



Putting ‘Memory’ back in Memorial Day

It’s been said that this is the land of the free, because we are also the home of the brave, and hundreds of veterans, active duty, family members and CAVHCS personnel gathered to celebrate that fact by commemorating Memorial Day by remembering the sacrifices made by those who served our nation and in doing so ensured the freedoms we enjoy today.

“President Bush said recently that throughout our history, the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States have placed the security of our nation before their own,” said Mistress of Ceremonies LaDonna Golden, from CAVHCS Customer Services. “On Memorial Day we honor those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom... All who enjoy the blessings of liberty live in their debt.”

Joined by Maxwell Air Force Base’s Brig. Gen. Alfred K. Flowers who currently serves as Commander, Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools, observers took time to remember the sacrifices made by generations



Members of Maxwell Air Force Base’s Ceremonial Honor Guard execute a 21-gun salute during this year’s CAVHCS Memorial Day observance.

past. General Flowers paid respect to the Tuskegee Airmen, the nation’s first all-black fighter-pilot unit, and to the Doolittle’s Raiders, the World War II pilots who made America’s first air attack on Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Memorial Day’s roots are planted deeply in the South. In 1868; three years after the Civil War, May 30th was recognized as Decoration Day. Decoration Day saw family members of fallen soldiers – both union and confederate – gather at cemeteries to honor those

lost. Considering that the bulk of the battles were waged in the South the cities claiming to have held the first Decoration Day are almost exclusively from the South.

In 1971, honoring those lost in all American wars, Congress declared the last Monday in May to be celebrated as a national holiday - Memorial Day.

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CAVHCS EEO

Appreciating our Rich Diversity

If variety is the spice of life, then how would you define diversity?

While defining diversity in the work place can be as diverse as the individual offering that definition, when it comes to celebrating diversity at CAVHCS as staff members did recently on both the Tuskegee and Montgomery campuses, that definition is based on respect, education and awareness that hopefully moves beyond simple tolerance and toward embracing the rich dimensions of each individual.

“This is our fourth annual celebration of diversity,” explained CAVHCS Equal Employment Opportunity Program Manager, Loretta McCloud. “But while we celebrate diversity, we also end up identifying and hopefully building upon our similarities at the same time. Finding common ground is important in the workplace. When we recognize that we have common interests, it is much easier to accept and work through many differences.”

The origin of CAVHCS’ diversity celebrations is rooted in the

EEO Program’s Diversity Committee. “The idea came from our committee,” explained McCloud. “We wanted to find a way to provide a better understanding of the culture of our co-workers, the veterans we serve, and what people consider important. In doing so hopefully would increase individual awareness and communication.

“Recently the VA developed an approach to create a diverse work

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From the Director

Robert W. Ratliff, PH.D., FACHE

There are few opportunities that exemplify our core values more than our observance of Memorial Day. Our **Commitment** to honor and **Respect** the **Courage** of those who have paid for our liberty with their lives, speaks directly to the **Trust** and **Compassion** our veterans have come to expect and whole-heartedly deserve.

The **Vision** of those of you involved in the planning process ensured the **Integrity** of the traditions that bind us to our nation's past. The **Excellence** in execution and teamwork – from set-up and special patient support to the placement of the wreath and service of refreshments afterward – resulted in an unqualified success.

Another success story was this year's participation in the All Employee Survey. At last count 1,013 of you took a moment to take the survey. I say at last count; because we have a few paper surveys that may change that total. Whatever the final numbers are, at a minimum 73 percent of you participated, which exceeded our goal. Once again that success was not only a reflection of your commitment, but the teamwork of our coordinators and work center points of contact.

Our Family Day celebration was another example of how capable we are when we commit ourselves to a goal. The success of promoting a greater

sense of family was clearly evident on those in attendance. That type of visible verification was also evident at our two Diversity celebrations as well.

Hopefully we're developing a sense of momentum. During my recent Town Hall meetings I've talked to you about CAVHCS' ranking amongst other VA systems and medical centers. Frankly, our scores and ranking of our Performance Measures mean that we have a lot of work to do. That said; you've responded. I was happy to send out an email the other



day indicating that we/you have made a significant improvement in our Performance Measures for the third quarter External Peer Review Program (EPRP) pull. We've pulled together to identify ways to refocus our efforts to improve, but I caution you that I don't want to focus solely on the measures. I'm confident that



reaffirming our commitment and focus on quality of care will translate to improved, sustainable performance measures.

I challenge you to remember why we observe Memorial Day and use that memory to continue our recent momentum. We are the Land of the Free, because we're also the Home of the Brave...and they deserve our best.

The CAVHCS Salute

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EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
Montgomery Campus

RICHARD WEARY

The Director received a complimentary letter from a veteran thanking and complimenting Mr. Weary, Patient Services Assistant, for his dedication and concern for him. This veteran had surgery at a local hospital and had made arrangements to get pain medication after being released. When arriving to the VA, his physician was in a meeting and he was asked to wait in LSU to be seen by another physician. There were 10 to 13 people already waiting in the LSU.

The veteran explained that he was in too much pain and could not sit that long to be seen. Mr. Weary overheard the veteran’s plight and took it upon himself to get involved. Mr. Weary went to the meeting and spoke with the physician about the veteran’s surgery and pain.

The physician, in turn, left the meeting and wrote prescriptions for the veteran.

Some of the quotes from the veteran: “... if not for his (Mr. Weary) actions, the severe pain and frustration that I was going through that day would only have gotten worse.

It would be good for everyone to know that with all the negative things that are said, there are dedicated people looking out for the well-being of veterans. Even though his actions were not in the manual, his dedication and extra thinking compelled him to act. Thank you Dr. Ratliff for allowing people like Mr. Weary to think carefully outside the box.”



EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
Tuskegee Campus

NICHOLAS FULLER

Mr. Nicholas Fuller, R.T., Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist is committed to quality patient care and is active in on-going quality assurance activities to improve patient care. Mr. Fuller is very well liked by all service employees and the medical staff. He possesses excellent public relation skills that are an asset to CAVHCS. He treats his patients as family members and goes out of his way to help them in any way he can.

Mr. Fuller is one of the most highly motivated individuals in this department. Over the last four months he has consistently demonstrated leadership qualities far

beyond his level of experience. In the absence of his supervisor, Mr. Fuller demonstrates a take-charge attitude that is

unequaled by any of his peers. In fact when the Lead Technologist is out on leave he is the next person in line to take care of Imaging in Tuskegee. And, in the absence of the Imaging Supervisor, Mr. Fuller assumed those duties in an outstanding manner. He expresses the genuine desire to improve his radiology knowledge and has excelled in all assignments given to him.



**A total of 1,013
 CAVHCS
 employees (73%)
 completed the
 recent All
 Employee Survey.**

**The participation
 goal established by
 VHA was 72%.**





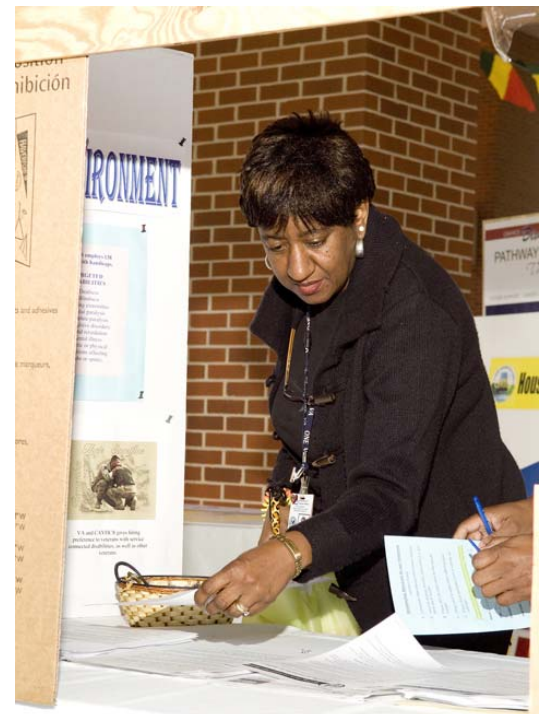
‘Diversity’

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environment within VA by utilizing an acronym to ‘R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity,’” added McCloud. “The Under Secretary for Health Diversity Advisory Board’s approach has been to emphasize each letter in a five-year campaign. Last year we focused on the ‘R’, which stood for respect. This year our focus is on ‘E’ for education. Hopefully we can build upon each of these concepts as we look to next year’s focal point... ‘A’ for awareness.”



Images by
Eric Johnson,
Robin Johnsonson





'Memorial'

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Naturally a big-ticket item for any institution with the word “veteran” in its title, Memorial Day observances are traditionally yet another example of CAVHCS teamwork. “An event like this takes a lot of cooperation to come off successfully, said William Petty, Chief, Voluntary Services. “EMS and Engineering Services are huge players. From setting up the tents and the public address system to getting the grounds looking as nice as they did...everything looked perfect. We even had a power surge just prior to the ceremony, but



the electrician stepped-up and re-did the set-up and nobody was the wiser.” CAVHCS’ association and strong working relationship with Maxwell Air Force Base was clearly on display as well. Not only was the keynote speaker from Maxwell, but the Honor Guard, the 21-Gun Salute team were all comprised of active duty members stationed at there.

“We also appreciate the Veteran Service Organizations who year-in and year-out provide the funds to purchase the refreshments,” added Petty. And of course my staff in Voluntary Services did a wonderful job, but folks that don’t usually get mentioned – that I’d like to thank – are the CAVHCS employees who came out on their day off. We talk about reaffirming the commitment, but clearly for a lot of us, that commitment is way more than talk.”

Following a wreath presentation at the base of a national ensign flown at half-staff; a 21-gun salute and a haunting rendition of echo taps by a member of the Capital Sounds Concert Band those

gathered we asked to do one more thing...remember.

“Please don’t forget to observe the National Moment of Remembrance at 3 o’clock today,” said Golden of the law passed in 2000 designed to put some of the ‘memory’ back into Memorial Day. “I am asking all of you to pause a moment at 3 o’clock for a moment of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to our nation.”

Yes – it’s been said we are the land of the free, because we are also the home of the brave, and sometimes – possibly even more than once a year – it may be a good idea to remember that fact and be thankful.



Images by
Robin Johnson, Al Bloom



Family Day was celebrated on the Tuskegee Campus to culminate last month's National Nursing Home Week, as well as promoting a greater sense of family among CAVHCS Nursing Home Care Unit residents. (Images by Eric Johnson)

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2007 VALUE Leadership Program from June 11-13 Information Protection Awareness Week, June 25-29th ** Achieve Global classes, June 20-21					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 ** Reaching for Stellar Service Individual Series 4	21 ** Caring for Customers; Serving a World of Customers	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Information Protection Awareness Week						

The CAVHCS Community Calendar is not intended to be an all-inclusive, official calendar. It is intended rather to provide a medium for CAVHCS Salute to share upcoming events.

If you would like to add a CAVHCS event please email details directly to alan.bloom@va.gov. Submissions are not guaranteed to be published. Considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.