

Green Country **Veteran**

A JACK C. MONTGOMERY VA MEDICAL CENTER MAGAZINE

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Wounded Iraq War Veteran Determined to Enjoy Life Again

Muskogee County EMS Helps Vietnam Veteran Spend Christmas with Family

Reaching Rural Veterans Through Clinical Video Telehealth

No Veteran is Ever Buried Alone



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On the Cover:

With treatment from VA and a positive attitude, Iraq War Veteran Shane Nuttle is overcoming a major traumatic brain injury he suffered in Iraq. Read his story on pg. 4.

Green Country Veteran

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Contents

- Elementary Students Honor Veterans 3
- Cover Story: Wounded Iraq War Veteran Determined to Enjoy Life Again 4
- No Veteran Is Ever Buried Alone 8
- Veteran Enjoys Serving Other Veterans 10
- Spreading Holiday Cheer - Red Cross Visits Inpatient Veterans 11
- Muskogee Group Makes Quilts for Veterans . . . 12
- Muskogee County EMS Helps Vietnam Veteran Spend Christmas with Family 13
- Resident Physicians Play Integral Role at Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center 14
- Reaching Rural Veterans Through Clinical Video Telehealth 16
- VA Adaptive Sports 17
- Striving for a Healthy Weight 18
- Be Involved in Your Health care 20
- JCMVAMC Calendar 22

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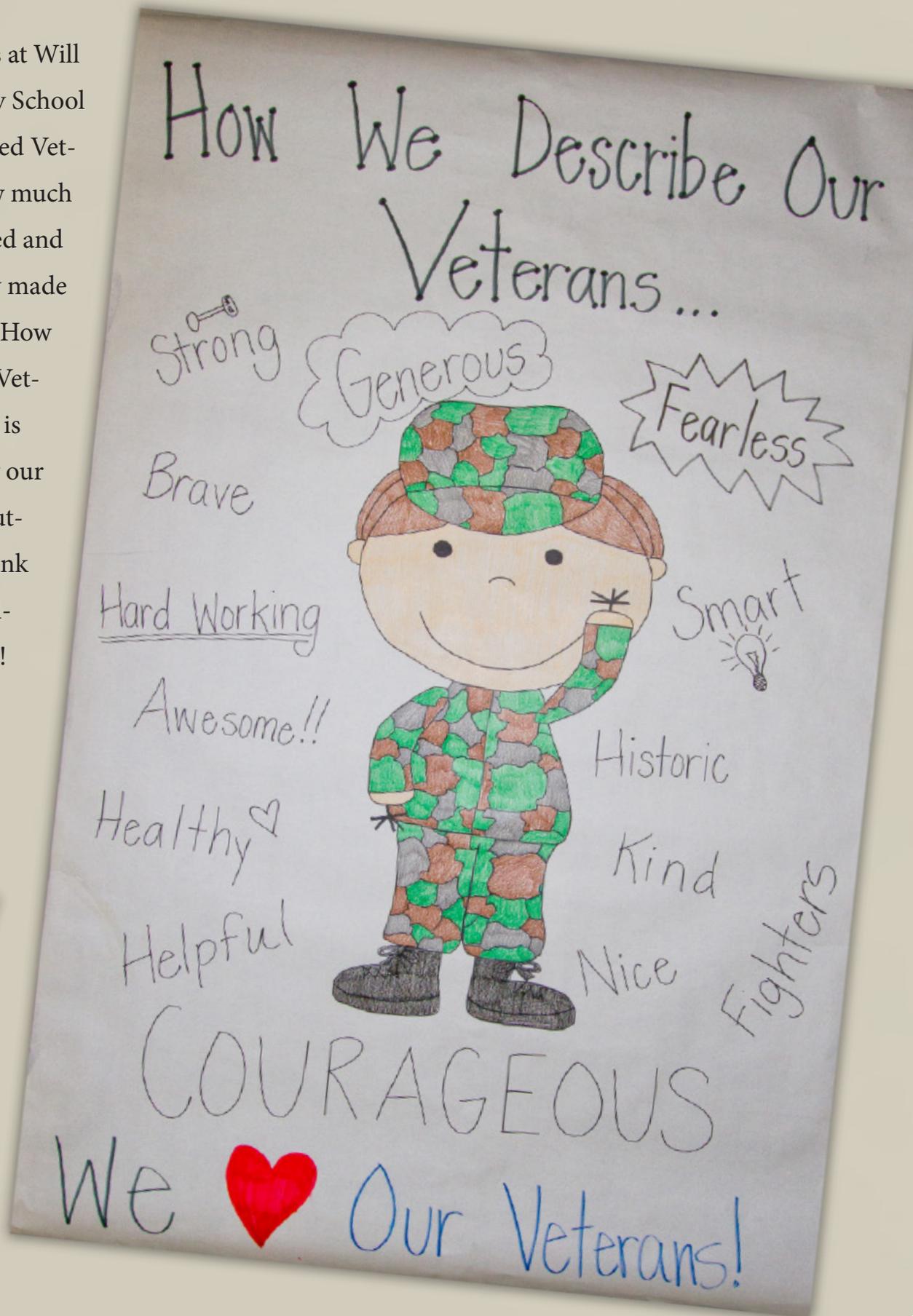
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How Do We Describe Our Veterans?

A third grade class at Will Rogers Elementary School in McAlester wanted Veterans to know how much they are appreciated and respected. So they made this poster called "How We Describe Our Veterans." The poster is being displayed by our Hartshorne VA Out-patient Clinic. Thank you Will Rogers Elementary students!



Wounded Iraq War Veteran Determined to Enjoy Life Again

Story by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist
Photos by Christopher Beshears, Visual Information Specialist

When Shane Nuttle joined the Army in 2004, his goal was to spend at least 20 years in the military.

His Army career got off to a great start when he earned his “Jump Wings” or Basic Parachutist Badge at the Army’s Airborne School. A newly minted paratrooper, Nuttle was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

After serving in the Army for one year and eight months, Nuttle deployed to Iraq in November 2006 and was stationed at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located just outside Baghdad.

On Jan. 28, 2006, exactly two months since arriving in Iraq, Nuttle was on a patrol with his platoon in Balad when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his humvee.

The Pawnee, Okla. native suffered a ruptured spleen, broken jaw and several broken bones in the left side of his face and was unconscious as Army medics gave him medical care on the battlefield. He was evacuated to a U.S. military hospital in Baghdad and then to Landstuhl, Germany and finally to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. For two weeks following the IED blast, Nuttle was in a coma.



To this day, he still doesn't remember any details of the attack.

"I don't remember the day of the injury," he said. "From what I've been told by other people in my platoon, (the IEDs) were completely unexpected and there was nothing that could have been done to prevent it."

Diagnosed with a severe Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), the injury affected his speech, vision, balance, coordination and cognitive thinking, which caused problems with his attention span, learning and decision-making. His injuries were so extensive, doctors said he would have to undergo intensive rehabilitation just to live independently on his own.

In March 2006, Nuttle was admitted to the VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (PRC) at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, which is one of five PRCs around the nation. He underwent comprehensive inpatient treatment and had to relearn how to do basic things such as eating, talking and walking.

"Basically, I had to change every aspect of the way I lived my life before the IED," said Nuttle. "I've done a lot of therapy and done a lot of recovery. It pretty much affected everything in one way or another."

Home in Oklahoma – Treatment Continues

In May 2006, Nuttle was discharged from the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and the Army allowed him to return to Pawnee to live with his parents during the remainder of his enlistment which wasn't up until 2009.

He helped his father raise cattle on the family's ranch, but he had trouble accepting his inability to do the same amount of work prior to his injury and the same lifestyle he used to live.

"Before, I was very hyper-active and hardly ever slowed down," said Nuttle. "Now I'm not on the go near as much and I'm not near as active as I was before. A lot of that also has to do with some depression issues."

Since returning to Oklahoma, he has received treatment through the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center and Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (JCMVAMC).

In 2008, he began receiving treatment through the JCMVAMC Polytrauma Support Clinic Team (PSCT), which was established that year and is today one of 87 PSCT sites around the nation.

"Basically, I had to change every aspect of the way I lived my life ... It pretty much affected everything in one way or another"

PSCTs are responsible for managing the care of Veterans who have suffered a polytrauma or TBI and assisting them with the integration

back into their home or community. The team includes a Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Physiatrist, Social Worker, Nurse Case Manager, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Rehabilitation Nurse, Speech and Language Pathologist and Rehabilitation Psychologist.

Dr. Jodi Yelverton, PSCT Director, and Janet Potter, Social Worker, met regularly with Nuttle while the entire PSCT staff met weekly to discuss his needs and progress, as well as other Veterans under their care.





Army Veteran Shane Nuttle (left) receives speech therapy from Speech and Language Pathologist Natalie Hartgrave.

The Next Chapter – Preparing for College

In 2010, Neuropsychologist Dr. Jared Bengé began working with Nuttle to help him start thinking about the next stage of life beyond his rehabilitation and help him set life goals. In 2011, Speech and Language Pathologist Natalie Hartgrave also met with Nuttle to work on his goals along with providing speech therapy.

During his meetings with Dr. Bengé and Hartgrave, Nuttle seriously considered the possibility of going to college for the first time in his life and started to dream of a future career.

“His goal was to spend 20 years in the military and that was going to be his life,” said Hartgrave. “He never pictured himself going to college and he hadn’t imagined what he’d do up until that point.”

The 29-year-old set a goal of attending Texas A&M and earning a bachelor’s degree. While the goal wouldn’t be easy since he had yet to live on his own following the injury, Hartgrave said he was determined and resilient.

“Brain injury recovery is different for everyone and the ones who make the most improvement are the ones who are willing to accept that ‘yes, something really bad happened, but it’s not going to keep me from still moving forward in life,’” said Hartgrave. “Their attitude is such a big part in how they recover and he’s definitely been the role model for that.”

Dr. Bengé and Hartgrave encouraged Nuttle to start

Hartgrave said his success is a credit to his positive attitude

small and enroll in classes locally at Tulsa Community College (TCC).

Nuttle signed up for two classes during the Fall 2012 semester, but he admitted he had doubts about whether he could finish the classes.

“For the first four weeks of the semester, I didn’t like being in the classroom setting,” he said. “I was uncomfortable. I get distracted easily and it’s hard to focus on one thing or somebody speaking.”

To help him with the coursework, Hartgrave taught him study skills and organization techniques such as setting reminders in his smart phone and writing out checklists before beginning a task.

Nuttle not only competed both courses at TCC, he received two A’s.

“He didn’t think he could do college,” said Hartgrave. “He never thought of himself as being a good student beforehand and certainly after a brain injury, he didn’t perceive himself as someone who could do that.”

Hartgrave said his success is a credit to his positive attitude.

“The biggest thing I’ve seen in him is a change in his self-esteem,” said Hartgrave. “When he set a goal that we helped him to define, he’s just worked so hard at it. He’s been very goal-driven once we helped him define goals.”

Wounded Warrior Program

To help him achieve his goal of attending Texas A&M, Nuttle also applied for the Wounded Warrior Project’s TRACK program in San Antonio. He was accepted and began the program in January. He is also living on his own, which Hartgrave says is truly remarkable.

“This was a guy who was told at some point that he can’t live alone,” said Hartgrave. “Now he’s able to independently function in another state. He has had so many obstacles to overcome. He inspires me and he has got to be one of the highlights of my career so far. It’s amazing.”

Nuttle said he is enjoying the TRACK program and hopes it will help him achieve his career goal of helping other wounded combat Veterans overcome their injuries.

“The program is phenomenal,” said Nuttle. “There are so many great things that they have done with other Veterans. There’s a group of 12 people going through the TRACK program right now. I’ll meet new friends and meet new people. I’ll be able to network, get out of my comfort zone and enjoy life again.”

Nuttle gives credit to Dr. Bengel and Hartgrave for helping him to change how he perceived himself and for helping him set life goals.

“Dr. Bengel and Natalie Hartgrave got me back to wanting to live a life somewhat to what I use to live,” he said. “The VA has done a lot.” ★

Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that seeks to raise awareness and to enlist the public’s aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs.

According to the WWP website, the organization began when several Veterans and friends, moved by stories of the first wounded service members returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq, took action to help others in need. What started as a program to provide comfort items to wounded service members has grown into a complete rehabilitative effort to assist warriors as they recover and transition back to civilian life. Thousands of wounded warriors and caregivers receive support each year through WWP programs designed to nurture the mind and body, and encourage economic empowerment.

For more information on WWP, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.





John Perry, an Air Force Veteran and cemetery technician at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, accepted Day's burial flag on behalf of the cemetery since no next of kin were present.



No Veteran is Ever Buried Alone

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

On Nov. 29, members of the local community gathered at Fort Gibson National Cemetery to pay their final respects to a man they did not personally know.

But they came to the cemetery to honor the man, because he was a Veteran and no Veteran should ever be buried alone.

The Veteran was Steven Ray Day, who served in the Army from 1975 to 1979 and achieved the rank of Private First Class. Day, who received his health care at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (JCMVAMC), had no known family or relatives when he passed away on Nov. 23 at the age of 60.

When the American Legion Post 15 in Muskogee heard that Day had no next of kin, they asked local Veteran groups and the local community to gather at the cemetery to honor Day and render a final salute.

Approximately 30 people turned out for the service, which included members from the American Legion Post 15, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 474, Patriot Guard Riders of Oklahoma, Fort Gibson Police Officers, 10 JCMVAMC employees and Fort Gibson National Cemetery staff members.

“I thought it was a tremendous response,” said Raul Rizo, an Air Force Veteran and member of the American Legion which served as the honor guard for the service. “It was a very patriotic gesture on the part of our citi-

zens and it took effort, time, fuel and the plain old element of caring to be there. To me, it was very comforting and a reassuring feeling of patriotism in our community.”

John Perry, an Air Force Veteran and cemetery technician at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, accepted the burial flag on behalf of the cemetery since no next of kin were present. The cemetery will display the flag in their Avenue of Flags, which are flown inside the entrance of the cemetery on special days of significance such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Bill Rhoades, the cemetery director, attended Day’s funeral service and said no Veteran ever gets buried alone.

“It is an honor for us to serve all of our Veterans here,” said Rhoades, a Coast Guard Veteran. “Whether we’re burying someone who is a highly decorated Veteran or whether it’s someone whose had 30 days of military service, they answered the call, did what their nation asked them to do and we do everything we can to pay them dignity and respect.”

JCMVAMC Chaplain Forrest Kirk, who officiated the funeral service, said he was touched by the turnout from the community and said it showed that someone who served is never without family.

“We’re his family,” said Kirk, a Navy Veteran. ★

Veteran Enjoys Serving Other Veterans

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist



Vietnam Veteran Michael Pegg spends most of his work day on his feet.

Pegg works for Patient Transport at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center and is responsible for transporting patients via wheelchair from various units and departments within the hospital.

When an inpatient unit such as 4 East or the Emergency Department need a patient transported to X-Ray for a CT

scan or to the Laboratory for a blood test, they call Patient Transport. When a patient is ready for discharge, they call Patient Transport.

“It keeps you healthy,” said Pegg with a laugh. “You do a lot of walking.”

On a busy day, Pegg transports an estimated 85 patients and walks miles and miles.

“On average days, about four to five miles,” said Pegg. “On days we’re busy, about six to seven miles.”

While it might go without saying, comfortable shoes are a necessity for Pegg who has worked in Patient Transport for more than three years.

“You’ll go through three of four pairs (in a year),” said Pegg. “You wear them out pretty quick.”

Health benefits aside, Pegg said he especially enjoys the time he gets to spend with each patient. While transporting patients from department to department, he takes the time to talk to each Veteran and learn something about them, such as what branch they served in and where they served.

“One of my favorite things about the job, being a Veteran myself, is that it gives me the chance to talk with other Veterans and swap war stories,” said Pegg, who served in combat in Vietnam with the U.S. Army 4th Infantry Division.

“I like it when I run into somebody who’s been to the same place that I have. I love talking with Veterans.”

His experience in the Army and combat experience in Vietnam help him form a quick bond with patients.

“You’re one of them so they’ll talk to you quite a bit,” he said. “We build close relationships with one another. There’s a bond there. Part of that is just because we’re both Veterans.”

With the opportunity to spend the majority of his day with patients, he said he is on a first name basis with many Veterans.

“A lot of the patients have ongoing problems, so I see them all the time,” said Pegg. “You build a friendship with these people, because your serving them all the time and you’re there with them.” ★



Spreading Holiday Cheer – Red Cross Visits Inpatient Veterans

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

Mary Barnett (far left), Kenneth Hearrell, Larry Henderson and Rick Thomas from the American Red Cross Tulsa Area Chapter give a Christmas Card to Vietnam Veteran Harry Cable on Dec. 10.

Every year, the American Red Cross collects Christmas Cards from residents in the local community as part of their “Holiday Mail for Heroes” program and then personally delivers them to Veterans at VA Medical Centers and to active-duty service members at military hospitals. The Red Cross also mails cards to troops serving overseas.

The program is intended to show the community’s appreciation for Veterans and give them a “touch of home” during the holiday season.

From October to December, the American Red Cross Tulsa Area Chapter visited local shopping malls in Bartlesville, Muskogee and Tulsa and collected more than 2,000 Christmas Cards.

On Dec. 10, five members from the Red Cross delivered the cards to inpatient Veterans at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center

(JCMVAMC), passed out candy and thanked Veterans for their service.

Red Cross Volunteer Larry Henderson said the response from the local community was an important display of appreciation for Veterans.

“It was very significant and I think the support of the community is always a very special thing,” said Henderson. “We need to continue that.”

“Every Veteran should be recognized for their service”

Henderson, an Army Veteran who deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, said it was special for him to visit inpatient Veterans during the holiday season.

“All of the Veterans deserve a very Merry Christmas and it’s a blessing to

give them cards so we can encourage them while we’re here,” said Henderson. “Every Veteran should be recognized for their service. It’s important to honor our heroes.”

Red Cross Volunteer Kenneth Hearrell, who served in the U.S. Army during 1953 to 1955 and deployed to Germany, said visiting Veterans was a small way for him to give back.

“I’m an old GI myself and I know what they’re going through and I want to help them out all I can,” said Hearrell. “They have sacrificed for the country and a lot of people don’t realize that they have given a lot of their time for our freedom.”

The Tulsa Red Cross also passed out Christmas Cards at the Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa and the Claremore Veterans Center. The Red Cross said the majority of the 2,000 Christmas Cards will be mailed to troops serving in Afghanistan. ★

Muskogee Group Makes Quilts for Veterans

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

On Veterans Day, Martha Panter decided she wanted to do something tangible for Veterans beyond thanking them for their service.

So she asked her fellow members of the Muskogee Area Quilt Guild to make handmade quilts for Veterans.

“Veterans Day has always meant a lot to me,” said Panter. “My father and my father-in-law both served in World War II, so when it comes around each year I just think ‘what’s something we can do?’, so I asked them to make quilts for the Veterans for Christmas.”

The group responded and made 56 quilts. On Dec. 18, four women from the group visited the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (JCMVAMC) and passed out the quilts to inpatient Veterans.

Among the women who helped make the quilts was Debbie Baker, a registered nurse at JCMVAMC. Baker said the



quilts were one way for the group to show their appreciation for Veterans.

“I just thought it was a good idea, because they’ve done so much for us,” said Baker. “We take care of a lot of people who don’t have very much and this is something we can do to give back to them. I like to quilt and I like to help people. Anything I can do for a Veteran, I like to do.”

Army Veteran Esther Santos was one of the inpatient Veterans who received a quilt and she said she was truly grateful for the gift.

“This (quilt) took a lot of time and a lot of effort,” said Santos, who served in the Army for 19 years and currently lives in McAlester. “It just made me realize that there are people out there that appreciate what we do. That’s pretty cool. That’s awesome. It’s going to be cherished.” ★



Army Veteran Esther Santos receives a handmade quilt from Dolly Blair (left), Debbie Baker, Patsy Matson, and Martha Panter (right) on Dec. 18 at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center.

Muskogee County EMS

Helps Vietnam Veteran Spend Christmas with Family

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

On Dec. 18, the Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) granted a special wish to Marine Corps Veteran Robert Smith, a hospice patient at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center who is terminally ill with gastric cancer.

The EMS provided Smith and his wife Cindy with a free round-trip ambulance ride to a relative's home in Poteau where they were able to celebrate Christmas with friends and family.

For approximately four hours, two EMS paramedics stayed at the home with Smith and then brought him back to the hospital.

The day trip was part of a new Muskogee County EMS program called Sentimental Journey, which provides special trips for terminally ill and hospice patients. Smith was the first recipient of the program, which was made possible through private donations.

Michele Cruz, Director of Community Relations for the Muskogee County EMS, said the organization wanted the



Mike Cates (right), a Muskogee County Emergency Medical Service paramedic, prepares to transport Marine Corps Veteran Robert Smith, a hospice patient at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center, and his wife Cindy to Poteau so they could celebrate Christmas with friends and family.

first Sentimental Journey recipient to be a Veteran. "It's part of our culture to take care of our Veterans," said Cruz. "They have a special place in our hearts. We love our Veterans and we couldn't think of anybody better to be the very first one for this new program than a Veteran."

Before the trip, Smith said he was grateful to the EMS for the opportunity to travel to Poteau to spend Christmas with relatives.

"It's part of our culture to take care of our Veterans. They have a special place in our hearts"

"I'm terminally ill, so I'm going to see them all together while I can," said Smith, who served in Vietnam during 1972 and 1973. "Without the EMS, it just wouldn't have been possible. We can't thank the EMS enough."

He also thanked the VA employees for the excellent care he has received.

"The VA hospital, on a scale of one to ten, they're an 11," said Smith, an Okmulgee resident. "I'd say they're one of the better hospitals that this state has." ★



Dr. Andrew Patchett, an internal medicine resident, practices a procedure on a Central Line Simulation Mannequin while Dr. Randall Reust provides instruction.

Resident Physicians Play Integral Role at Jack C. Montgomery

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

Following World War II, VA began forming affiliations with medical schools and universities, and today is the largest provider of health care training in the U.S. In 2011, 36,816 medical residents, 21,502 medical students, 288 Advanced Fellows, and 1,231 dental residents and dental students received some or all of their clinical training in VA medical centers.

Through an affiliation agreement with the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Medical Center in Tulsa, internal medicine and general surgery residents complete two-month rotations at the medical center during each year of the residency program. During each rotation, four internal medicine and two general surgery residents participate in JCMVAMC's Residency Program.

On a typical day, the four internal medicine residents provide care for approximately 32 inpatients per day and perform medical procedures under the supervision of faculty physicians. First year residents receive close supervision, while third-year residents enjoy more autonomy.

"They see inpatients in the Intensive Care Unit who are really sick and inpatients in acute care that are moderately sick," said Dr. Randall Reust, the Internal Medicine Resident Program Director. "They do all the hospital procedures, so any procedure needed to be done on an inpatient here is done by one of the internal medicine residents."

Dr. T.J. Palmer, a third-year resident, said he sees fewer patients per day at JCMVAMC than he does at OSU Medical Center, but that also means he gets to spend more time with each patient.

"We do get to spend a little bit more time with them than I get to spend at OSU," said Palmer. "But our time becomes a lot more occupied, because we do a lot of the procedures for the hospital."

Reust said the number of procedures the residents get to perform and the one-on-one training from faculty are one of the biggest benefits of JCMVAMC's Internal Medicine Resident Program.

Another benefit is the opportunity to use the VA's electronic health record and provide care for a patient population who receive regular primary care appointments.

"Most of our Veterans have primary care, most of them have been seen by multiple physicians and have good medications and are getting proper care," said Reust. "It's a whole different ball game to see someone who is properly managed."

Reust said another benefit is the opportunity to give back to Veterans who

have served the nation and who are also grateful for the care they receive from VA.

"The Veterans are nice to them and easy to care for," said Reust. "They've paid their dues and the residents know that. It's just a refreshing patient population to have to deal with."

Palmer said his three rotations at the medical center have been positive.

"We need everybody to understand that now we're a teaching hospital"

"The Jack C. Montgomery program has actually been great in the sense of what we see for pathology (disease diagnosis) and type of patients we see," he said. "We see quite a few patients with (multiple illnesses) pretty much across the board. I would not want to give up what we do out here. This contributes quite a bit to what we do as far as our educational program through our residency program."

Reust said the entire medical staff can have a positive impact on the development of the residents.

"It takes nurses, lab technicians, pathology technicians, secretaries and primary care providers," said Reust. "We need everybody to understand that now we're a teaching hospital. Everybody in the chain has to understand that our mission is not only the care of Veterans, but also teaching residents how to do their job." ★

Reaching Rural Veterans Through Clinical Video Telehealth

Story & Photo by Nathan Schaeffer, Public Affairs Specialist

Every Thursday, Veterans with diabetes attend a Diabetes Education Group at the Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa to help them lower their blood sugar levels and get the disease under control.

Over time, high blood sugar levels can lead to serious health problems such as blindness, heart attacks and strokes. However, health problems associated with diabetes can be prevented by properly managing the disease, physical activity and healthy eating.

Led by Dr. Nicholas Moorad, a VA primary care physician at the Tulsa Clinic, the group helps Veterans understand the disease and how to properly manage it on a day-by-day basis.

“Our number one goal is education, so our Veterans will be in control of their diabetes,” said Moorad. “We want our Veterans to not be afraid to adjust their insulin and know how to deal with it when their sugar drops.”

While Veterans in Tulsa listen and interact with Dr. Moorad face-to-face, another group of diabetic Veterans also attends the same group at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center in Muskogee through a secure video conferencing system, which is part of VA’s Clinical Video Telehealth initiative.

The video conferencing system displays each group on separate television screens and microphones allow each site to interact with each other with clear audio. Throughout the group, VA

In Fiscal Year 2012, JCMVAMC connected 587 Veterans with specialists using Clinical Video Telehealth.

staff ask questions to Veterans at both locations and have them read handouts.

Coast Guard Veteran Charles Battenfield, who lives near Bristow, Okla., attended his first Diabetes Education Group on Dec. 6 at the Muskogee hospital and said he enjoyed the convenience of telehealth.

“I think it’s a great thing that we can sit in one place and interact with someone who is helpful to us and not have to drive to them,” said Battenfield.

While he said Muskogee is a few more miles to drive, he prefers the drive to Muskogee than to Tulsa.

“They say Tulsa is a little closer to my house, but it’s a more pleasant drive to Muskogee,” he said. “There’s not near as much traffic on the road.”

Reducing barriers to access such as travel is one of the goals of the Clinical Video Telehealth initiative, which seeks to increase access to health services for Veterans.

Opal McCoy, a Licensed Practical Nurse and Telehealth Technician, said the group is doing just that.

“With telehealth, more patients can be seen and they can see a specialist more immediately because they don’t have to drive the longer distances,” said McCoy. “We’re seeing great success with this and that’s the most important thing.” ★

Veterans Phil Alworden (right) and Ralph Baugus listen to Dr. Nicholas Moorad during a Diabetes Education Group at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center.





Get in the Game With VA Adaptive Sports

Throughout the year, Veterans who receive their health care through VA can participate in creative arts competitions and sports clinics. VA sponsors a National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, National Veterans Golden Age Games, National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, National Veterans Training-Exposure-Experience (TEE) Tournament, National Veterans Wheelchair Games and the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

For complete information about each event and registration information, visit the VA Adaptive Sports website:
www.va.gov/adaptivesports/.



Striving for a Healthy Weight

By Nancy Walsh, Dietician, Vinita VA Outpatient Clinic

In the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*, Kevin Costner plays Ray Kinsella who hears a voice while walking in his corn field that whispers, “If you build it, he will come.” Kinsella then sees a vision of a baseball diamond. As the story-line unfolds, Costner commits to building the baseball diamond, which leads to positive changes in his life.

Maintaining a healthy weight is similar to this story line, but with the catch phrase “If you change your habits, you can achieve a healthy weight.”

We are a product of the habits we have developed over the years. The challenge is to review the habits we have developed and focus on changing to healthier habits. However, keep in mind that a healthy weight does not only mean a lower weight.

When you identify and become familiar with your own behaviors and habits, you can more easily identify those that you need to retrain to make positive lifestyle changes to achieve a healthy weight.

Here are 20 Positive Tips to Improve Your Health (pick one or two to work on at a time):



1 If you eat at restaurants or fast food establishments, do so three times per week or less.

2 Shop the perimeter of the grocery store for basic and unprocessed foods and limit items purchased in the aisles.

3 Purchase fresh frozen foods or, if buying processed foods, check the ingredient list and purchase those that have five ingredients or less.

4 Drink water and reduce all sweetened beverages from your diet.

5 Use milk and juice as a part of a balanced meal plan and not for hydration.

6 Eat a minimum of five servings of vegetables and fruit each day (Serving = 1 cup raw, ½ cup cooked). Half your plate should be non-starchy vegetables.

7 Eat more whole grains and low fat dairy products (1% or skim milk).

8 Have healthy snacks available such as unsalted nuts.

9 Get rid of snack foods high in calories, fat and sugar from your house. If you don't have these foods available, you won't be as tempted.

10 Reduce sugary sweets, fried foods, creamy foods, desserts and alcohol.

11 Limit "extras" such as butter, jam, salad dressings, gravies and sauces.

12 Don't return for second helpings or feel you have to "clean your plate." When eating out, automatically request a "to go" box and take half the portion home for another meal or "share" a meal with someone.

13 Eat in only one room of your home.

14 Eat only while sitting down at a table (not standing or lying down).

15 While eating, focus only on eating and not while watching TV, reading, writing or working.

16 Slow down while you eat and enjoy your food. Put your fork down between bites of food and chew each bite thoroughly.

17 Eat at regular meal times.

18 Eat at least three meals a day.

19 Plan ahead when you are scheduled to be away from home during a meal and pack healthy meals and snacks to go.

20 Increase your physical activity.



Be Involved in Your Health Care

By Pamela Benson, APRN-FNP, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program Manager

There are a lot of things you can do to keep yourself healthy such as exercising and eating right, but one of the most important things you can do for your health is to become actively involved in your health care. Research has shown that patients who are informed about their health, ask questions and get involved in making decisions, actually get better care.

So how do you become involved in your health care? You can start by giving your health care team complete information about your current health. Let them know about any health problems, concerns, past illnesses and your past hospitalizations. Always take an up-to-date list of all medications you take, regardless of who has prescribed it or any over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbals.

To plan for your health care visit, write down your questions and concerns and let them know about your questions at the beginning of each visit. Share your ideas and beliefs about your health problems and treatments and talk about any other matters related to your health. Also tell your health care team about any stress aspects of your life that affect your health and your ability to manage daily activities.

To create a treatment plan that will work for you, talk with your provider about the treatment options you prefer. This allows you to share in the decision making process. Also ask your team to clarify anything that is not clear to you and be

sure to tell your team if you have any problems or if your condition changes. Please speak up if you have any concerns about the care you are receiving or if you think something is wrong.

One of the most important things you can do for your health is to become actively involved in your health care

To get the most out of your visit, ask for written information and instructions that you can keep and share with your family or caregiver. Know the names of your medications and why you take each one. Ask when and how you will get results of any tests or treatments. Ask your team for the name and telephone number of the person to call if you have a problem with symptoms, medications or treatments. Bring a family member or friend to your appointment to help you.

VA is making it easier for Veterans to get the information they need, by offering tools, tips and resources such as the My HealtheVet website that they can use to improve the quality of care that they receive. If you have questions about how to make healthy living changes, please talk with your health care team. ★



WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Five awkward
minutes can save
your life.

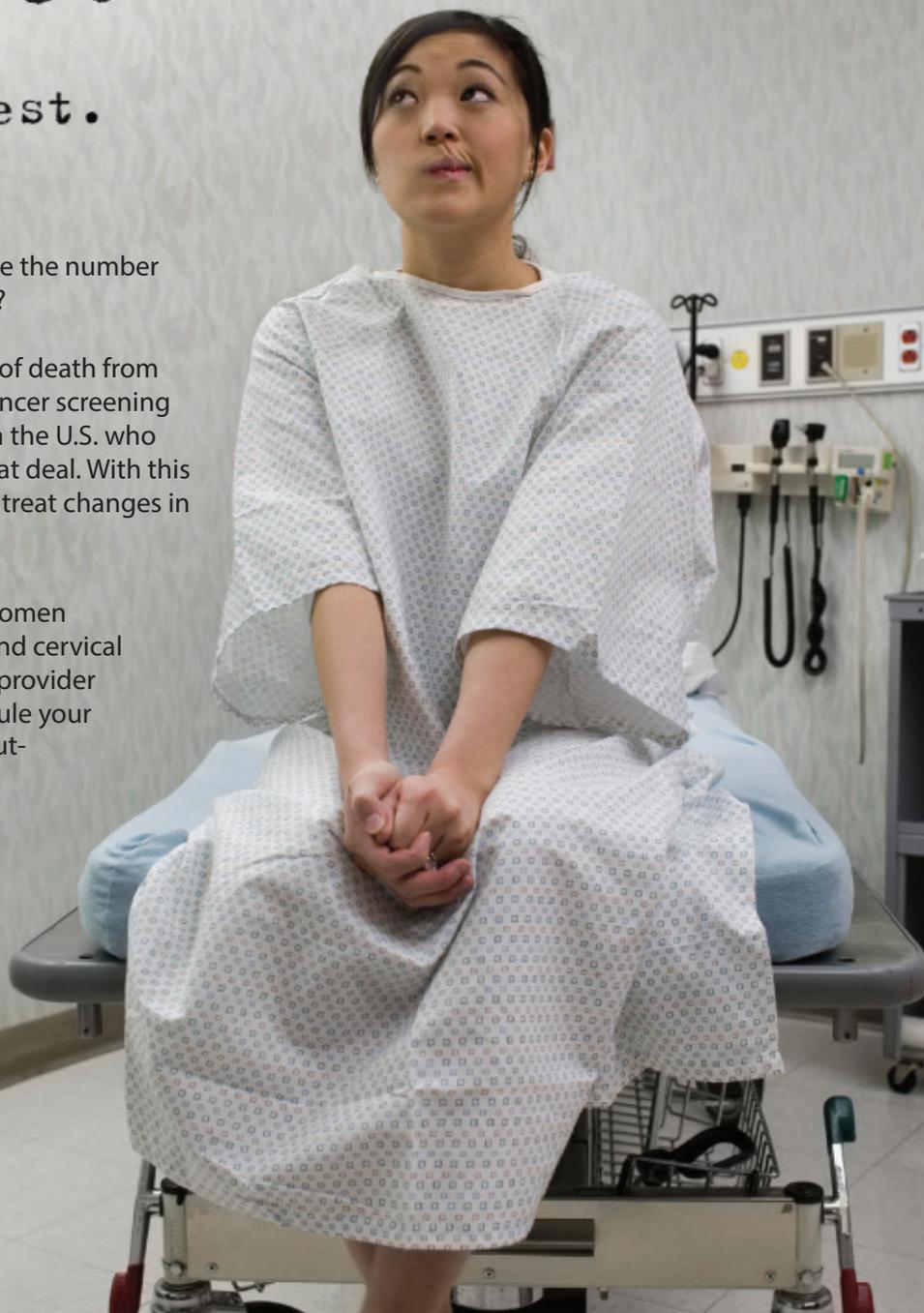
Schedule a Pap test.
Let VA help.

Did you know that cervical cancer was once the number one cause of death from cancer in women?

Now it is the second-most common cause of death from cancer in women and thanks to cervical cancer screening with the Pap test, the number of women in the U.S. who develop cervical cancer has dropped a great deal. With this screening, doctors can find cancer early or treat changes in the cervix before they develop into cancer.

VA provides gynecologic care to eligible Women Veterans, including routine pelvic exams and cervical cancer screening. Please talk with your VA provider about cervical cancer. He or she can schedule your Pap test at a VA facility or refer you to an outside provider for testing.

For more information about services for Women Veterans, please contact Susan Hartsell, Women Veterans Program Manager, at 918-577-4277.



★ *You served, you deserve the best care anywhere.* ★



Department of
Veterans Affairs

www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth

Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group, VACO 01/2010

Jack C. Montgomery VA

Muskogee

Cooking Class

We offer a cooking education program for enrolled Veterans, which will provide hands-on experience and help Veterans become more independent and responsible for their nutritional care.

Location: Jack C. Montgomery VAMC Auditorium

Time: Wednesday's, excluding federal holidays, at 9 a.m.

Contact: Gregory Thomas, RD, at 918-577-3287, to register for this class.



Grief Support Group

We offer a grief support group for Veterans who have lost a loved one and for family members of Veterans who have passed away. The group will offer resources and support to participants that can help them cope with their loss while also providing

an opportunity to connect and share with others who have lost a loved one.

Location: Jack C. Montgomery VAMC Chapel

Time: Monday's, excluding federal holidays, at 1 p.m.

Contact: Chaplain Julia Shreve, BCC, at 918-577-3809 or Dusti Johns, LCSW, at 918-577-4124.

MOVE! Introduction Class

MOVE! is VA's national weight management program designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. This introduction class will provide information about the MOVE! program.

Location: Jack C. Montgomery VAMC Patient Education Room

Time: Monday's, excluding federal holidays, at 1 p.m.

Contact: Gregory Thomas, RD, at 918-577-3287



Medical Center Calendar

MOVE! Group Class

Join us each week to improve your eating, exercise and behavior habits.

Location: Jack C. Montgomery VAMC Auditorium

Time: Wednesday's, excluding federal holidays, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 3 to 4 pm

Contact: Gregory Thomas, RD, at 918-577-3287

Veterans Open Art Studio/Writing Workshop

We offer an Open Art Studio and Writing Workshop to give Veterans an opportunity to create art or write and socialize with other Veterans. Veterans can bring their own art to work on or use art kits that were donated to the medical center by Help Hospitalized Veterans.

Location: Jack C. Montgomery VAMC Auditorium

Time: Monday's, excluding federal holidays, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Contact: Deborah Moreno - 918-577-4014.



Tulsa

MOVE! Introduction Class

MOVE! is VA's national weight management program designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. This introduction class will provide information about the MOVE! program.

Location: Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic Sooner Room

Time: Monday's (except the 4th Monday), excluding federal holidays, at 1 p.m.

Contact: Melinda Smiley, RD/LD, 918-628-2509



MOVE! Group Class

Join us each week to improve your eating, exercise and behavior habits.

Location: Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic Boomer/Sooner Room

Time: Tuesday's, excluding federal holidays, at 10 a.m. or 1 p.m.

Contact: Melinda Smiley, RD/LD, 918-628-2509

Diabetic/Pre-Diabetic Group Education

Learn survival skills for living with Diabetes and improving eating habits to reduce risks.

Location: Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic

Time: Monday's, excluding federal holidays, at 10 a.m. in the Sooner Room

Contact: Melinda Smiley, RD/LD, 918-628-2509

Lipid Education

Learn how to improve your heart health through lifestyle changes.

Location: Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic Sooner Room

Time: First and Third Thursday, excluding federal holidays, at 2 p.m.

Contact: Melinda Smiley, RD/LD, 918-628-2509

The Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center and Hartshorne, Tulsa and Vinita VA Outpatient Clinics served approximately 37,000 Veterans from a 25-county area in Eastern Oklahoma in 2012.



Jack. C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (Muskogee) - 918-577-3000 or toll free at 1-888-397-8387



**Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic
(Tulsa)**

918-628-2500
or toll free at 1-888-398-8387



Hartshorne VA Outpatient Clinic

888-878-1598



Vinita VA Outpatient Clinic

918-713-5400

Excellence Starts Here.

Our mission: Honor and serve our Veterans through excellence in health care.



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century