OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM/ IRAQI FREEDOM REVIEW

GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

Information for Veterans Who Served in Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families

Vol. 5, No. 1 **October 2007**

VA MEDICAL CENTERS EXTENDING HOURS
Change Benefits New Combat Veterans, Older Vets

In order to provide more health care for more veterans, especially mental health services, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson directed the 153 medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to keep their doors open longer. "Illness doesn't follow a 9-to-5 schedule," Nicholson said. "I'm directing our medical centers to provide extended hours to ensure we're there for the veterans who have earned our care."

Although the extra hours apply to many hospital-based programs and services, Nicholson said his decision was based upon a desire to ensure VA's more than 9,000 mental health professionals are available when veterans need them. VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country and the nation's largest mental health program. About 5 million veterans are expected to seek health care from VA's nationwide system this year, accounting for about 800,000 hospitalizations and 60 million outpatient visits.

ABOUT THE OEF/OIF/GWOT REVIEW

Welcome to the eighth issue of the "Operations Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Review" newsletter. Earlier issues are dated December 2003, June 2004, February 2005, September 2005, February 2006, April 2007, and July 2007. VA's Environmental Agents Service (EAS) publishes the "Review" to provide information about the concerns of combat veterans, specifically the Global War on Terror Heroes, who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom (primarily in Iraq), and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, their families, and others interested in possible long-term health consequences of military service in Southwest Asia. The "Review" describes actions by VA and others to respond to these concerns. For past and current issues of the "Review" and additional information, see our web site at **www.va.gov/EnvironAgents**.

Beginning with Volume 4, Number 1 of the Review, audio files of news items (pod casts) will be available at our web site at **www.va.gov/EnvironAgents;** click on "Operation OEF/OIF".

We encourage your comments or questions concerning the content of the "Review." Please send suggestions and ideas for future issues of the newsletter to: Environmental Agents Service (131), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420.

Requests for additional copies of this and/or future issues also should be sent to the above address. A limited supply of the prior issues is available. Please specify the quantity and issue date requested.

VA RESEARCHERS DEVELOP NEW PROSTHETIC ANKLE
Nicholson: "Once Again, VA Leads in Medical Innovation"

Veterans with lower-leg amputations can look forward to having a prosthetic ankle-foot that matches their natural ease of motion, thanks to research funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and conducted by researchers from the Department and two of the nation's top universities.

"Veterans are entitled to the best this nation has to offer, and at VA, we're constantly redefining the meaning of best," said former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "This new ankle-foot prosthetic is another example of VA's medical innovations for veterans that will benefit all Americans."

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Researchers say the new ankle-foot prosthetic is the first in a new family of artificial limbs. It will replicate natural motion by propelling people forward using tendon-like springs powered by an electric motor.

Through VA-funded research, the Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine, a partnership between the Providence VA Medical Center in Rhode Island, Brown University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed the new prosthesis. The center's goal is to restore natural function to amputees.

VA expects to spend more than $1.2 billion this year on prosthetics and sensory aids, which includes glasses and hearing aids. The Department operates about 60 orthotic-prosthetic labs across the country that fabricate, fit and repair artificial limbs or oversee limbs provided by commercial vendors.

VA BRINGS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS

VA Leading the Way in Increasing Access

Addressing a special mental health forum with the top clinicians and researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced plans to begin locating some of the Department's mental health programs closer to places where primary care is provided.

"Given the reluctance of some veterans to talk about emotional problems, increasing our mental health presence in primary care settings will give veterans a familiar venue in which to receive care -- without actually going to an identified mental health clinic," Nicholson said.

Nicholson described VA as "a long-standing leader in mental health," with $3 billion devoted this year to mental health services. The Department has the nation's largest mental health program and is internationally recognized for research and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"The wounds of war are not always the result of explosions and rocket fire," he added. "They can sometimes be unseen and cloaked in silence. If left untreated, they can be just as lethal."

"We let veterans know that mental health issues and other military-related readjustment problems are not their fault – that we can help them – and that they can get better," he added.

Acknowledging that VA officials expect to see increasing numbers of newly returned combat veterans with PTSD and other mental health issues, Nicholson said mental health care is currently provided at each of VA's 153 medical centers and 882 outpatient clinics.

Nicholson also announced plans to begin a series of regional conferences related to providing mental health care to veterans with "our partners at the state, local and community levels."

Recent expansion of the Department's mental health services include:

- Greater availability of "telemental health" programs, which treated about 20,000 patients last year;
- Integrating mental health services into geriatric programs;
- Adding psychologists and social workers to the staffs of VA's polytrauma centers;
- Increasing the number of Vet Centers from 209 to 232, and
- Hiring 100 new combat veterans to run outreach programs to their former comrades.

"As the newest generation of combat veterans returns home, we want to ensure that we are providing them the very best in mental health care and treatment possible. They deserve nothing less," Nicholson said.

VA'S SUICIDE HOTLINE BEGINS OPERATIONS

"Help a Phone Call Away"

To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans and their families.

"Veterans need to know these VA professionals are literally a phone call away," said former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson said. "All service members who experience the stresses of combat can have wounds on their minds as well as their bodies. Veterans should see mental health services as another benefit they have earned, which the men and women of VA are honored to provide."

The toll-free hot line number is **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. VA's hot line will be staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. They will take toll-free calls from across the country and work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers.

To operate the national hot line, VA is partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

"The hot line will put veterans in touch – any time of the day or night, any day of the week, from anywhere in the country – with trained, caring professionals who can help," added Nicholson. "This is another example of the VA's commitment to provide world-class health care for our nation's veterans, especially combat veterans newly returned from Iraq and Afghanistan."

The suicide hot line is among several enhancements to mental health care that Nicholson has announced this year. In mid July, the Department's top mental health professionals convened in the Washington, D.C., area to review the services provided to veterans of the Global War on Terror.

VA SECRETARY PRAISES TAMPA PAIN CENTER
Local Facility Model for VA and Rest of Nation

During a recent visit, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson praised the VA's acclaimed Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital as a shining example of VA's world-class health care.

"The program at the Tampa VA Medical Center is the largest and most comprehensive pain center in the VA system," Nicholson said. "We're meeting the challenges of treating wounded servicemembers returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, while providing top-notch care to older veterans with chronic medical problems."

Nicholson noted the Tampa pain program was one of six facilities – and the only VA facility -- earlier this year to receive the American Pain Society's first "Clinical Centers of Excellence in Pain Management Awards," honoring the nation's outstanding pain care centers.

The Society recognized programs that help pain patients enhance overall functionality and quality of life through integrated care across medical disciplines. Patients in the VA pain program have, on average, a 50 percent reduction in pain during treatment. More than half of polytrauma patients leave the facility free of prescribed pain medications, while others have substantially reduced dosages.

The Tampa VA Medical Center hosts one of VA's major polytrauma centers that receive the most severely wounded veterans of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pain management for these patients is particularly challenging because many have cognitive impairment and multiple complex injuries. Patients often arrive on high doses of narcotics, which can interfere with their rehabilitation.

In its recognizing the Tampa center, the American Pain Society highlighted programs that reach beyond drugs to other approaches such as cognitive behavioral and physical therapy to treat the whole person, not just the pain. According to the Society, the Tampa facility had demonstrated that integrated, multidisciplinary pain care yields the best medical, psychological and social outcomes.

The Tampa pain center's core team includes doctors and nurses from a variety of disciplines, pain psychologists, a registered dietician, rehabilitation therapists and a social worker, with occasional assistance from a chiropractor, acupuncturist and pharmacist.

During 17 years of operation, Tampa's Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program has developed national models for managing chronic pain. The facility has devised a pain assessment questionnaire that is used by more than 800 clinicians and researchers in 36 countries.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Review continues its most recent feature, "What's New?", highlighting new programs, benefits, and services provided by VA and other agencies. Information from the July issue is provided for reference due to the interest voiced by readers.

Featured in this issue is a listing of Veteran Only Job Fairs coordinated by the US Department of Labor HireVetsFirst program. There is at least one Job Fair in each state during the month of November in honor of Veterans Day. Information provided includes a state by state listing, locations, and points of contact. Additional assistance is available on the internet at **www.hirevetsfirst.gov**.

New Programs in the October issue include:

- **One-Stop Career Centers**
- **Transition Assistance Program for Veterans (TAP)**
- **Troops to Teachers**
- **FAFSA4CASTER Early Eligibility Indicator**

ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

Veterans can find the services they need at a convenient One-Stop Career Center where they can work with a Veterans' Employment Specialist to find jobs, acquire skills and education, plan careers, attend workshops, and take advantage of other resources. Information for the One-Stop Career Center near you is available on the internet at **www.hirevetsfirst.gov/onestop_vet.asp** or by telephone toll free at **1-877-US2-JOBS**.

TROOPS TO TEACHERS

Troops-to-Teachers provides referral assistance and placement services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Troops-to-Teachers office will help applicants identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification and employment opportunities. DANTES is available on the internet at **www.ProudToServeAgain.Com** or can be e-mailed at **dantes@navy.mil**. For more information about Troops-to-Teachers, write or call:

DANTES Troops to Teachers
6490 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32509-5243
Telephone **850-452-1241** or toll free at **1-800-231-6242**.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR VETERANS (TAP)

The US Department of Labor's Transition Assistance Program for Veterans (TAP) website provides career information for active duty service members, National Guard, Reserves, and spouses of service members separating or retiring from the military.

The website (**www.dol.gov/vets/programs/tap/main.htm**) provides tools and information to use during transition from military life to civilian life. Those interested in more information may either visit the website listed above or contact **1-877-USA-JOBS**, and ask to speak with a Veterans Representative.

FAFSA4CASTER EARLY ELIGIBILITY INDICATOR

(This information is provided by the Department of Education)

What Is the Purpose of FAFSA4caster?

FAFSA4caster is a free online tool to provide students with early estimates of their eligibility for federal student aid. The tool, essentially a simpler form of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), instantly calculates an estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC), an estimated award amount for the Federal Pell Grant program, and sample award packages. Having such information helps families plan ahead for college. FAFSA4caster then pre-populates certain data on the student's official FAFSA, expediting the application process.

Who Should Use FAFSA4caster?

FAFSA4caster is for anyone who is not yet ready to file an official FAFSA, which the student must fill out to receive federal student aid.

How Do You Use FAFSA4caster?

FAFSA4caster is accessible at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov./** It is divided into three sections: "Getting Started"; "Using the FAFSA4caster"; and "What's Next." The student logs on to FAFSA4caster by providing basic identifiers such as name, Social Security number and date of birth and by creating a password. Then the student answers financial and other questions that are used in determining federal student aid eligibility. Note that no signatures are required to submit FAFSA4caster because it is not the official federal student aid application.

What Information Does FAFSA4caster Provide?

When the student clicks on the "Submit My FAFSA4caster Now" button, the tool displays an estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and invites the student to see what college might cost for him or her based on average costs for categories of schools. Then it shows the types of federal student aid that might help cover that cost, listing the student's estimated award amount for the Federal Pell Grant program and providing examples of award packages with in-state and out-of-state costs. Finally, FAFSA4caster shows any estimated financial need that remains after the estimated aid amounts and EFC are taken into account.

Note: *The EFC and award amounts provided by FAFSA4caster are estimates. FAFSA4caster explains that the student also might receive aid from the state or other entities, and it encourages the student to research scholarships and other nonfederal aid.*

What Happens After Using FAFSA4caster?

FAFSA4caster is not an aid application. The student still must fill out an official FAFSA for the year the student plans to go to college. Let's use an imaginary student called "Jane" as an example. "Jane" fills out FAFSA4caster in spring of 11th grade. "Jane"'s name and date of birth are provided to the Social Security Administration; if they match the Social Security number he provided, then a personal identification number called a Federal Student Aid PIN is generated and held in a database for "Jane". In November of "Jane"'s senior year, he receives his Federal Student Aid PIN, either via e-mail if he provided a valid e-mail address on FAFSA4caster, or via postal mail if sshe did not. Then in January or February, "Jane" receives a notice reminding her to fill out the FAFSA. "Jane" accesses the FAFSA using his PIN to identify himself (and again at the end of the FAFSA, to sign electronically). Data from "Jane"'s FAFSA4caster will automatically appear on the FAFSA, and she can update or correct items as necessary. Additional questions on the FAFSA help determine "Jane"'s eligibility for aid from states and schools.

HIREVETSFIRST: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S TRANSITION PROGRAM

The US Department of Labor (DOL) makes many programs and opportunities available to qualified veterans, reservists, and service members. These include educational opportunities, career counseling and placement assistance, as well as information resources, at DOL, VA, and other locations.

Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is the US DOL agency responsible for helping veterans make the transition from the military to good civilian jobs and for protecting their employment rights and benefits. Opportunities offered by the US DOL, both through VETS and other programs, will be featured in this and upcoming issues of the Review. Facts regarding current programs maybe obtained at the US DOL web site at **www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment_Services_fs01.htm.** Location-specific office information is available on the Internet at **www.dol.gov/dol/location.htm**.

2007 NATIONAL HireVetsFirst JOB FAIRS

State	Date	Time	Location	City	Point of Contact	Phone Number
Alabama	11/13/2007	0800-1500	Embassy Suites 700 Monroe St.	Huntsville	Terris Tatum	(256) 851-0537 ext. 254
Alaska	11/8/2007	1100-1600	Muldoon Job Center 1251 Muldoon Rd	Anchorage	Nancy Heckman	(907) 269-4774
Arkansas	10/30/2007	1000-1600	State House Convention Ctr.	Little Rock	Rex Platt	(501) 682-1544
Arizona	11/2/2007	1000-1400	Maryvale Community Center Phoenix		Michael G. Guitugua, AZ State Veterans Coordinator	(520) 628-6810 x 233
	11/3/2007	1000-1400	Bradshaw Mountain HS (east) 6000 Longlook	Prescott Valley	James Ramm	(928) 445-5100 ext. 236
	11/7/2007		Tucson VA Medical Center	Tucson	Michael G. Guitugua,	(520) 628-6810 x 233
California	11/9/2007	1000-1400	Courtyard Hotel 600 E. Esplanade Dr.	Oxnard	Daniel Venegas	(805) 382-863
	11/8/2007	1100-1500	Military.com Job Fair Radisson Hotel @ LAX	Los Angeles	Michael Gross	(877) 561-5627
	11/13/2007	1000-1400	Long Beach Convention Center	Long Beach	Michael Kane	(323) 242-6704
Colorado	11/6/2007	1000-1400	Police Protective Services 2105 Decatur St.	Denver	Tim Amthor State Veterans Coordinator	(303) 318-8821
	11/9/2007	0800-1500	Downtown Municipal Center	Colorado Springs	Tim Amthor	(303) 318-8821
Connecticut	TBD		Connecticut Work Center 2 Lafayette Square	Bridgeport	Andy James	(203) 455-2711
Delaware	11/15/2007	1000-1500	Dover Downs Hotel 1131 N Dupont Hwy	Dover	Albert Barclift	(302) 761-8093
District of Columbia	11/8/2007	1000-1500	MOAA Career Fair Washington Convention Center	District of Columbia.	Dick Crampton – MOAA	(703) 838-6622 x-107
Florida	11/3/2007	0900-1400	Comfort Inn and Conference Center 8700 Navarre Parkway	Navarre	Bill Neal	(850) 595-5200 ext. 103
	11/14/2007	1100-1500	Recruit Military/MOAA Raymond James Stadium	Tampa	Larry Slagel	(513) 683-5020
Georgia	11/07-08/2007	0900-1300	VFW Post 665 1814 Victory Dr.	Columbus	Walt Pollock	(706) 649-7423
	11/8/2007	1100-1500	Recruit Military Job Fair Georgia Int. Convention Ctr.	Atlanta	Larry Slagel	(513) 683-5020
Hawaii	11/8/2007	0900-1400	DAV Hall Keehi Lagoon	Oahu	Norma McDonald	(808) 586-9065
Idaho	11/6/2007	1500-1900	Ramada Inn 133 West Burnside Ave	Pocatello/ Chubbuck	Ron Tapia	(208) 236-6710 x- 3708
	11/7/2007	1000-1400	Idaho– N. G. Armory 5453 East Seltice Way	Post Falls/ Coeur d'Alene	Robert Shoeman	(208) 769-1558 x-3993
	11/8/2007	1200-2000	Nampa Civic Center 311 3rd Street South	Boise/ Nampa	David Hoag	(208) 332-3575 x- 3272
Iowa	11/7/2007	1300 – 1500	Iowa Workforce Development 430 E. Grand Avenue	Des Moines	Doug Bryson Iowa Workforce Development	(515) 281-9629

State	Date	Time	Location	City	Point of Contact	Phone Number
Illinois	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	American Legion – Post #365 1022 Vandalia	Collinsville	Gregory Haynes Manager, Veterans Programs Gregory.haynes@illinios.gov	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	American Legion 4501 S. Airport Rd.	Bartonville	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	Richard J Daley College 7500 S Pulaski Rd.	Chicago	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	Illinois Veterans Home 1707 North 12th St.	Quincy	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	Camp Lincoln Illinois National Guard Armory 1301 N. Mac Arthur Blvd.	Springfield	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	Richland Community College #1 College Park	Decatur	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	IDES 407 North Franklin Street	Danville	Gregory Haynes	(312) 793-8961
Indiana	11/7/2007	1000 – 1500	Valle Vista Golf Club and Conference Center 755 E. Main Street	Greenwood	Tony Cross State Veterans Coordinator	(317) 232-0647
Kansas	11/6/2007	0900-1500	Central Community Church 6100 W. Maple	Wichita	Wayne Meyers State Veterans Coordinator	(785) 296-5202
Kentucky	11/7/2007	1300-1600	Receptions Conference Center 1379 Donaldson Road	Erlanger	Ken Wocher	(859) 292-6666 x-273
Louisiana	11/5/2007	0900-1200	American Legion Post 307 5518 Canal Street	New Orleans	Hal Brown	(504) 599-0339
Maine	10/25/07	0900-1600	Atrium Inn and Convention Center	Brunswick	Larz Nelson	(207) 624-5720
Maryland	11/1/2007	1100-1500	Recruit Military M & T (Raven) Stadium	Baltimore	Larry Slagel	(513) 683-5020
	11/14/2007	1000-1400	American Legion Post 136 6900 Greenbelt Road	Greenbelt	Harry Brooks	(301) 618-8435
	11/15/2007	1000-1400	Pikesville Armory Reisterstown Road	Pikesville	Harry Rutledge	(410) 767-2126
Massachusetts	11/7/2007	1000-1300	Sheraton Four Points Hotel 407 Squire Road	Revere	Alex Lawn	(978) 825-7221
	11/7/2007	1000-1400	Norwood ETR 275 Prospect St	Newton	Jake O'Hare	(617) 928-0530
	11/7/2007	0900-1500	Career Center of Lowell 18 John St	Lowell	Tina Macy	(978) 805-4710
	11/8/2007	1000-1400	Quincy Career Center 152 Parking Way	Quincy	Michael Caro	(617) 745-4000
	11/14/2007	0830-1300	Greater New Bedford Career Ctr. 618 Acushnet Ave	New Bedford	Beth Costa	(508) 990-4121
	11/14/2007	0900-1100	Franklin Hampshire Career Center One Arch Place	Greenfield	Deborah Radway	(413) 774-4361
	11/15/2007	1000-1400	Attleboro Career Center 860 South Street	Attleboro	Kristine Libertucci	(978) 534-1481 ext. 135
	11/15/2007	1000-1500	Leominister 67 Mechanic Street	Fitchburg	Linda King	(508) 222-9050 ext. 303

State	Date	Time	Location	City	Point of Contact	Phone Number
Massachusetts	11/16/2007	0900-1300	Fall River Career Center 446 N. Main St	Fall River	Stan Lukas	(508) 730-5013
	11/16/2007	0900-1300	Valley Works Career Center 80 Merrimac	Haverhill	Tom Hargraves	(978) 469-7811
Michigan	11/7/2007	0900 – 1500	Delta College 1961 Delta Road	University Center	Yves Hamel Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth	(517) 243-2515
Minnesota	11/6/2007	1100 – 1630	Eagle Brown Heritage Center 6155 Earle Brown Drive	Brooklyn Center	Gary Quernemoen Local Veterans' Employment Representative	(763) 785-6465
Mississippi	10/23/2007	0900-1400	Desoto County Civic Center	Southaven	Joe Bucker	(601) 321-6154
Missouri	11/6/2007	0900 – 1500	Cowan Civic Center	Fort Leonard Wood	Rodney Henry State Veterans Coordinator	(573) 526-9762
Montana	11/9/2007	0900-1500	Willis Cruse House	Helena	Rick Danielson	(406) 449-7666
Nebraska	11/8/2007	0900 – 1630	Nebraska Workforce Development 1050 N Street	Lincoln	Cee Cee Coatney State Veterans Coordinator	(402) 471-1932
Nevada	11/5/2007	1100-1500	Military.com Job Fair Palace Station Hotel 2411 W. Sahara	Las Vegas	Michael Gross	(877) 561-5627
New Hampshire	11/7/2007	1000-1500	Army National Guard Center 350 Meadow Street	Littleton	Ralph Hodgman	(603) 444-2971
	11/8/2007	1000-1500	Army Reserve Center Route 108	Somerworth	Allan Enario	(603) 742-3600
	11/13/2007	1000-1500	American Legion Post 4 797 Court Street	Keene	Dwight Albrecht	(603) 352-1904
	11/15/2007	1400-1900	National Guard Armory 771 Canal Street	Manchester	Ronald Stowell	(603) 627-7841
New Jersey	11/6/2007	1100 – 1500	New York Times – Hire a Hero Javits Center	New York City	Doug Latino New York Times	(212) 556-1488
New Mexico	11/07-11/09/2007	0900-1500	New Mexico – Virtual Job Fair		Christian Zafra	(505) 841-9529
New York	11/6/2007	1100 – 1500	New York Times – Hire a Hero Javits Center	New York City	Doug Latino – New York Times	(212) 556-1488
North Carolina	11/5/2007		VFW Post 2087 2605 S Elm-Eugene St.	Greensboro	Archie Barrow	(336) 334-5777 x-263
	11/7/2007		Durham Marriott at Civic Center 201 Foster St.	Durham	Linzie Atkins	(919) 560-6880 x-217
	11/7/2007		National Guard Armory 102 Spaulding Road	Marion	Tom Lamb	(828) 652-7131
	11/10/2007		Joblink Career Center 717 Market Street	Wilmington	Dan Peninger	(910) 251-5777
North Dakota	11/15/2007	1700-1930	Job Service North Dakota 1601 East Century Ave	Bismarck	Wyman Roeder	(701) 328-5043

State	Date	Time	Location	City	Point of Contact	Phone Number
Ohio	11/8/2007	1000 – 1400	Village of Woodlawn Community Center/National Guard Armory 10050 Woodlawn Blvd	Woodlawn	Bill Gaskins Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist	(513) 946-3306
Oklahoma	11/7/2007	0900-1400	American Legion Post 12 6101 NW 50th	Oklahoma City	Sandy Payne	(405) 470-3200
Oregon	11/7/2007	0900-1400	Lloyd Center – 2nd floor	Portland	John Concepcion	(503) 526-2748
Pennsylvania	11/8/2007		PA National Guard Armory Southampton Road & Roosevelt Blvd	Philadelphia	Christopher Schull	(215) 281-1044
Puerto Rico	11/16/2007	0900-1400	Veterans Advocate Office Cancha Rafael G. Amalbert	Juncos/San Juan	Angel Mojica	(787) 754-5391
Rhode Island	11/13/07	TBD	netWORKri, 1 Reservoir Ave	Providence	Joseph DesRoches	(401) 462-8912
South Carolina	11/7/2007	1000-1400	Jamil Temple 200 Jamil Road	Columbia	Chena Melvin	(803) 737-9936
South Dakota	10/17/2007	0900-1400	American Legion Post 1701 West Legion Dr	Sioux Falls	Bradley Friez	(605) 367-5344 x-220
Tennessee	11/7/2007	1000-1400	2200 Metro Center Blvd	Nashville	Ron Hammontree	(615)741-8892
Texas	11/15/2007	1100-1500	Military.com Renaissance Dallas Richardson 600 E. Outlook Dr.	Dallas	Michael Gross	(877) 561-5627
Utah	11/9/2007	1400-1800	South Towne Expo Center 9575 South State Street	Sandy	Pedro Alvalle pvalle@utah.gov	(801) 526-9758
Vermont	11/8/2007	1000-1500	Career Resources Center Burlington		Bradley Paige	(802) 652-0339
Virginia	11/8/2007	1000-1500	Richmond Speedway	Richmond	Jerry Lindsay	(804) 786-5693
Washington	11/5/2007	0900-1300	VFW Post 1263 416 Burnett Ave S	Renton	Lindvig Gregory	(253) 804-1132
	11/6/2007	1000-1400	Worksource Vancouver 5411 E. Mill Plain Blvd, #15	Vancouver	Nona Mallicoat/Holly Parkin	(360) 735-4975/5020
	11/7/2007	1000-1400	SAFECO Jackson St. Center 306 23rd Ave. S #200	Seattle	William Charles	(206) 721-6011
	11/7/2007	1000-1400	Worksource Central Basin 309 E. 5th St.	Moses Lake	Eileen Boyston	(509) 766-4111
	11/7/2007	1000-1400	Worksource Whatcom/Northwest 101 Prospect St.	Bellingham	Thomas Noel	(360) 676-3203
	11/9/2007	0900-1400	AMVETS Post #1 517 South Tyler	Tacoma	Sal Cantu	(253) 593-7351
West Virginia	11/9/2007		Charleston Marriott 200 Lee St E	Charleston	Ken Deal	(304) 558-7849
Wisconsin	11/6/2007	0900 - 1600	Waukesha County Expo Center N1 W24848 Northview Rd	Waukesha	Bruce Markert State Veterans Coordinator	(608) 267-7277
	11/7/2007	0800 - 1200	Waukesha County Expo Center N1 W24848 Northview Rd	Waukesha	Bruce Markert	(608) 267-7277
Wyoming	11/16/2007		1510 E. Pershing Blvd	Cheyenne	Jerry Davis	(307) 777-3700

For more information about US DOL employment and training programs for veterans, contact the VETS office nearest you, listed in the phone book in the US Government under the Labor Department or visit: **www.dol.gov/vets/about-vets/contacts/main.htm**.

The following information is taken from DOL's current "VETS Fact Sheet 1" at **www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment_Services_fs01.htm**. Updates will be posted in future issues.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS

The Department of Labor's VETS program offers employment and training services to eligible veterans through two principal programs: Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives Program. Information is available on the Internet at: **www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment_Services_fs01.htm#DVOP#DVOP**.

To contact a DVOP specialist, call or visit the nearest State Employment Service (sometimes known as Job Service) agency listed in the State Government section of your phone book.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S PATRIOT EXPRESS LOANS

Patriot Express is open to veterans, Reservists and National Guard members, current spouses of eligible personnel, the surviving spouses of service members who die on active duty, or spouses of veterans who die from a service connected disability.

More information about the Small Business Administration (SBA) program is available at **www.sba.gov/patriotexpress**

or contact the SBA Answer Desk
1-800-U-ASK-SBA (1-800-827-5722).

Email may be sent to: **answerdesk@sba.gov**.

VA HOME LOAN GUARANTY

A VA-guaranteed loan can be used to buy a home, a manufactured home, a condominium, or a lot for a manufactured home; to build, repair, or improve a home (including energy efficient improvements); refinance an existing loan.

You can apply by requesting your lender to obtain a certificate for you through VA's secure web site. For more information, including eligibility requirements, go to **www.homeloans.va.gov** or toll free at **1-888-244-6711**.

EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR RETURNING OEF/OIF VETERANS

Requests for education benefits from OEF/OIF veterans are receiving priority review and processing at VA in order to expedite opportunities for these newest combat veterans. VA's Education Service provides education programs and benefits to qualified veterans, service members, Reservists and dependents.

Information about the following educational programs and the applications process is available on the Internet at **www.gibill.va.gov** or by calling **1-888-GIBILL1**.

Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (MGIB-AD)

The MGIB program provides up to 36 months of education benefits to qualified veterans. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses.

Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)

The MGIB-SR program may be available to you if you are a member of the Selected Reserve. The Selected Reserve includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses.

Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)

REAP is a US Department of Defense education benefit program designed to provide educational assistance to members of the Reserve components who were called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency (contingency operation) as declared by the President or Congress. This program makes certain Reservists who were activated for at least 90 days after September 11, 2001, either eligible for education benefits or eligible for increased benefits.

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)

DEA provides education and training opportunities to the eligible dependents (usually children and spouses) of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. The program offers up to forty-five months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs,

apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course.

Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

VEAP is available if you first entered active duty between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985, and you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Your contributions are matched on a $2 for $1 basis by the Government. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Federal Student Aid

Veterans may also be eligible for Federal Student Aid programs administered by the US Department of Education. For in-depth information about the Federal Student Aid programs, please visit the US Department of Education's website at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov**.

Various Web sites do offer help filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for a fee. These sites are **not** affiliated with, or endorsed by, the US Department of Education. The Department of Education urges you **not** to pay these sites for assistance that we provide for free. If you apply using *FAFSA on the Web* at **www.FAFSA.ed.gov**, you get online instructions for each question, and you can "chat" live online with a customer service representative. Another source of free help is our online guide, *Completing the FAFSA*, at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/completefafsa**.

Whether you apply online or use the paper FAFSA, you can get free help by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at the telephone numbers listed below or by contacting the financial aid administrator at your college.
Federal Student Aid Information Center:
1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)
(TTY 1-800-730-8913)

Federal Student Aid also provides support for graduate school, mostly in the form of loans. Here are some other places you should consider looking for funding: your school, your state education agency (search online at **wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_ID=SHE**; the reference section of your school or public library; the Internet (there is a free scholarship search at **www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov**); foundations, religious organizations, community organizations, local businesses, and civic groups; organizations (including professional associations) related to your field of interest; ethnicity-based organizations; your employer; your state vocational rehabilitation agency (if appropriate); a list of state agencies is at **www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html**.

HOW TO APPLY FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION FROM VA

Like other veterans, OEF/OIF War veterans with service connected illnesses or injuries are eligible for monthly payments, called disability compensation. The disability must have been incurred or aggravated during active military service. Furthermore, the military service of the veteran must have been terminated through separation or discharge under conditions that were other than dishonorable.

Disability compensation varies according to the degree of disability and the number of dependents. Benefits are not subject to Federal or state income tax. Receipt of military retirement pay, disability severance pay, and separation incentive payments, known as SSB and VSI (Special Separation Benefits and Voluntary Separation Incentives), also affects the amount of VA compensation paid.

Disability ratings range from 0 to 100 percent (in increments of 10 percent). For example, in 2007, a veteran with a disability rating of 10 percent receives $115 per month; a veteran with disability rating of 50 percent gets $712 per month; and a veteran who is totally disabled and evaluated at 100 percent receives $2,471 monthly.

DISABILITY COMPENSATION RATES FOR 2007

Percent Disabled	No Dependents	Veteran & Spouse
10%	$115	------
20%	$225	------
30%	$348	$389
40%	$501	$556
50%	$712	$781
60%	$901	$984
70%	$1,135	$1,232
80%	$1,319	$1,430
90%	$1,483	$1,608
100%	$2,471	$2,610

Veterans with disability ratings between 30 and 100 percent also are eligible for monthly allowances for each dependent. (The amount depends on the disability rating).

A veteran who either is in need of regular aid and attendance of another person (including the veteran's spouse), or who is permanently housebound may be entitled to additional benefits. VA must make that determination before the veteran can get these benefits.

Must Apply To Be Considered

Veterans must apply separately for disability compensation. It is not provided automatically; nor does participation in a health registry substitute for filing a claim. VA veterans service representatives (VSR) can provide the necessary application and assist veterans who need help in completing it. VSRs are located at all VA Regional Offices, in most VA medical centers, and at most VA clinics.

For help in locating a VSR near you, call the following toll-free telephone number: **1-800-827-1000**.

Other Benefits

In addition to the compensation program described above, individual veterans may be eligible for the full range of other benefits offered by VA, including education and training, vocational rehabilitation, home loan guarantees, life insurance, pension, burial benefits, and more.

To learn more about VA's programs, OEF and OIF veterans and other interested parties can visit the VA home page **www.va.gov** or call **1-800-827-1000**. For additional information on other benefits programs, please check online at **www.vba.va.gov/benefit_facts/index.htm**.

VETERANS DAY

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to be of service to those who have given so much of themselves.

ADDRESS CHANGES

If this newsletter has your old address, please use this form to update our mailing list. Send the completed form to the OEF/OIF Review, Corporate Franchise Data Center, Austin Campus (200/397A), 1615 Woodward Street, Austin, TX 78772-0001. If you have access to the OEF/OIF Review via the VA Web site **www.va.gov/EnvironAgents** and wish to discontinue receiving a copy by mail, please complete the form provided and return it to the Austin Automation Center. If you are receiving more than one copy of the newsletter, please let us know. Write to the address above. Please provide your name, address, and last four digits of your Social Security number. Thank you.

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WHERE TO GET HELP

Due to a high volume of requests, this information has been updated as of October 2007 and repeated from earlier editions of the Review).

Active duty military personnel with questions or concerns about service in Southwest Asia: Contact your commanding officer or call the Department of Defense (DoD) Deployment Health Clinical Center **(1-800-796-9699)** for information. DoD also offers the "Direct Veterans Hotline," with the toll-free number **1-800-497-6261**.

OIF and OEF veterans with concerns about their health should contact their nearest VA medical center. The telephone number can be found in your local telephone directory under Department of Veterans Affairs in the "US Government" listings. Medical care is available, and a Gulf War Registry examination is also available on request for OIF veterans.

OIF and OEF veterans in need of marital/family counseling or other social services should contact the nearest VA medical center or VA Vet Center, also listed in your phonebook under Department of Veterans Affairs in the "US Government" listings. For information about these programs, call **1-800-749-8387**.The Vet Centers welcome home and honor war veterans by providing quality readjustment services in a caring manner and by assisting them and their family members toward a successful post-war adjustment in their communities.

OIF and OEF veterans seeking disability compensation for illnesses incurred in or aggravated by military service can contact a Veterans Benefits Counselor at the nearest VA regional office or health care facility at **1-800-827-1000**. You can also start a claim online at **www.va.gov**.

Additional information about the wide range of benefit programs administered by VA should contact a Veterans Service Representative at the nearest VA regional office or health care facility or visit **www.vba.va.gov**.

Representatives of veterans service organizations, like the American Legion **(1-800-433-3318)**, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States **(1-800-VFW-1899)**, and Disabled American Veterans **(1-877-426-2838)**, are very helpful to veterans seeking disability benefits. VA does not endorse or recommend any one group over another.

County Veterans Service Officers can also be of great help to many military veterans seeking benefits they earned through their service to the Nation.

For additional Federal benefit information, see VA's Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents booklet. It is updated annually to reflect changes in law and policies. It is available for purchase from the US Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402, Web site **bookstore.gpo.gov**. VA's World Wide Web pages are updated throughout the year to present the most current information. The VA home page **(www.va.gov)** contains links to selections on compensation and pension benefits, health care benefits and services, burial and memorial benefits, and more.

Department of Veterans Affairs

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