit.

SJM 2 – Memorial urging Congress to create and fund a veterans' transportation network in Oregon to provide transportation to and from VA medical facilities.

SJM 3 – Memorial urging Congress to fully fund Category 8 in the VA health care system, allowing all veterans access to VA health care.

Editor's note: All memorials are tied to federal legislation being supported by the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

To view a bill or see a bill's legislative history, visit the Oregon Legislature website at: www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws/

USDVA TO EXPAND COMBAT VETERAN COUNSELING IN BEND

WASHINGTON DC - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced Aug. 14, that combat veterans will receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in 28 additional communities across the country where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will establish Vet Centers in 2010.

One of the new centers will be built in Bend. When completed, the new center will be the only one located east of the Cascade Mountains. Oregon's other centers are in Portland, Salem, Eugene, and Grants Pass.

A new center will also be built in Walla Walla, Wash. to serve veterans in Umatilla County.

"VA is committed to providing high-quality outreach and readjustment counseling to all combat Veterans," Shinseki said. "These 28 new Vet Centers will address the growing need for those services."

These community-based Vet Centers -- already in all 50 states -- are a key component of VA's mental health program, providing veterans with mental health screening and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) counseling. The

232 existing centers also conduct community outreach to offer counseling on employment, family issues, education to combat veterans and family members, bereavement counseling for



families of servicemembers killed on active duty, and counseling for veterans who were sexually harassed on active duty.

More than 70 percent of Vet Center employees are veterans themselves and most have served in combat zones. Learn more about Vet Centers at: www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp.

STAND DOWN IN DALLAS

Dallas City Park will be the site of the Marion and Polk County Veterans Stand-Down, Sept. 19. There will be food, entertainment, and a wide range of veteran services and veterans organizations represented including ODVA. The event is open to all veterans.



Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Location: Dallas City Park, Levens St. near Walnut.



MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Magazine Subscription Program, veterans residing at the Oregon Veterans' Home enjoy reading current magazines.

The individuals listed below have recently joined dozens of previous donors to support this meaningful program. Their generosity is greatly appreciated by our veteran residents.

Royal Neighbors Lodge
Penelope White

For information concerning the Magazine Subscription Program, please contact Linda Adams at the Oregon Veterans' Home by calling 1-800-846-8460 or 541-296-7152 or e-mail: adamsl@odva.state.or.us.

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Whether you're just back from a combat zone or have been home for 60 years, you may be eligible for federal VA benefits. Give the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs a call so we can direct you to the Veteran Service Officer nearest you!

800-692-9666

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

Few VA medical centers provided gender-specific inpatient or residential mental health treatment for women, instead having mixed-gender services;

VA medical facilities had not fully implemented VA policies pertaining to the delivery of health care services for women veterans;

None of the facilities inspected fully complied with VA policies related to ensuring the privacy of women veterans;

VA officials were unclear about steps needed to implement VA's new female veterans health care initiatives;

VA officials noted difficulty hiring primary care providers with specific training and experience needed to provide services to female veterans;

VA officials noted difficulty hiring mental health providers with training and experience treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Military Sexual Trauma;

VA officials noted difficulty in establishing the Women Veterans Program Manager as a full-time position; and

VA officials noted space constraints as a challenge affecting provisions of appropriate female veteran health care.

The GAO's findings are consistent with an internal report conducted by the VA in November 2008. In that report entitled *Report of the Under Secretary for Health Workgroup: Provisions of Primary Care to Women Veterans*, the following challenges were identified:

VA recognizes that women have been under-served in the veterans health care system. Utilization rates for men have held at approximately 22 percent for many years while the rates for women range between 11-19 percent. Research shows that women veterans do not self-identify as bona fide veterans and are more likely to be unaware of their enrollment eligibility.

VA acknowledges there is a clear and growing need for improved service delivery to women veterans in VHA (Veterans Health Administration). Given significantly higher VA utilization rates among women returning from OIF/OEF, VA expects the number of women coming to VA for care will likely double within the next four years.

VA reports have shown a significant demographic shift related to women VA users and notes the impact of age-related health concerns for this population.

Gender disparities were identified in quality of care in VHA between men and women.

Routine fragmentation of health care delivery to women veterans poses possible negative health outcomes.

VHA has an overwhelmingly insufficient number of clinicians with specific training and experience in women's health.

There is inconsistent policy in place for women's health care delivery in VHA.

The Testimony

Kayla Williams was a soldier with the 101st Airborne Division and is an Iraq veteran. As an Arabic linguist, Williams conducted combat foot patrols in Baghdad during the first phase of the war in 2003. "During the initial invasion, my team came under small arms fire. Later in Mosul, we were mortared regularly," she told the committee. "I served right alongside my male peers: with our flak vests on during missions, we were all truly soldiers," she said.



"However, it became clear upon our return that most people did not understand what women in today's military experience... Even Veterans Affairs employees are still sometimes unclear on the nature of modern warfare, which presents challenges for women seeking care," Williams continued. "For example, being in combat is linked to post traumatic stress disorder, but since women are supposedly barred from combat, they face challenges proving their PTSD is service-connected. One of my closest friends was told by a VA doctor that she could not possibly have PTSD for just this reason: he did not believe that she – as a woman – could have been in combat," Williams told the committee.

Williams' story is not unique. More than 102,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2002. Many served as combat medics, linguists and other "support" functions that place them side by side with their male counterparts in combat.

As retired Air Force Master Sergeant Delilah Washburn testified, "Because there is no clear front line on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, female servicemembers are exposed to direct fire, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and

constant threats from insurgents without the benefit of awards and decorations to prove it."

One such veteran is Genevieve Chase, an Operation Enduring Freedom veteran who lived through a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosion Device attack. In her testimony before the committee, Chase recounted her experience with the VA.

"During the past two years, I have gone to the VA website repeatedly and called the VA to pursue an assessment and screening for TBI and other related issues. After attempting to navigate through the bureaucracy, I gave up, frustrated by an unclear website and unfriendly service on the other end of the phone," Chase told the committee.

"I looked to the VA for help when I most needed it, but never succeeded in completing my enrollment, let alone receiving the care I needed. In communicating with other veterans, I have found that I am hardly alone in this."

Both the VA and Congress are listening to these women veterans. According to Lawrence Deyton of the VHA, enhancing primary care for women veterans is one of the VA's top priorities.

"VA recognizes that a growing number of women veterans are choosing VA for their health care," Deyton said. "VA is implementing an innovative approach to women's health care that seeks to reduce the possibilities of fragmented care, quality disparities, and lack of provider proficiency in women's health by fundamentally changing the experience of women veterans in VA."

Recommendations

Referring to the VA's *Provisions of Primary Care to Women Veterans* report, Deyton related the reports recommendations that the VA is working to implement. These recommendations include:

Delivering coordinated, comprehensive primary women's health care at every VA health care facility by recognizing best practices and developing systems and structure for care delivery appropriate to women veterans.

Integrating women's mental health care as part of primary care, including co-locating mental health providers.

Promoting and incentivizing innovation in care delivery by supporting local best practices.

Cultivating and enhancing capabilities of all

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WOMEN VETS FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

VA staff to meet the comprehensive health care needs of women veterans.

Achieving gender equity in the provisions of clinical care.

According to Deyton, three models are being explored. Under the first model, women veterans are seen within a gender-neutral primary care clinic.

Under the second model, women veterans are seen in a separate but shared space that may be located within or adjacent to a primary care clinic.

Under the third model, Deyton said women veterans are seen in an exclusive space with a separate entrance into the clinical area and a distinct waiting room. One-third of VA facilities already have adopted the third model and found it to be very effective.

To help push the issue, Congress has introduced several bills, including H.R. 1121, the Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act co-sponsored by Oregon Congressman David Wu. The bill requires key studies assessing VA health care services provided to women veterans, including assessment of barriers.

The bill also provides seven days of medical care for newborn children of women veterans; authorizes a child care pilot program; requires mental health professionals to receive training on caring for veterans suffering from military sexual trauma and PTSD; and empower OEF/OIF women veterans to serve on the VA's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and other committees.

In Oregon

The issues before Congress parallel the findings of the Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services, which also found significant gaps in services to women veterans in Oregon.

The 2009 Oregon Legislature passed a bill creating a Women Veterans Health Care

Task Force that will examine these issues in depth and make recommendations to the 2011 Legislature.

The Legislature also directed the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) and the Oregon Military Department to conduct education and outreach to veterans regarding PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Suicide.

Women veterans are now being targeted for this outreach. According to VA statistics, 21 percent of women veterans have experienced Military Sexual Trauma (as compared to 1.5 percent for male veterans) and a higher

percentage of women veterans are committing suicide than their male counterparts.

"We are committed to ensuring that our women veterans receive all the benefits they have earned and that those benefits are delivered in appropriate ways," ODVA Director Jim Willis said.

"We will work with the federal VA, our congressional delegation, the legislature and health care providers to do all we can to correct deficiencies in the system so that our female veterans are treated with the honor and dignity they deserve."

CAMP ADAIR TO GET HISTORICAL MARKER

The Oregon Historical Marker Committee will dedicate one of the state's newest historical markers at the former World War II military training site, Camp Adair.

The Camp Adair marker will be dedicated during a ceremony on Sept. 19, at 11 a.m. The marker is located near the Camp Adair Memorial Park, at 2955 Camp Adair Road, off Highway 99E, 13 miles north of Corvallis.

From 1942-43, four U.S. Army infantry divisions were trained at Camp Adair for overseas duty: the 91st Powder River Infantry Division, 96th Deadeye Infantry Division,

104th Timberwolf Infantry Division, and 70th Trailblazer Infantry Division.

The camp was named in honor of Lt. Henry R. Adair. A West Point graduate and descendant of Oregon pioneers, he was the first Oregonian killed during the 1916 Mexican border clashes.

To obtain more information regarding the Camp Adair Historical Marker dedication, contact Oregon's Travel Information Council at 800-574-9397, or email Annie Von Domitz: annie@oregontic.com.

OPERATION SANTA BEGINS

Operation Santa 2009 will kick-off Sept. 11 and volunteers will be needed to organize and begin packing for more than 20,000 troops to ship "Christmas-in-a-box" this holiday season.

Holidays continue to be the most difficult time for military members as they are separated from families and friends. Packages will be filled with socks, hand warmers, calling cards and holiday snacks, as well as cards and letters of support and thanks. Volunteers are still needed to help ship these special packages.

To help, contact Connie Riecke, 503-409-5905, email: info@marinecorpsfamilyfoundation.org or, www.marinecorpsfamilyfoundation.org.



Attention All Veterans!

Did you experience any unwanted sexual attention, uninvited sexual advances, or forced sex while in the military? Does this experience continue to affect your life today?

Both women and men can experience sexual harassment or sexual assault during their military service. VA refers to these experiences as military sexual trauma, or MST. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively affect a person's mental and physical health, even many years later.

Some problems associated with MST include:

- Disturbing memories or nightmares
- Difficulty feeling safe
- Feelings of depression or numbness
- Problems with alcohol or other drugs
- Feeling isolated from other people
- Problems with anger or irritability
- Problems with sleep
- Physical health problems

If you have experienced military sexual trauma, seek help by calling the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs at **800-692-9666**, and ask to speak to a counselor.





FRIENDS OF THE HOME



Donations to the Oregon Veterans' Home Trust Fund continue to be received. We deeply appreciate the thoughtfulness and generosity of an ever-growing number of Friends of the Home. To become a friend of the Home, use the gift form on page 10, and make a tax-deductible donation today. Those who contributed during the months of June and July, 2009 are listed below:

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 Stanley W. Elliott
 George Fogg
 Doug Foss
 Dewey France
 John Gallagher
 Stephen R. Gracon
 William C. Greig
 Gresham Ford
 Max Gutierrez
 Thomas and Virginia Hake
 Keith Hanson
 Barbara Hayden
 Vic Hefferin
 John and Barbara Heile
 Bruce Hembling
 Mary Hill
 Hood River Elks Lodge #1507
 Ray Inabnitt
 Charles and Patricia Ives
 Michael and Linda Jenks
 Gretchen G. Johnson
 Jolene Jonas
 Larry and Sarah Keil
 Louis Kingman
 Knights of Columbus

Knights of Columbus—Portland
 Korean War Veterans Association
 Howard E. Kronish
 Thomas T. Lanman
 Arnold Larson
 Lebanon Elks Lodge #1663
 Becky Lowmaster
 Marine Corps League—OR Devil Dogs
 Bill Marker
 Keith R. Masterson
 Bob McConnell
 Florence McCulley
 Eugene Melvin
 Military Officers Association
 —Portland Chapter
 Military Officers Association
 —Willamette Chapter
 Military Order of the Cooties—Salem
 Military Order of the Cooties—Corvallis
 Military Order of the Cooties
 —Rimrock Pup Tent #8
 Military Order of the Purple Heart
 —Ladies Auxiliary—Dept. of Oregon
 Military Order of the World Wars—Salem
 Gary and Janet Miller
 John Miller
 Darrell and Winifred Mitchell
 Norb Murray
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 Charles Norman
 William Olson
 Oregon Coastal Quilters Guild
 Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association
 Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Shop
 Tino Ornelas
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 Clair Pense
 Gerard Perrone
 Mel and Norma Peterson
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 Bob Reily
 Stanton M. Rickey

Linda Roberts
 Eugene Robertson
 Ed and Shirley Rognle
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 John E. Ryan
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 Jane T. Sabat
 Scrapbag Quilters
 Elizabeth E. Serna
 Gregory R. Smith
 Myrle Smith
 Celia Smith
 Troy and Earlene Stubbs
 Larry and Jane Sundberg
 Dennis Templer
 The Pinheads 4-H Sewing Club
 The Regence Employee Giving
 Campaign
 John and Lois Thienes
 Dennis George Thompson
 Gary Van Orman
 Richard Van Zante
 VFW Post 1325
 VFW Martin J. Ryan Post 2666
 VFW Willamina Auxiliary #4211
 Vietnam Veterans of America
 —Chapter 805
 Vietnam Veterans of America
 —Chapter 820
 Cork and Linda Walker
 WAVES National Unit 70
 —Columbia River Ripples
 Richard Welch
 Robert and Karen Welch
 Gregory R. White
 Michael Williams
 Helen and Clyde Wilson
 Ila Winslow
 Virginia Wood
 Bill and Karen Wright
 Gary Zwicker

Veterans Day Events Information Needed

The *VETS NEWS* is seeking input from community event organizers statewide to compile a comprehensive list of Veterans Day activities. Annually, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs publishes this list in the Nov./Dec. issue. The deadline for receiving Veterans Day event information is Oct. 5. To have your event listed, please submit a brief description in writing with the following information:

- Date and time
- Organization hosting or sponsoring the event
- Event location and address
- A very brief description of the event
- Name and phone number of contact person

Mail your information to: Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, *VETS NEWS*, 700 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR 97301-1285; or fax it Attn: *VETS NEWS* to 503-373-2362; or email to: vetsnews@odva.state.or.us.
 If you have questions, call toll free, 1-800-828-8801, ext. 2390, or 503-373-2390.

2009 MILITARY REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association is having their 31st national reunion, Sept. 9-12, in Portland, OR. For information: 360-256-5788 or 541-689-0721. Email: 2009portland@usncva.org. Website: www.usncva.org.

11th Armored Cavalry Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia (ACVVC) is having their annual reunion, Sept. 9-13, in Santa Clara, CA. See website for information: www.11thcavnam.com.

Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum is hosting the 3rd Annual Fly-in, Sept. 11-13, at 1600 Air Museum Road, near the Hood River Airport. Displays contain working models of military aircraft, jeeps, and old weapons. Admission: Veterans discount; free for active duty military. For information: 541-308-1600; www.waaamuseum.org/events

Soldier Angels and Operation Homefront will hold a Veterans Appreciation Day to honor active duty, reserve and veteran military members, Sept. 12, at the McMinnville Armory, 333 Armory Way. For information: Dawn Bevil; 503-857-0948.

Farragut Naval Training Station is having their annual reunion, Sept. 12, at Farragut State Park, Athol, ID. For information: Janice Lauer, 208-660-0660, or Bob Moore, 208-683-5707.

USS Long Beach CGN-9 Association is having their reunion, Sept. 14-20, at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, 4450 S. Palo Verde, Tucson, AZ. Reservations call: 520-746-1161. For information: Don Shade, 299 Klanstone Rd, Lot 92, Jamestown, NY 14701. Phone: 866-352-2469. Email: LBCGN9@aol.com. Website: www.usslongbeach-assoc.org

Society of the Third Infantry Division is having their 90th reunion, Sept. 16-20, at the Clarion Hotel in Springfield, MO. For information: Linda Irvine, 360-663-2521. Email: info@thereunionbrat.com

Oregon Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America will hold their State Convention, Sept. 25-27, at the Red Lion Inn, 200 N. Riverside Ave, Medford, OR. For information: Email: Merv McConnell, mervmc@west-point.org

Lincoln City to host Celebration of Honor for all veterans of America's armed forces and their families, Sept. 25-27. Activities are city-wide. For information: 541-996-5815 or, e-mail: teresas@chinookwindsgaming.com.

USS Begor APD-127 is having their reunion, Sept. 29-Oct. 3, in Portland, OR. For reservations: Red Lion Hotel Jantzen Beach, 503-283-4466. Email: theredlionjantzenbeach.com. For information: Rich Parady, 315 W. Evans

Creek Rd #50, Rogue River, OR 97537. Phone: 541-582-1761. Email: rogriv@q.com. Website: www.ussbegor.org.

Navy Net Tender/Layer is having their reunion, Oct. 5-19, at Gatherings Plus in Branson, MO. For information: Harlan Roth, 11820 SW Belmont Terr, Beaverton, OR 97008. Phone: 503-643-1424.

Veterans of the Battle of The Bulge is having their 64th reunion of the 84th Infantry Division, Oct. 6-9, in Colorado Springs, CO. For information: Bruce Morrell, 2825 Brogans Bluff Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919. Phone: 719-592-1523.

USNR Midshipmen's School New York, NY is having their reunion, Oct. 15-17, in Washington, D.C. For information: Ken Boyd, 7501 W. Britton Road Apt 319, Oklahoma City, OK 73132. Phone: 405-570-6421; or Norman Jelinek; 216-831-1011. Email: jelinek@aol.com

Fighting 69th Infantry Div. is having their reunion, Oct. 18-25, in Nashville, TN. For information: Robert Heisler, 503-463-9524.

McMinnville Pancake Breakfast at the city's Fire Department, 175 N.E. 1st St., Sunday, Oct. 11, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Everyone is invited to this "Support Our Troops" event. All profits will benefit "Operation Santa," which provides care packages for deployed troops.

Veterans of Underage Military Service meet monthly on the first Friday, Shari's Restaurant, S.E. 122nd and Sunnyside, Portland, OR, at 10:30 a.m. For information: Willie Paradise, 503-665-1733.

Submit reunion and event information to:
Department of Veterans' Affairs
Public Information
700 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97301-1285
Email: shaffes@odva.state.or.us
Fax: 503-373-2362

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
Veterans' Home Loans - Veterans' Benefits - Conservatorship
Oregon Veterans' Home (skilled nursing & rehabilitative care)
503-373-2000 or 1-800-828-8801
ODVA Website: www.oregon.gov/odva

ODVA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA provides that no qualified person with a disability shall be kept from participation in, or be denied a benefit of the services, programs, or activities of ODVA because of that disability. This publication is available in alternate formats. For this service, or concerns regarding ADA, contact the ADA Coordinator at 503-373-2380.

HIPAA Statement

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, known as HIPAA. You may obtain a copy of the ODVA Notice of Privacy Practices anytime by way of the following:

- * Access ODVA's website at www.oregon.gov/odva
- * Call ODVA at 1-800-828-8801 ext. 2141 or 503-373-2141
- * Write to ODVA's Privacy Officer to have a copy mailed to you; or
- * Ask for a copy the next time you visit ODVA.

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For more information on Veterans' Home Loans,
Contact the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
at 1-888-673-8387 or by email at orvetshomeloans@odva.state.or.us.

Also discussed was ODVA's new Campus Veterans Service Officer program that will place accredited veterans service officers on university and college campuses. The service officers will help veterans navigate the Post 9/11 GI Bill and provide information on other veteran benefits.

"Like the first GI Bill did for veterans returning from World War II, the Post 9/11 GI



VA Sec. Eric Shinseki and Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden listen to veteran's concerns during a meeting at Portland State University.

Bill will pay high dividends for these veterans. As Americans have done before, we must turn a veteran's uncertainty into opportunity," the secretary said.

Wyden and Shinseki told students during a forum at Portland State University that the proposed National Guard-Reserve Soft Landing Reintegration Act of 2009 will ensure that returning servicemembers have a firm safety net when they return from war.

It will allow them to remain on active duty for up to 90 days, collect pay, and access reintegration service to help ease the adjustment from combat to civilian life.

CORRECTION

There was a photo identification error on page 6 in the July / August edition of VETS NEWS in the article titled "Military Uniforms Displayed at the Capitol."



In the caption, the photo of Jim Hardy was mistakenly identified as Kerry Wymetalek. Hardy is with the Greater Salem Area Veterans Organizations.

GOT YOURS YET?

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has worked with the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles and the Oregon Legislature to bring you new graphic designed veteran license plates for your vehicle. Now you can show your loyalty to your branch of service or show that special medal you earned.

Just visit your local DMV office and ask how you can get one of the new veteran license plates for your automobile.

As an added bonus, a percentage of the money raised on the license plates is returned to the Oregon Veterans' Home. So you are helping others as you adorn your vehicle with new graphic plates.



Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Form

"Give to those who have already given of themselves"

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Signature: _____

Please print this form and mail it with your donation to: Oregon Veterans' Home
 c/o ODVA
 700 Summer St NE
 Salem OR 97301-1285

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE OREGON VETERANS' HOME!
 "The Place Where Honor Lives"

DOD PROGRAM WILL HELP STRUGGLING VETS, MILITARY FAMILIES

WASHINGTON DC – The Department of Defense has created a new, free program designed to reduce the stigma of mental health issues for veterans and servicemembers. Military Pathways is a voluntary, anonymous mental health and alcohol self-assessment and referral service available in Oregon and across the nation.

Developed in 2006, the assessments are available 24-hours a day and identify symptoms associated with mental health disorders and educates families on the signs and symptoms as well. The program also provides contacts to health care providers to receive confidential help with their situation.

For more information go to:
www.militarymentalhealth.org

COMMISSARY SALES COMING TO PENDLETON, ROSEBURG

Military veterans, their dependents and retirees can take advantage of savings on grocery items at on-site commissary sales in Pendleton and Roseburg.

Representatives from the Fairchild AFB, Wash. Commissary will be in Pendleton at the Oregon Army National Guard Armory on Sept. 25-26, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Disabled customers may begin shopping at 8:30 a.m.

The armory is located at 2100 N.W. 56th St., next to the airport.

Commissary staff from Beale AFB, Calif. will be holding a sale at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Roseburg, 2110 S.W. Frear St., Sept. 18-19, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Authorized customers will be able to save 30-60 percent on club packs of popular items and a variety of products. The items include: condiments, juices, cereals, health and beauty items, frozen pizza, meat, sports drinks, pet foods, detergents, household cleaning products, paper products, a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The sales are open to active-duty military, Guard/Reserve, retirees and their family members. Shoppers must bring valid military ID to enter. Cash, checks, debit and major credit cards will be accepted.

For more information about Pendleton's sale call 509-244-5591, ext. 0, or email: eric.quantock@deca.mil. For Roseburg information, email: joan.meyer@deca.mil or nolasco.templado@deca.mil

VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICERS

County	Telephone Number	Service Officer
Baker	541-523-8223	Jane Chandler
Benton	541-758-1595	Don Johnson
Clackamas	503-650-5631	Janice Harlan-Raisl
Clatsop	503-325-2429	Kenneth H. Rislow
Columbia	503-366-6580	Joseph Pyle
Coos	541-396-3121, Ext. 362	Mary Ann Sackett
Crook.....	541-447-5304	Angela Gilley
Curry	866-298-0404	Frank Van Meter
Deschutes	541-385-3214	Keith Macnamara
Douglas	541-440-4219	Mary Newman
Gilliam	541-384-6712	Paul Conway
Grant	541-575-1631	Bruce B. Makela
Harney.....	541-573-6024	Anne Lessar
Hood River	541-386-1080	Mike Benedict
Jackson	541-774-8214	Renee Burgdorf
Jefferson	541-475-5228	Tom Weiss
Josephine.....	541-474-5454	Lisa Shipley
Klamath	541-883-4274	Kathy Pierce
Lake	541-947-6043	G. Don Boone
Lane	541-682-4191	Joseph Reiley
Lincoln	541-574-6955	John Reed
Linn	800-319-3882	Kim Grooms
Malheur	541-889-6649	Bill Thomson
Marion.....	503-373-2085	ODVA
Morrow	877-999-8387	Juanita Cox
Multnomah	503-988-3620, Ext. 26123	Katie Pereault
Polk	503-373-2085	ODVA
Sherman	541-565-3408	Paul Conway
Tillamook	503-842-4358	Steve Weld
Umatilla	541-278-5482	Peggy Raines
Union	541-962-8802	Timothy H. Jederberg
Wallowa	541-426-3155, Ext. 241	Linda McIntyre
Wasco	888-804-1817	Mike Benedict
Washington	503-846-3060	Doug MacEllven
Wheeler.....	800-982-1172	Paul Conway
Yamhill	503-434-7503	Debbie Gill

Service Organizations	Telephone Number	Service Officer
American Legion	503-412-4771	Greg Demarais
Blinded Veterans Association	541-265-9087	Frank Armstrong
Disabled American Veterans	503-412-4750	Jay E. Woodbury
Military Order of the Purple Heart	503-412-4770	Jennifer Burt
Paralyzed Veterans of America	503-412-4762	Ken Fink
Veterans of Foreign Wars.....	503-412-4757	Jack Zule

State Offices-ODVA	Telephone Number	Service Officer
Salem	1-800-692-9666 or 503-373-2085	Leah Rickert Mitch Sparks Gina Thomas Jerry Wilson Doug Yerke
Portland	503-412-4777	Deanna Erhardt Linda McMillan Ed Van Dyke

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nanci L. Visser 13934 NW Meadowridge Dr. Portland, OR 97229 503-614-8463	Eugene J. LaBonte, Chair 8825 Hebo Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347 503-879-5342	Joseph R. Howell 1780 NW Valley View Drive Albany, OR 97321 541-990-4176
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Meetings of the Advisory Committee are held in the Director's Conference Room, Oregon Veterans' Building, 700 Summer Street NE, Salem, Oregon.

Special needs will be met for those who have a disability. For arrangements and meeting dates, please call 503-373-2383.

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
700 Summer Street NE
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Jim Willis, Director

September / October 2009

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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS...

WHERE EVERYDAY IS VETERANS DAY



VETS NEWS

www.oregon.gov/odva

September / October 2009
Jim Willis, Director

WOMEN VETERANS TESTIFY TO GAPS IN THE US DVA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

By Tom Mann

WASHINGTON DC – Recognizing the need to provide appropriate gender-specific health care to the growing ranks of female veterans, the U.S. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held an oversight hearing on July 14 to identify barriers and gaps preventing female veterans from accessing their VA health care.

Sparked by a Government Accounting Officer report, Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka invited several prominent female veterans to testify regarding their experiences and ideas to improve the VA health care system for female veterans.

The GAO recently inspected nine VA medical centers, 10 community based outpatient clinics and eight Vet Centers to determine the VA's availability of health care for female veterans, the extent to which VA facilities were following VA policies regarding female veterans, and key challenges these facilities face providing appropriate health care to female veterans.

According to the GAO report entitled *Preliminary Finds on VA's Provision on Health Care Service to Women Veterans*, gaps were found in providing female veterans care in the following areas:

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) routinely referred female patients needing gender-specific care to other VA and non-VA medical facilities;

Outpatient mental health was limited at CBOCs;

_____**SEE WOMEN VETS** ON PAGE 6

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claims with nearly 400,000 in the system. "Veterans are waiting far too long for their checks and services," Shinseki said. "I'm doing something about that."

Shinseki said VA must provide more veteran centers. VA is developing an electronic medical records database that will be tied to a veteran's military service records and available for VA use. "Using that technology will mean no lost records and fewer errors," he said.

_____**SEE SHINSEKI** ON PAGE 10

SHINSEKI'S PRIORITY: IMPROVING VETS' BENEFITS

PORTLAND – Addressing two venues in one day, on August 19, the message from Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki was clear—give America's veterans everything they have earned and deserve and do it better.

Sen. Ron Wyden, Gov. Ted Kulongoski and ODVA Director Jim Willis joined Shinseki as he addressed the national convention of Blinded Veterans Association of America. He said VA has a backlog of more than 145,000