



**From
Patrick Welch
Director**

There is no group our people that I hold in higher regard than America's Veterans. Because of you veterans, we live in the strongest, freest, greatest country in the world. Throughout history, our country has been blessed to have men and women willing to answer the call to duty and accomplish great things for the benefit of their fellow man.

It is our responsibility to ensure that our children and grandchildren appreciate the sacrifices made by those serving our country and never forget them. Each year, as the percentage of our population who has worn a uniform declines, fewer and fewer individuals and families have a personal connection with the military. Instilling in America's youth an awareness of the contributions of veterans past and present becomes even more important.

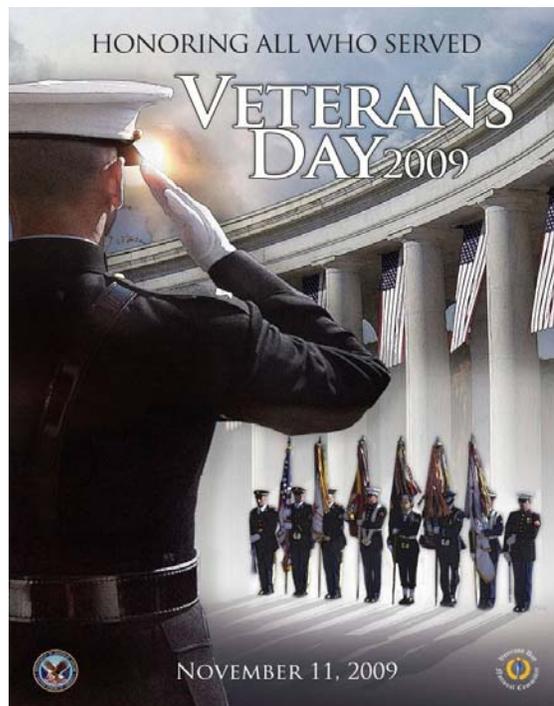
Even though many Americans will not serve, knowledge of those who have served is essential. The traits we learn from veterans - courage, honor, duty, sacrifice, patriotism, heroism - are characteristics that make us better citizens. Their everyday acts inspire us to reach beyond our limits. Their losses remind us to live a life worthy of their sacrifice. And through their service on our behalf, we remember the obligations we owe. These are important lessons only a veteran can teach us.

It is a day to share with our children that Veterans Day is more than a day off school or a department store sale. It is a day to honor the 25 million living veterans who stepped forward to defend our country as well as their families. It is a day to pay tribute to those who gave the

ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country. And it is a day to remember that over 93,300 Americans are still listed as POW/MIA's.

The magnitude of this contribution bears repeating on this special day of remembrance. Since the founding of our nation in 1775, nearly 48 million men and women have served in the Armed Forces of our country and more than 1.2 million died in service.

These millions of people are both extraordinary and ordinary, and it is both of these qualities that call our attention today. Their commitment, courage, and quiet patriotism are exemplary.



In times of peace as well as in times of war, our service men and women accept a responsibility that goes far beyond the scope of their individual lives.

Yet they also are sons and daughters, moms and dads, loved ones, neighbors, and friends. Their service is compounded by those who share their lives. We must be grateful to those who have given up so much of their personal freedom in life for the broad ideal of freedom that is so cherished in our country. We must be grateful to their families and others who share the many sacrifices that such service entails. And we must return to them all the concern and compassion our veterans have shown for the day-to-day experience of life in this nation and for the lives of people throughout the world.

On this Veterans Day let us recognize the enduring challenges and special needs that result from military service. Let us commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by so many. And, in their honor, let us affirm our own utmost commitment to the principles our service women and men uphold. Some served long ago, while some served just yesterday. I pray that our reasons for living are as good as theirs were for serving and dying.

*May we always remember. May we always be proud.
May we always be prepared.
So we may always be free.*

God bless our service men and women, our veterans and the country they so dearly love.



CELEBRATING AMERICA'S FREEDOMS

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20420

The Origins of Veterans Day

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This site, on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the city of Washington, D.C., became the focal point of reverence for America's veterans.

Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor (in England, Westminster Abbey; in France, the Arc de Triomphe). These memorial gestures all took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I fighting at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The day became known as "Armistice Day."

Armistice Day officially received its name in America in 1926 through a Congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar Congressional action. If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was "the War to end all wars," November 11 might still be called Armistice Day. But only a few years after the holiday was proclaimed, war broke out in Europe. Sixteen and one-half million Americans took part. Four hundred seven thousand of them died in service, more than 292,000 in battle.

From:
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/feature/celebrate/docs/vetday.pdf>



Armistice Day Changed To Honor All Veterans

The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947. Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized "National Veterans Day," which included a parade and other festivities, to honor all veterans. The event was held on November 11; then designated Armistice Day. Later, U.S. Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. In 1954, Congress passed the bill that President Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. Raymond Weeks received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Reagan in November 1982. Weeks' local parade and ceremonies are now an annual event celebrated nationwide.

On Memorial Day 1958, two more unidentified American war dead were brought from overseas and interred in the plaza beside the unknown soldier of World War I. One was killed in World War II, the other in the Korean War. In 1984, an unknown serviceman from the Vietnam War was placed alongside the others. The remains from Vietnam were exhumed May 14, 1998, identified as Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Joseph Blassie, and removed for burial. To honor these men, symbolic of all Americans who gave their lives in all wars, an Army honor guard, the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), keeps day and night vigil.

A law passed in 1968 changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that November 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans. Therefore, in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.



EMPLOYERS PLAN TO HIRE VETERANS

A new survey from CareerBuilder.com is offering some encouraging news with 41 percent of employers reporting they have hired U.S. veterans or members of the National Guard in the last six months. One-in-five (21 percent) are actively recruiting veterans and members of the National Guard for open positions today.

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The top positions employers say they are targeting U.S. service men and women for include information technology, engineering, management and sales. According to the survey, employers recommend that candidates clearly spell out their military responsibilities and how they are applicable to the position at hand in their resume, cover letter and interview.

And surprisingly, some veterans aren't even identifying themselves as such. Employers said veteran applicants don't always identify themselves as veterans on their resumes. In fact, 11 percent of veterans said they don't include their military experience when applying for positions, while 12 percent said they do so selectively. This can ultimately work to a candidate's disadvantage as 43 percent of employers stated that if they had two equally-qualified candidates, they are more likely to hire the person with military experience. Others did not have a preference either way.

Hiring managers recommend that veterans and National Guard members put a greater empha-

sis on marketing their military skills and accomplishments. They identified the following attributes associated with military personnel as critical to

- Disciplined approach to work (68 percent)
- Ability to work as part of a team (63 percent)
- Respect and integrity (57 percent)
- Leadership (50 percent)
- Problem-solving skills (46 percent)
- Ability to perform under pressure (44 percent)
- Communication skills (37 percent)

Reminder About Tax Credit for Hiring Veterans - Don't neglect to let employers know about the tax credit for hiring veterans. For a limited time (January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010) companies can take a maximum tax credit of \$2,400 per veteran (not only service-connected disabled) who meet certain criteria. The following link provides specific instructions for employers when completing the IRS form: <http://www.irs.gov/instructions/i8850/ch02.html>.



Get the word out!

If you've placed veterans who were:

- Discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces at any time during the 5-year period ending on the hiring date, AND
- Received unemployment compensation under State or Federal law for not less than 4 weeks during the 1-year period ending on the hiring date

their employers may be eligible for this tax credit. Additionally, this new veteran category of Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) is retroactive to apply to individuals who began work for employers after December 31, 2008.

from

JAMES L. "SCOTTY" SCOTT, II

DIRECTOR, INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT POLICY AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DoD YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

NOTICE: SEEKING TO INTERVIEW WOMEN VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Dr. Heather Stur, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Southern Mississippi, is writing a book that looks at women's experiences in the Vietnam War, and she'd like to interview women who served in Vietnam during the war, as well as women who enlisted in the military in the years immediately following the end of the draft.

She is in particular need of the voices of African American women veterans who served in Vietnam, but in need of women of all races and backgrounds. Women veterans who are willing to be interviewed, contact Dr. Stur at: heather.stur@usm.edu



Did You Know...

The focal point for official, national ceremonies for Veterans Day continues to be the memorial amphitheater built around the Tomb of the Unknowns. At 11 a.m. on November 11, a combined color guard representing all military services executes "Present Arms" at the tomb. The nation's tribute to its war dead is symbolized by the laying of a presidential wreath. The bugler plays "taps." The rest of the ceremony takes place in the amphitheater.

Veterans Day ceremonies at Arlington and elsewhere are coordinated by the President's Veterans Day National Committee. Chaired by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the committee represents national veterans organizations.

Governors of many states and U.S. territories appoint Veterans Day chairpersons who, in cooperation with the National Committee and the Department of Defense, arrange and promote local ceremonies.



VA STAFFS OFFICE FOR SURVIVORS OF VETERANS

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- To strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs programs for survivors of the nation's veterans and servicemembers, the VA has staffed an office to serve as their advocate, with a charter that includes creating or modifying programs, benefits and services.

"Taking care of survivors is as essential as taking care of our veterans and military personnel," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said. "By taking care of survivors, we are honoring a commitment made to our veterans and military members."

The office serves as the primary adviser to the secretary on all issues affecting the survivors and dependents of deceased veterans and servicemembers. It will monitor VA's delivery of benefits to survivors, make appropriate referrals to VA offices for survivors seeking benefits, and explore innovative ways of reaching survivors who are not receiving the VA benefits for which they are eligible.

VA benefits for eligible survivors include educational assistance, home-loan guaranties, health-care insurance, and dependency and indemnity compensation. Known as DIC, this is a monthly payment to the survivors of some people who die on active duty and some seriously disabled veterans.

More than 554,000 spouses, dependents and other survivors of veterans are receiving VA benefits. That figure includes nearly 5,000 spouses of World War I veterans, 90 spouses and 94 children of Spanish-American War veterans, and two children of Civil War veterans.

The establishment of this office was authorized in the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2008. For more information, call 800-827-1000 or visit the VA Web site at www.va.gov/. (Courtesy of VA News Service)

Update on September 2009

The Western New York Connection...

PFC William J. Grabiarz

This newsletter's editor recently received a phone call from Lt. Anthony Abeyta, US Army at Ft. Benning, Georgia, asking if I had any photos of PFC Grabiarz. Apparently our newsletter receives widespread distribution! I sent him several pictures that will be used as material in support of a proposal to nominate PFC Grabiarz for memorialization at Ft. Benning.

There is substantial new construction taking place on Post and PFC Grabiarz was mentioned as a possible candidate for the naming of any number of buildings there. The memorialization process can be lengthy, so it may be 2010 before there is any further movement on this project.

Lt. Abeyta offered to keep us informed on the status of this nomination. Keep watching for future updates



Everyone Loves A Parade

Join

Antoine M. Thompson, New York State Senator, 60th District

In the 1st Annual Veterans Day Parade



Saturday, November 7, 2009

9:00 am line up, American Red Cross 786 Delaware Avenue - Buffalo
10:00 am step off

Parade begins at Summer and Delaware Avenues,
proceeds down Delaware circling in front of City Hall to the review stand
Ceremony to follow

Groups are welcomed, please call JoAnn Cole or Zack Sadler at
854-8705

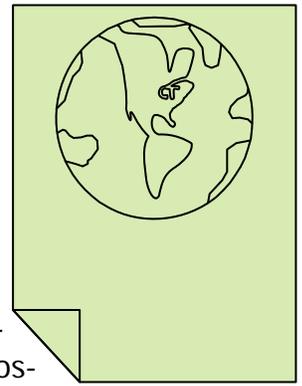
Please Make every effort to join us as we say THANK YOU to our Veterans

Volunteers are needed to help collect toiletries during the parade in support of our troops. We are looking for soap, lotion, toothpaste and deodorant for both men and women.

Global Commitments Stretch Army

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service



WASHINGTON, Oct. 15, 2009 - With more than 1.1 million active and reserve-component soldiers in the U.S. Army, some may wonder how the service could be stressed, as is commonly discussed and reported.

The answer lies in the number of deployments soldiers have around the world -- known as operations tempo -- and the "dwell time" needed for them to spend at home between deployments, officials say.

The following is a look at where soldiers are based as of Oct. 6.

The Army has 552,400 active-component soldiers, who are called upon most for operations and exercises. Of the Army's 207,400 reservists, 21,700 are mobilized. The Army National Guard has 362,000 soldiers, with 58,100 activated. Once Guard and Army Reserve soldiers come on active duty, there is no difference between them and active-component soldiers. Reservists can be called up for one-year tours, including training.

According to Army statistics, 102,400 active-component soldiers are based overseas, and 450,000 are in the continental United States. About 21,200 soldiers are in Hawaii, and 13,200 are in Alaska. Soldiers deploy to contingencies around the world. Some 38,200 soldiers are based with U.S. Army Europe, and 17,300 serve with U.S. Forces Korea.

The two largest contingencies for the Army are Iraq and Afghanistan, with 98,025 soldiers operating in Iraq and 43,800 in Afghanistan. Another 12,700 soldiers based in Kuwait provide assistance to both theaters in U.S. Central Command, and 1,050 soldiers work in Qatar.

But those aren't the only areas of operations. NATO's Kosovo Force in the Balkans has 1,525 U.S. soldiers -- most from the Army National Guard. Ten soldiers based in Bosnia work with the European Union effort in that country.

Another 700 soldiers are part of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai desert. Since 1981, a battalion of American soldiers has been in the area to ensure peace between Israel and Egypt.

Some 1,200 soldiers are based with Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. They're based mainly in Djibouti, but also work in Ethiopia and other areas of the region.

Another 600 soldiers are part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, helping to run the detention center at the Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba, and in Honduras, 325 soldiers are part of Joint Task Force Bravo, which works at improving military-to-military ties with Central American countries. In place since the mid-1980s, the command has used civil-military operations to connect with the people of the region.

There are 225 soldiers in the Philippines, working to develop the capabilities of the Philippine armed forces, and another 3,440 soldiers are deployed around the world in "other operations and exercises," officials said.

Added to these numbers are soldiers going through various levels of training, sick or injured, on recruiting duty or involved in other aspects of maintaining the base.

The bottom line is that there are more than 266,000 soldiers deployed or forward stationed in almost 80 countries around the world.



The Erie County Veterans Service Agency

Presents:

The Veterans Opportunities Fair

Providing veterans with Education, Employment and Business opportunities

**Buffalo Convention Center
Thursday, November 5th, 2009
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

A *free* continental breakfast will be served.

Erie County Executive Chris Collins will be delivering the opening remarks.

Proceeds will benefit:

WNY Heroes, Inc. and The Buffalo Renaissance Foundation.

If you wish to participate in this event, please contact:

Alyssa at 716-858-6363 or email: Alyssa.Gingerich@erie.gov

The Western New York Connection...

Roswell Park

Roswell Park, born in Connecticut on May 4, 1852, could trace his roots back nine generations in America. His family was wealthy enough to send him to private school and he eventually entered the medical department of Northwestern University where he graduated MD, Class of 1876.

On June 23, 1883, Dr. Park came to the University of Buffalo as professor of surgery and soon thereafter was appointed surgeon to Buffalo General Hospital. His fame had gone abroad, and he received many flattering offers of high position in other cities, but he was loyal to the University of Buffalo, and declined all of these honors.

In 1897, Dr. Roswell Park and Mr. Edward H. Butler, publisher of the *Buffalo Evening News*, ask the New York State Legislature to introduce a bill that would provide a \$7,500 grant to establish a cancer research laboratory in the University of Buffalo School of Medicine.

That bill was passed in 1898, and the New York State Pathological Laboratory of the University of Buffalo – the first facility in the world dedicated specifically to cancer research – was founded. The facility, which gave birth to what would later be known as *Roswell Park Cancer Institute*, has been cited as the earliest historical example of direct government interest in cancer research.

He died in Buffalo, February 15, 1914.

Sources:

<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/exhibits/panam/hsl/rpbiog.html>

and

<http://www.roswellpark.org/AboutUs/HistoricalHighlights>



ROSWELL PARK, M.D., M.A., LL.D.
1852 – 1914



Roswell Park Cancer Institute is among the oldest National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States.

November 2009 Veterans Advocate of the Month Celia O ' Brien



Staff at the Veterans Service Agency with recipient, Celia O'Brien.

The *Erie County Veterans Service Agency* would like to recognize ***Celia O'Brien*** as the **November 2009 Veterans Advocate of the Month**. Celia O'Brien joined WNY Veterans Housing Coalition, Inc. in 1996 as a bookkeeper /case manager and in 2001 was made Property Manager, managing all the properties and homeless program. She left for a short time in 2006 and worked as a Property Manager for the Olmsted Center for Sight. Celia was asked to come back in 2008 as Chief Operating Officer for WNYVHC, where she remains today.

Prior to joining WNYVHC, Celia worked in banking for over 20 years and at COPIN House in Niagara Falls, a program for Vietnam Veterans coming from the PTSD program.

Celia is the widow of Terence O'Brien, a combat Vietnam Veteran with 173rd ABN who passed away in 1996.

She is a member of the Associates Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 77 and Disabled American Veterans Auxilliary.

Celia has played a big role in reaching out to our homeless veterans population throughout the community. Thank you, Celia, for all of your hard work and dedication!

RECONNECT AMERICA

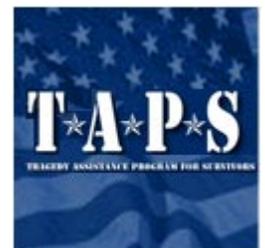
GIVE BACK TO THOSE WHO  *GIVE IT ALL*



The Military Channel and [Military.com](http://www.military.com) have joined forces to create *Reconnect America*, a nationwide program that makes it easy for you to show your support for the men and women of our Armed Forces. <http://www.military.com/giveback/>

Together, we can join forces to say "thanks" in ways that matter most.

The non-profit organizations are doing great work for our troops. Check the above website for more information and links (or click on any of the icons below to learn more or donate directly to that organization.)



Send a Military E-Card

Let the servicemembers in your life know you are thinking about them.

Follow this link to

[SEND ONE NOW](#)



Mission Statement of Erie County Veterans Services

To insure that every veteran in the county is registered in the VA System and is fully aware of all the benefits that they have earned.

To make veterans an economic force in education, employment and business development.

Call for Volunteers

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

In association with the UB Department of Sociology and the Buffalo VA, Dr. Brenda Moore is conducting research to better understand the coping mechanisms associated with MST. The study is open to both male and female veterans who have screened positive for MST.

Volunteers will be required to participate in an individual one-hour interview with Dr. Moore. The interview will cover topics ranging from military experience, coping strategies, VA treatment and support networks.

Participants will receive \$25 in compensation.

Contact: Dr. Brenda Moore
socbrend@buffalo.edu
716.645.8470

Contact us at:

Erie County Veterans Service Agency

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<http://www.erie.gov/veterans/>

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Assistant Service Officer
- Judy Ehman, RSVP Volunteer
and Newsletter Editor



IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND
STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO
ASK FOR HELP...

If you're in an emotional crisis,
call 1-800-273-TALK (Press "1" for Veterans)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org