

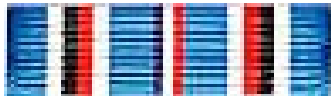


Alfonso R. Batres, Ph.D., Chief Officer, Vet Center Program

Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of Warrior/Citizens and their Families: A Multidisciplinary Panel

January 13, 2010

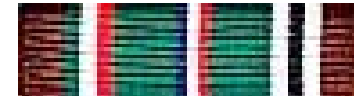
WWII American Theater Campaign Medal



WWII Asian Pacific Campaign Medal



WWII European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal



WWII Victory Medal



Korea Service Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



Vietnam Service Medal



SW Asia Service Medal



Kosovo Service Medal



GWOT Expeditionary Medal



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



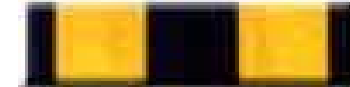
USMC Combat Action Ribbon



USMC Expeditionary Medal



Navy Expeditionary Medal





Vet Center Statement of Purpose

We are the people in VA who welcome home war Veterans with honor by providing readjustment counseling in a caring manner. Vet Centers understand and appreciate Veterans' war experiences while assisting them and their family members toward a successful post-war adjustment in or near their community.



Vet Centers are staffed by small teams (3-6 staff members) composed of a mix of mental health professionals and counselors from other disciplines.

- Approximately 80% of all Vet Center staff are Veterans and 60% are combat Veterans.
 - One third of all Vet Center staff served in Iraq, Afghanistan, or both.
 - Over 60% of Vet Center direct counseling staff are VHA qualified mental health professionals (Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Social Workers, and Nurses).
 - 42% of all Vet Center staff are women.
-



Vet Center Services

Readjustment counseling is a wide range of services offered to eligible veterans and their families in the effort to make a successful transition from military to civilian life.

Services offered at Vet Centers nationwide include:

- **Counseling for veterans and their families**
 - **Marital & family counseling for military related issues**
 - **Bereavement counseling**
 - **Military sexual trauma counseling and referral**
 - **Demobilization outreach and services**
 - **Substance abuse assessment and referral**
 - **Employment**
 - **VHA referral**
 - **VBA referral**
 - **Veterans community outreach and education**
-



Vet Center Client Satisfaction

The Vet Center program is the gold standard for client satisfaction in both VA and the federal government as a whole. Over 99% of Vet Center clients surveyed report high satisfaction and report that they would recommend the Vet Center to a fellow veteran.



Vet Center Workload

1,188,145 total visits provided in FY2009

174,362 total Veterans seen in FY2009

40% of all Veterans served by Vet Centers in FY2009 were not seen at any other VA facility

Cumulatively since the beginning of the war the Vet Centers have provided services to 424,398 OEF-OIF Veterans and their families



Readjustment Counseling Service...

Celebrating 30 Years in Service to our Nations Veterans

...Keeping the Promise **Vet Center**

Vet Centers

Vet Centers have provided family services for military related issues since the program's inception in 1979.





Vet Centers:

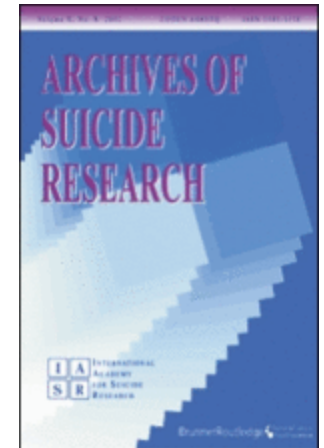
- Vet Center services do not require enrollment in the larger VA system. Eligibility is based on service in a combat theater of operations, sexual trauma while on active duty, or loss of a family member who was serving on active duty.
 - Vet Centers have eligibility to see families for military related problems.
 - Vet Centers are in Veteran and family friendly, easy to access locations outside of VA hospitals.
-



Suicide Prevention

Evaluation of Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention in Veterans (USUI #285912, VOL 12, ISS 2)

Clinical providers and “front line” nonclinical staff who work with Veterans, families and communities are natural gatekeepers to identify and to refer Veterans at risk for suicide. A national cohort (n = 602) of community based counseling center staff from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vet Centers participated in an evaluation of a brief standardized gatekeeper training program and a scripted behavioral rehearsal practice session. A significant difference in knowledge and self efficacy was observed from pre to post ($p < .0001$) with the non-clinicians showing larger effect sizes for knowledge (0.96 vs. 0.42) and self efficacy (0.89 vs. 0.41). Gatekeeper training for suicide prevention shows promise for increasing the capacity of VA staff to work with at risk Veterans.



ARCHIVES OF
SUICIDE
RESEARCH,
2008



Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Center Assessment

- Three Visit Assessment
 - Presenting psycho-social focus
 - Mental Status Evaluation
 - evidence of depression
 - evidence of PTSD
 - Lethality Assessment
 - Health History
 - Developmental/Pre-military history
 - Military History
 - Post-Military History
-



FY09 Crisis Response

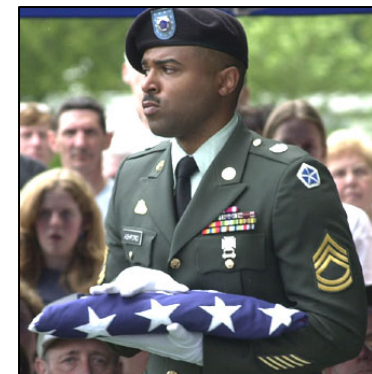
- Vet Center staff responded to crisis situations via 109 suicide, 16 homicide, and 7 suicide and homicide interventions.
 - These situations are in response to significant signs of eminent danger to self or others
 - This usually occur outside of the Vet Center and involve significant contact and in some cases are life saving.
 - Once stabilized, the cases are case managed via referral to VA Medical Centers for psychiatric services.
 - Vet Centers make numerous referrals to VA Medical Centers and the VA National Suicide Hotline
-



On August 5, 2003 VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi authorized Vet Centers to furnish bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings of service members who die while on active duty, to include federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel.



Vet Center





Through September 2009, the Vet Centers have assisted the families of 1,656 fallen Service Members, 1,160 (70%) were in-theater casualties in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Over 15,958 bereavement visits have been provided by Vet Center staff, many times in the family's home. This is an average of 9.6 visits per family.





Family Services

- OIF and OEF suicide cases in the bereavement program involve both in-country (N = 22) and after return (N = 191) from the combat zone.
 - The cases require more intensive and extended counseling services for family members.
 - Many of these families require extended case management especially when there are children involved.
 - In-country suicide cases may involve a protracted waiting period while the military investigates the case, sometimes putting the family on “hold” until the process is completed.
-



In February 2004 the VA Under Secretary for Health authorized the Vet Center program to hire fifty (50) OIF/OEF veterans to conduct outreach to their fellow Global War on Terrorism veterans. Due to the success of the initial 50 Outreach Specialists an additional 50 positions were authorized by the Under Secretary in April 2005. These positions are located in all fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.



Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



**Elizabeth Lopez, El Paso Vet Center OEF/OIF Outreach Specialist
First Outreach Specialist Hired (May 16, 2004)
Iraq 2003 - Patriot Missile Crew Member - 11th Brigade, 552 Echo Bat.
Iraq 2005 - TMT Gunner - NMCB 22 (Sea Bee)**



Iraq (2nd Tour) 2005



Vet Center Outreach Event 2006



Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



Moses V. Gloria, Raleigh Vet Center OIF/OEF Outreach Specialist
Afghanistan 2001 26th MEU Navy Corpsman
Iraq 2003 I MEF CASEVAC team Navy Corpsman



21 Mar 2003 / Iraq



8 Aug 2009 / Durham, NC



Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



Dave Hosking, Madison Vet Center OEF/OIF Outreach Specialist Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom



**Vietnam 1966/67
119th Air Assault**



**Iraq 2003
Blackhawk Crew Chief
1-147th Aviation**



**Global War on Terrorism
Expeditionary Medal**



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



Rafiq Raza, BSW - Orlando Vet Center OIF/OEF Outreach Specialist

Afghanistan 2001-2002 & 2002-2003
Intelligence Analyst – G2 10th Mountain Infantry Division (Light)



2001 / Afghanistan



2008 / VFW Convention - Orlando



Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



Afghanistan Campaign Medal



Iraq Campaign Medal



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...Keeping the Promise **Vet Center**

Mobile Vet Centers



Initial MVC Demonstration for Congress, October 2008

50 Mobile Vet Centers are being utilized to provide access to VA for returning Veterans via outreach to demobilization active military bases, National Guard, and Reserve locations nationally. The vehicles provide essential homeless Veteran services including participation in Stand Down events. The vehicles also support Vet Center services to rural areas geographically distant from VA services. Each Mobile Vet Center is equipped with a state of the art satellite communications package that includes fully encrypted tele-health equipment, access to all VA systems (Computerized Patient Record System, MyHealthEVet) and connectivity to emergency response systems (Emergency Management Strategic Healthcare Group).



Response to Ft. Hood Tragedy, November 2009

VHA Mobile Vet Centers arrived at the Killeen Vet Center on the day of the shooting to assist the veteran community and any assistance requested by Ft. Hood. Four were initially deployed and currently three remain in the area. The VHA Vet Center and VA Medical Center worked collaboratively to assist the community in the area. The Vet Center Program has provided readjustment counseling services continuously since the incident at Ft. Hood to over 6,600 veterans, active duty service members, and families. The local Ft. Hood surrounding municipalities requested counseling services and assisted in the local advertising and the business community has provided space and support to the Vet Center employees providing assistance.

