



VETERANS ADVOCATE

VA Programs for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Special points of interest:

- VA Programs for PTSD
- American Flag Folding
- Memorial Day Services
- Military Awards and Decorations

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“They say there are no more heroes. They are wrong. Every guy in my squad was a hero-and everything I know about honor, loyalty and courage, I learned from them.”
-Anonymous

PTSD is an anxiety disorder resulting from a psychologically stressful event beyond the scope of “normal” human experience. The trauma may be experienced alone (rape or assault) or in the company of groups of people (military combat). The events that can cause PTSD are called “stressors.” They include natural disasters (floods, earthquakes), accidental man-made disasters (bombing, torture, death camps). Symptoms include recurrent thoughts of a traumatic event, reduced involvement in work or outside interest,, hyper alertness, anxiety and irritability. The disorder apparently is more sever and longer lasting when the stress is of human design. As of September 2000, 133,789 veterans were receiving VA disability compensation for PTSD.

Vet Centers

A nationwide system of community-based centers, known as Vet Centers or Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers, provides counseling for psychological war trauma. VA operates 206 Vet Centers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia and Guam. In 2000, Vet Centers saw more than 131,000 veterans and provided more than 890,000 visits to veterans and family members.

Interdisciplinary teams that include psychologists, nurses and social workers staff the centers. Readjustment counseling features a non-medical setting, a mix of social services, community outreach activities, psychological counseling for war-related experiences and family counseling. These services are designed to assist

combat-affected veterans and other veterans have well-adjusted lives. Current law has extended eligibility for the program to any veteran who has served in the military in combat operations during any period of armed hostility.

Seventy-five percent of Vet Center managers are war-zone veterans primarily from Vietnam. Staffs include high percentages of minority and women veterans, and more than 60 percent are veterans of Vietnam or the Persian Gulf; another 25 percent are Vietnam-era veterans.

VA Medical Center Programs

VA operates an internationally recognized network of more than 140 specialized programs for the treatment of PTSD through its medical centers and clinics. One notable program consists of PTSD clinical teams that provide outpatient treatment, working closely

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with other VA treatment programs, including Vet Centers and the community.

In addition to 86 PTSD clinical teams, VA operates eight specialized inpatient units around the country, plus five brief-treatment units, 18 residential rehabilitation programs, and nine PTSD day hospitals. There also are four outpatient Women's Stress Disorder and Treatment Teams. A special focus in the program has included underserved and minority populations, such as African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans. A specialized PTSD inpatient treatment unit serves women veterans at the Palo Alto, Calif., VA Medical Center's Menlo Park Division.

The Veterans Millennium

Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117) provided support for new specialized PTSD and Substance Use Disorder treatment programs. The law also re-established the Under Secretary of Health's Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The statutory charge to the committee is to assess VA's capacity to diagnose and treat PTSD and to provide guidance on VA's education, research and benefits activities with regard to PTSD.

National PTSD Center

In 1989, VA established the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—a center for clinical research, training and information of PTSD. The center initially

consisted of five divisions with distinct, but complementary responsibilities: Behavioral Science, Clinical Neuroscience, Education, Evaluation, and Executive and Resource Center Divisions. Growing recognition of the dimensions of PTSD has brought new programs, such as the Women's Health Sciences Division, located at the Boston VA Medical Center, and the Pacific Islands Division in Honolulu. Among its many programs the center maintains a Web site with information about PTSD and a bibliographic database of more than 13,000 articles. (www.ncptsd.org)

National Memorial Day Concert

PBS' *2002 National Memorial Day Concert* invites the nation to pay special tribute to the Americans who are serving in the war against terrorism; the thousands of soldiers who endured the World War II Bataan Death March; and the September 11 victims and heroes of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and on Flight 93 in Pennsylvania.

The concert is broadcast live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol on **Sunday, May 26, 2002 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. ET** (check local listings) on PBS stations nationwide. The concert is broadcast overseas via American Forces Radio and Television network.

Noted actor and World War II veteran Ossie Davis returns to host the

annual event, which will weave musical performances by the National Symphony Orchestra, archival footage and dramatic readings into a salute to those who have perished, as well as those who have endured the tragedies of war. Joining Davis are Charlotte Church, Tony Danza, musical group Chicago, Heather Headley, Charles Durning, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and color guards from each of the armed forces.

Veterans and their families can visit the *National Memorial Day Concert* companion Web site at www.pbs.org/memorialdayconcert

Features on the Web site include:

1. Resources and Support
2. Honoring Our Heroes
3. Historical Resources
4. Virtual Vietnam Wall
5. Help a Homeless Veteran
6. A Chance to Share

If you have any additional questions, Please contact the *National Memorial Day Concert* mailbox at: dschenker@devillier.com

Why the American Flag is Folded 13 times

Have you ever noticed on TV or at military funerals that the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the American flag 13 times? The flag is folded 13 times when it is lowered or when it is folded and handed to the widow at the burial of a veteran.

Here it is:

1. The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
2. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.
3. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.
4. The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.
5. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for

in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

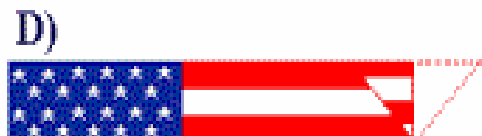
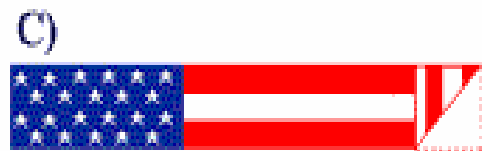
6. The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.
7. The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or with out the boundaries of our republic.
8. The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

9. The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.
10. The tenth fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, have given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.
11. The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
12. The twelfth fold, in the eyes of Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and Glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.
13. When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's

motto:

"In God We Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today. There are some traditions and ways of doing things, which have deep meaning. Please remember this one!



Anoka County Veteran Services Office

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Military Awards and Decorations

Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations, and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served. However, for Air Force (including Army Air Corps) and Army personnel, the National Personnel Records Center will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request with the verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medals.

The Standard Form (SF 180), Request Pertaining to Military Records, is recommended for requesting medals and awards. Generally there is no charge for medal or award replacements. The length of time to receive a response of your medals and awards varies depending upon the branch of service sending the medals.

For help in applying for your medals or awards, contact your local County Veteran Services Office.

Service Office Closed

The Anoka County Veteran Services office will be closed on the following dates:

Monday, May 27, 2002
Memorial Day

We highly recommend that you call the office to make sure that there is a service officer in to see you before you arrive. We are a walk-in office and see clients on a first come first serve basis.

*Valor is a gift.
Those having it never know for
sure whether they have it until
the test comes.
Carl Sandburg*

Anoka County Memorial Day Services

On Saturday, May 25, 2002, the Anoka County Veterans Council will again be sponsoring Memorial Day services at two sites within Anoka County. The County Council, which is composed of all veterans organiza-

tions and auxiliaries of Anoka County, takes great pride in hosting this event.

Memorial Day Services will be on Saturday, May 25, 2002 which will begin at Morning-side Memorial Gardens,

11800 University Ave. NW in Coon Rapids at 10:00 am. They will then continue at the Bunker Hills Park on Foley Blvd. And Highway 242 in Coon Rapids at 11:30 am. Everyone is invited to attend the family picnic

following the ceremonies at Bunker Hills Park provided by the Anoka County Veterans Council.