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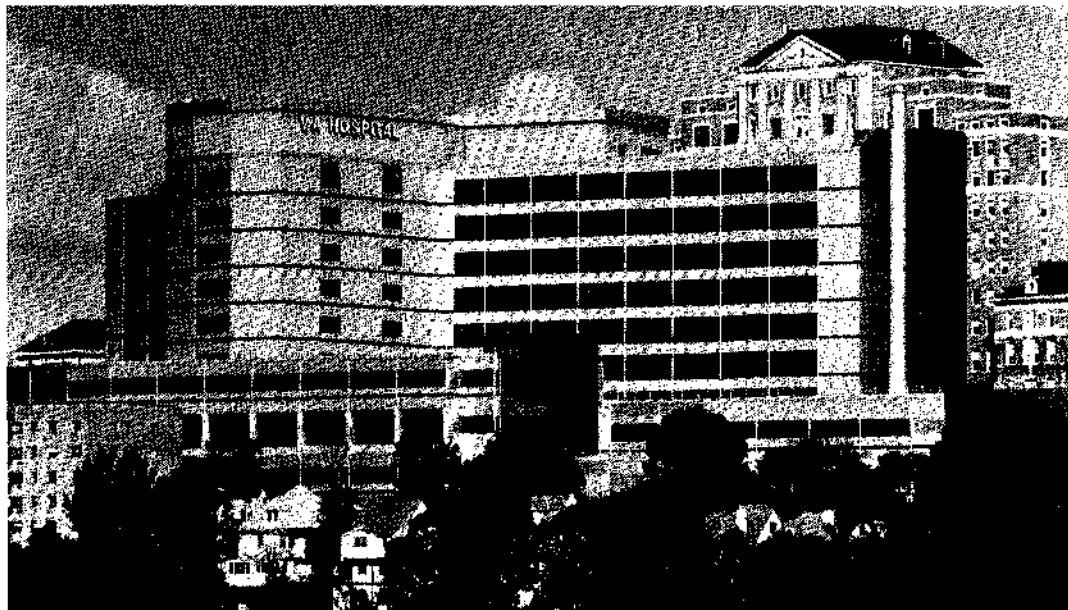
Vol. XXVII No. 4

Direct Appointment Doors Open

The VA has negotiated interchange agreements with the Office of Personnel Management which allow certain Title 38 employees to apply directly for positions in the competitive civil service. Employees covered by the agreements include physicians, dentists, nurses and other health care professionals, and employees in the Canteen Management Program of the Veterans Canteen Service.

Previously, these employees could not be reassigned or promoted to a competitive service position without applying through the civil service examining process. This process required an individual to apply to OPM to have his or her name placed on a register. Those individuals not within reach on OPM registers for competitive service vacancies have been excluded from consideration for such positions.

The interchange agreements remove a major barrier that *See Direct Appointment page 4*



Bronx Designed for Change

The first patients have moved into the \$105 million Bronx replacement medical center which was designed to support current and future medical technology.

At dedication ceremonies, Administrator Max Cleland told some 2,000 patients, staff, volunteers, members of veterans organizations and community

visitors that the VA is in the Bronx "not only for the patients who are here today, but for the patients that will be here in the years to come."

Building toured

U.S. Rep. Mario Biaggi also spoke at the ceremonies which were followed by a tour of the

702-bed hospital. It replaces the old structure built around the turn of the century as an orphanage and serving as a veterans hospital since 1922.

Prior to the dedication a parade of 800 representing 20 veterans service organizations marched from the national guard armory to the medical

See Bronx page 2



vantage point

The Soul of Leadership

By Max Cleland
Administrator of Veterans Affairs

I want to share with you a speech, an inspiring speech.

It was given this fall at the dedication of the Southeast Asia Memorial at the United States Military Academy. The speaker was John P. Wheeler III, USMA 1966, who is director of the Viet-

nam Veterans Memorial Fund.

It has an important message for all who have served or who now serve in the military. I commend it to you.

"There are bonds born in military service that are never

broken. I think that they are not even broken by death. They are bonds of intimacy and fellowship. They give us strength. They are a source of sorrow when battle or the changes of life keep us from seeing each other. But the

See Vantage page 8

Honors and Awards

Gladys Malone, secretary to director of Dublin VAMC, named Secretary of the Year by the Dublin Chapter of the National Secretaries Association.

Marcia Monahan, dietitian at Gainesville VAMC, elected president of the Florida Dietetic Association.

"Human Goals", an exhibit produced by VACO Audio Visuals Service, awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Prometheans for exhibit excellence.

Robert Olix, veterans claims examiner at Albuquerque VARO, presented the Silver Beaver Award for Distinguished Service to Youth by the Boy Scouts Great Southwest Area Council.

Dave Wolf, chairman of the adjudication rating board at Fargo VAM&ROG, selected outstanding person of the

year by the Disabled American Veterans of North Dakota.

Judy Marquardt, nursing coordinator at Hines VAMC, selected one of the Outstanding Humanitarians of the Year by the Chicago Hospital Council.

Fred Blumenthal, management analyst on records management staff at VACO, received Special Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service to the Community by the Mental Health Association of Alexandria, Va.

Tommy Clack, staff assistant to the director at Atlanta VAMC, elected vice-chairman of Georgia's State Veterans Service Board.

San Antonio VAMC awarded an outstanding achievement plaque by the American Hospital Association for accomplishing a 26

percent reduction in energy usage.

George Higgins, M.D., chief of surgical service at Washington, D.C., VAMC, given the Lucy Worthman James Clinical Research Award by the Society of Surgical Oncology.

Thomas Gigliotti, director at Pittsburgh (University Drive) VAMC, presented a Bronze Plaque for outstanding medical care provided veterans by John Zwiersdak, State Commander for the Pennsylvania American Legion.

Alice Booher, senior attorney, BYA, elected as 1980-1981 president of the District of Columbia State Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Martha Goodwin, purchase contract chief at Reno VARO, presented Certificate of Honorary Recognition by the Small Business Ad-

ministration for outstanding service strengthening Small Business Communities.

Mitchell Stephens, claims clerk at Nashville VARO, has qualified for national and international competition in Wheelchair Olympics as a member of the U.S. Wheelchair team.

Captain Benjamin Long, diagnostic radiologic technologist at White City VA Domiciliary, presented the Oregon National Guard "Exceptional Service Medal" for outstanding performance of duty.

Donovan Hower, director, land management service, Office of Construction, named a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. First from VA to receive this honor, he was nominated by the society's Potomac Chapter for administrative professional work in public agencies and for direct service to the society. □

Bronx continued from page 1

center grounds.

As one of the nation's most innovative health care facilities, the new Bronx center's medical areas are composed of horizontal modules stacked on top of one another. Interstitial service zones contain utility facilities. Each utility service zone con-

nects at one end to a two-story room containing mechanical and electrical equipment that supply the utility systems.

As technology changes, workers can use these design concepts to install new medical systems without interrupting day-to-day hospital routines.

The hospital building is flanked by a five-story research center where work will be continued by Bronx investigators who have won every major scientific award. These include the Nobel prize awarded to Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, whose work was conducted in collaboration with Dr. Solomon Berson until his death.

The research center and the hospital building are connected with each other by an enclosed walkway. The buildings are located on a 30-acre site.

The medical center's emergency power system is first of its kind in New York City. It delivers a computer-monitored full electrical load to the medical center and parallels the Con Edison electrical supply. An energy management computer monitors and adjusts temperature and energy demands.

Computerization enhances the processing, storage and retrieval of patient data in the pharmacy, laboratory and wards. Computer terminals on the wards provide clinical staff with immediate access to vital patient data.

Computer monitors

Biomedical engineering features include a three-computer physiological monitoring system, an automated electrocardiogram analysis system and a cardiac catheterization laboratory computer. All of these systems serve the operating room and surgical intensive, medical intensive and cardiac care units.

Among other innovations at the new center is an auto-valer system to provide personnel with clean uniforms quickly. Employees insert special identification cards into a receptacle, and the uniforms are delivered by conveyor. □



Medical Center Director Roy McCracken conducts guided tour of new medical center

On tour at the Bronx, center Director Roy McCracken explains how innovations will give veterans good care. 1. Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, 2. Administrator

Cleland, 3. Rep. Mario Biaggi, 4. James Peters, executive director of Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, and 5. McCracken.

Appraisal Time

To Reward High-Level Performance

By Charles Clark

Assistant Administrator for Personnel

October 1, 1980, marked the beginning of the first performance appraisal period for those VA managers and supervisors who will be converted to the merit pay system in October 1981. Two years ago, VANGUARD published an article summarizing the key features of this system established by the Civil Service Reform Act. Now may be a good time to review some of the main points in that article and to add my thoughts on merit pay. The VANGUARD article noted that:

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 will replace customary within-grade increases for GS-13 through GS-15 supervisors and managers with a merit pay system that will emphasize quality of performance

rather than length of service. Under this new merit pay system, . . . a supervisor or manager will be evaluated annually on organizational accomplishments and individual performance, as demonstrated by such factors as improvements in efficiency, productivity, cost effectiveness, quality of work, and timeliness of service.

This evaluation will be the basis for determining the appropriate amount of merit pay increase for a supervisor or manager. . . .

The "pool of money" now available for full comparability increases and within grade and quality increases for GS-13 through GS-15 supervisors and managers will be

redistributed on an employee-by-employee basis under the merit pay system. Each supervisor or manager will receive at least half of the October comparability increase and, in addition, may receive a merit pay increase based on performance. Some supervisors and managers will get more, some less. The key will be quality of performance.

Now, let me share some of my thoughts about merit pay with you. I have read and listened to issues raised criticizing merit pay. This has not diminished my enthusiasm for the merit pay principle. I believe that different levels of performance should go hand-in-hand with different levels of rewards.

We are in the final stages of

developing a VA merit pay system which will translate next year's performance ratings into merit pay increases that will reward high level performance but not reduce generally rates of pay for fully satisfactory employees. However, the VA's merit pay system will not take final shape until recommendations and comments from all VA departments and staff offices have been thoroughly examined.

In the final analysis, the success of the merit pay system will ultimately depend on the performance appraisal system. Supervisors and managers must accept the responsibility placed upon them to properly make distinctions between their subordinates' performance and discharge such responsibility with integrity. □

Interview with an Expert

Does Agent Orange Deform Children?

Dr. Barclay Shepard, special assistant to the Chief Medical Director for environmental medicine, speaks out about the effects of Agent Orange on the unborn:

Interviewer: Does Agent Orange cause birth defects?

Dr. Shepard: We have no evidence that Agent Orange causes birth defects in humans. While dioxin (the trace contaminant in Agent Orange) has been known to cause birth defects in pregnant, female laboratory animals, there is no evidence, either from our Vietnam experience or from data collected from other government agencies, to indicate that exposure to herbicides by human males can result in birth defects.

Interviewer: What is VA doing to find out about it?

Dr. Shepard: We can't experiment with humans, so the only information we have on humans has to come either from studying people who have worked with the chemical or people exposed

as a result of industrial accidents. No sign of a higher rate of birth defects among children of these groups has been reported.

Laboratory studies on animals provide some indirect information, but here it is important to distinguish between male and female exposure. Female animals exposed to dioxin during pregnancy have borne offspring with defects. But there is no evidence to suggest that exposure of males affects their reproductive role in anyway. In a recent study by the National Toxicology Program 200 male mice were fed various constituents of Agent Orange, including dioxin. There was no increase of infertility or birth defects.

Interviewer: Max Cleland turned the male mice study over to VA's Advisory Committee on Health Related Effects of Herbicides for comment. What was their opinion?

Dr. Shepard: We don't have all

the reports back yet, but those we do have say the study was well carried out. Some committee members suggest that there needs to be a follow-up looking at possible long-term effects.



' . . . We have no evidence that Agent Orange causes birth defects in humans.'

Back to your question about what is being done to research this subject—one big study on birth defects will soon be started by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. This study is based on the CDC registry of 6,000 children who have major anatomic birth defects and were born in the greater Atlanta area over the last 12 years or so.

The parents of these children will be interviewed to determine service in Vietnam. After setting up a control group, we should be able to establish whether or not the Vietnam veteran group has an increased incidence of birth defects and what types of defects are most common. It will not tell us anything about the cause of the defects. It will simply say whether Vietnam veterans as a group have an increased risk of producing children born with defects.

Interviewer: How long will that take?

Dr. Shepard: The protocol for
See AO page 6

Converted Van Saves Money and Energy

Hank Black of CO's Office of Construction management staff has converted his 15-passenger van to use liquid propane fuels to run the engine.

Black used to pay \$1.37 for a gallon of gas. He now pays 76 cents a gallon for propane and gets about the same mileage. Since most propane used in the United States is not imported, his van conversion contributes to the saving of approximately 3,000 gallons of gasoline per year, which would otherwise be used in his van's operation.

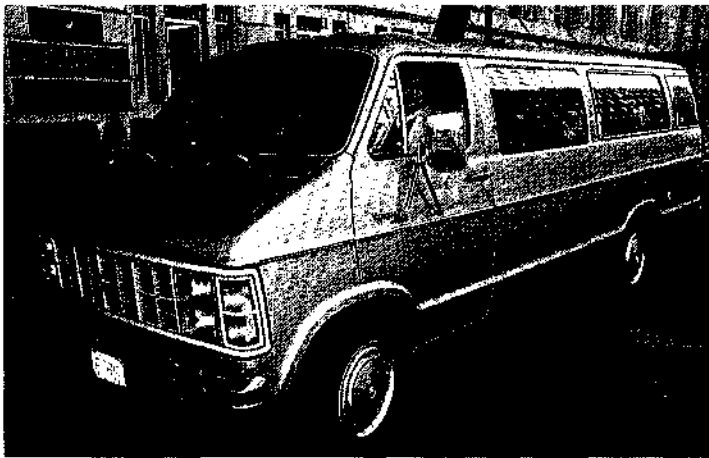
The propane system was installed at a cost of \$1,250 by Environmental Fuel Systems, Inc. located in Bealeton, Va. For convenience in refueling, Black had a 500-gallon storage tank placed in his back yard at a one-time cost of \$75. Black

stresses that the conversion is a minor modification to the vehicle, but should nevertheless be done by an experienced person in propane technology.

With propane, he says, his engine starts and runs smoother and discharges less pollutants into the atmosphere.

Black figures that he will be able to pay for the conversion in about a year by the savings he will make in using propane as opposed to gasoline; his 15-passenger vanpool commutes 120 round-trip-miles a day.

Overall, the propane conversion will save Black money now spent on gasoline, reduce air pollution, use domestic energy sources, eliminate the possibility of having to sit in long gas lines and help in the overall reduction of foreign gasoline imports. □



Driver Hank Black and his propane powered van.

Prosthetic Distribution Transfer

VA's Prosthetics Distribution Center in Denver, Colo., has been transferred from the Department of Medicine and Surgery to the Office of Supply Services.

At the same time the distribution responsibility for stockings, back braces, support hose and other softwares is being transferred from New York to the Denver facility.

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restricted advancement opportunities for many VA employees, who may now apply directly for competitive service positions without going through OPM.

These include a number of service chief positions, as well as the Assistant Director Training Program. □



AFGE negotiations underway. It was a historic occasion when AFGE VA Council representatives and members of the VA negotiation team met for their first negotiating sessions on November 13.

Prior to the session, held at the Washington, D.C., VAMC, management's negotiating team had reviewed union proposals and drafted counter-proposals for presentation to AFGE.

Present for the first session from left, back row: Susan Lawson, labor relations specialist; George Kvasnicka, personnel officer Washington, D.C., VAMC; Ferman Sullins, Dallas VAMC; Girard Meyers, Battle Creek VAMC; Mel Morris, Denver VAMC; Rhea Butler, Brentwood VAMC; James Pete, Bronx VAMC; Charles Myers, Perry Point VAMC.

Front row: Barry Jackson, associate director for personnel management, DVB; Donald Ducharme, management analyst

Homebound Veteran Becomes Self-Employed Watchmaker

A Korean war veteran afflicted with multiple sclerosis, that has left him without the use of his legs, has become a watch repairman under VA's homebound instruction program.

Burton Skibinsky, 52, of Philadelphia received the Delaware Valley Watchmaker's Guild certificate of accomplishment at a ceremony attended by VA personnel from Philadelphia VARO&IC who were responsible for his training program.

The presentation was made by Tom Murray, president of the Guild, Skibinsky's instructor under VA's Vocational Rehabilitation program. Equipment and tools were provided by VA.

Instruction averaged four hours a week over two years. Discouraged at first, Skibinsky's wife, Jacqueline, and daughters Randi and Fern, helped him gain confidence.

"He is a fast learner and was willing to try anything new. His



Skibinsky

attitude was just fantastic," Murray said. Skibinsky knocked on doors in his high rise apartment building, offering his services.

Today his neighbors keep him busy full time. He works on six to 10 watches a week and provides pick up and delivery.

VARO Counseling Psychologist Paris Sterrett and Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Arron Freedland cited Skibinsky's success in overcoming his handicap as "one of the most rewarding" training experiences in their careers. □



Boston VARO; Howard Steinwandel, alternate spokesman and chief, Labor Relations Division; Milton Michael, Jr., formerly a medical center director, DM&S field representative from Phoenix; Jim Adams, General Counsel representative; Lansing Hills, deputy regional director, Western Region; Michael Rudd, spokesman and deputy assistant administrator for personnel; Arte Pierce, Detroit VARO; Andrea Brooks, Los Angeles VARO; John Broda, Wilkes Barre VAMC. Not in the photograph, Vernon Clayton, deputy regional director, Northeastern Region.

Negotiations were scheduled to begin November 13 on a two weeks on, two weeks off basis until completed. Management members represented Personnel, General Counsel, Department of Medicine and Surgery and Department of Veterans Benefits.

Others will represent major services such as nursing and human goals when pertinent material in those fields is under discussion.

Medical Terms in Espanol

A Spanish language class for professional staff with emphasis on medical terminology is underway at New York VAMC.

When a survey conducted by the station's Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) showed the Hispanic patient population at 20 percent and sometimes higher, Director James Dooley authorized a program for better communication between doctors, nurses, social workers and other professional health care employees and the Spanish-speaking patients.

HEP Manager Father Charles Lovato of the center's chaplain service made arrangements for instructor Irene Gross to teach 22 sessions of 1½ hours each.

The classes enable Hispanic patients to feel more at home with the health care staff. They also make it possible to be sure patients understand directions.

Father Lovato hopes to continue classes of 10 each until there is at least one medical professional in each ward who can relate to Hispanic patients in Spanish. □



Members of New York's first Spanish class pose with Father Lovato, who organized the class, center Director James Dooley and instructor Irene Gross, who are standing in the center of the group.

Paperwork Reduction Programs Work

A total of 1,404 VA forms and form letters have been eliminated as of the end of FY 1979.

In response to Administrator Cleland's expressed concern about a significant growth in the number of VA forms in use, the Office of Management Services initiated a reduction drive in January 1980.

Response of departments and staff offices resulted in an 11.5 percent reduction in the number of VA forms and form letters. □

VA Helps Mark Graves in Private Cemeteries

A VA benefit that first became available in 1979, has helped pay for privately purchased headstones or grave markers for almost 40,000 veterans buried in private cemeteries.

Legislation has permitted VA to reimburse part of the cost of an individual headstone or marker placed on the grave of a veteran buried in a private cemetery. The reimbursement cannot exceed the average cost of headstones purchased by VA for this purpose. The current amount is \$53.

Families of veterans who select a burial site for a deceased veteran in a private cemetery now have two options for VA assistance in marking the grave. VA will provide a headstone or grave marker free of charge and ship it to the consignee designated on the application. Cost of placing the marker in a private cemetery must be borne by the applicant, however. If a marker other than the VA standard is chosen, VA will reimburse up to \$53 toward its cost.

Application for reimbursement can be filed at any VA

Arkansas State Home Recognized

VA has recognized the new Arkansas Veterans Home in Little Rock, Ark., and is now able to make per diem payments of \$6.35 for domiciliary care provided there to eligible veterans.

The 150-bed domiciliary makes Arkansas the 32nd state to establish such a state veterans home.

Arkansas remodeled an old state school for the blind and the deaf with \$1,081,212 in VA assistance provided under the state home construction grant program. This program enables VA to provide up to 65 percent of the cost of construction or renovation. It is administered in the Office of Extended Care by State Home Program Coordinator Rita Frampton.

Total cost of the Little Rock facility was \$1,663,403. □

regional office. Applications for the free of charge VA headstone or marker should be addressed to Director, Monument Service, Department of Memorial Affairs, Veterans Administration, 810 Vermont Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420.

The VA assistance on headstones is available in addition to the \$300 VA burial allowance and a \$150 plot allowance. □

VANGUARD

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New Legislation Boosts Compensation For Veterans and Their Dependents

Nearly 2.3 million veterans, 240,000 surviving spouses and more than 83,000 children of deceased veterans received larger VA compensation checks in November.

The increase is the result of recent Congressional action signed into law October 7 by President Carter which hiked compensation rates by 13 percent for those rated from 10 to 40 percent disabled, and 14.3 percent for more seriously disabled veterans.

Dependency and indemnity compensation rates for surviving spouses and children of veterans were increased 14.3 percent also.

Effective on October 1, the new rates were reflected in

checks received November 1.

The legislation made several other changes in VA benefits, including:

- an increase from \$25,000 to \$27,500 in the amount of a VA home loan guaranty for conventional homes, and from \$17,500 to \$20,000 for mobile home loans;

- payment of up to \$5,000 for special housing adaptations for veterans with service connected blindness in both eyes (5/200 visual acuity or less), or with the loss, or loss of use, of both hands;

- provision of headstones or grave markers for a veteran's wife, husband or child buried in a state veterans' cemetery;

- removal of the prohibition against concurrent receipt of VA pension and military retired pay.

The legislation also provides relief for veterans who obtained mortgages during periods of high interest rates and later find they can obtain refinancing at lower rates.

Previously, VA loan guaranty eligibility could be restored when the prior loan was repaid and the property disposed of. The new law permits VA to guarantee a loan for the existing VA loan balance plus closing costs even if the veteran has used all his or her loan entitlement.

The bill restricts compensation and dependency indemnity benefits for persons incarcerated in federal, state or local penal in-

stitutions on felony convictions. They will receive such benefits at a lesser rate after they have been confined for 60 days.

The new compensation rates mean that a veteran with a service connected disability rated at 10 percent will receive \$54 a month, an increase from \$48. The rate for a 50 percent disability goes from \$255 monthly to \$291, and a veteran with 100 percent disability will receive \$1,016 monthly instead of the current \$889.

Additional amounts, providing a maximum monthly payment of \$2,898 (up from \$2,536), will be paid for specific severe disabilities. □

Presidential Letters

Through government's incentive awards program, employees whose contributions result in first-year savings of \$5,000 or more, or whose energy-saving actions are significant, are recognized by a personal letter from the President. VA employees who have recently received a letter and personal recognition from the Administrator are:

G. H. Hughes
Building Management Service
Dayton VAMC

Abe Darwish
Engineering Service
San Francisco VAMC

Michael Mirabella
Engineering Service
San Francisco VAMC

Norma Meyerricks
Laboratory Service
Tampa VAMC

William Mir
Inpatient Psychiatry Services
Phoenix VAMC

Dr. Anthony Dymond
Engineering Service
Loma Linda VAMC

Jesse Rhodes
Engineering Service
Loma Linda VAMC □

Bond Rates Up 1 Percent

The interest rate on Series EE Bonds purchased on and after November 1 has been increased from 7 percent to 8 percent, compounded semiannually, when the bonds are held to original maturity. The term to maturity is being shortened from 11 to 9 years.

The interest rate on Series HH Savings Bonds purchased on and after November 1 is being in-

creased from 6½ percent to 7½ percent to their original maturity, which remains at 10 years. Interest on these Bonds is paid semiannually by check.

All outstanding Series E, EE, H and HH Savings Bonds, as well as outstanding Savings Notes (Freedom Shares) will also benefit from a 1 percent increase to their next maturities. □

A0 continued from page 3

this study is now in the final stage of review. Vietnam veterans' organizations are looking at the questionnaire for their comments, and we hope the study will actually get underway before the end of the year. It will probably take two to three years to complete, but we are hoping to have some preliminary data before then.

Interviewer: Many Vietnam veterans around the country are having children with birth defects. How do you explain this?

Dr. Shepard: The normal, expected rate of birth defects in the world population is between three and four percent. Therefore in a group of 2.4 million Vietnam veterans, one would expect a fairly large number of children with naturally occurring birth defects, unrelated to any exposure in Vietnam.

Interviewer: What can veterans who are concerned about the effects of Agent Orange on their children do while these long studies are being done?

Dr. Shepard: We are encouraging veterans to proceed as

though there were no effects. At the present time we do not believe there is enough evidence to suggest any increased likelihood of their having children with defects. Agent Orange exposure should not be a factor in their family planning.

If a veteran does have a child with birth defects, he should call his nearest VAMC and request an appointment with the environmental physician so that he can discuss the issue in more detail and get counseling.

Interviewer: How much evidence will VA need in order to establish policy linking birth defects to service in Vietnam?

Dr. Shepard: I would certainly hope that the CDC study will definitely answer that question.

Interviewer: What will VA do once the study is finished?

Dr. Shepard: That depends on the outcome. If it's conclusively shown that there is a significantly higher incidence of birth defects among children of Vietnam veterans, VA will undoubtedly formulate policy to help veterans deal with the problem. □

publications and reports

Regs Bar Discrimination Against Handicapped Persons

Final regulations barring discrimination against handicapped persons in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance from the VA are being sent to all stations.

These are designed to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and amendments as well as Executive Order 11914.

The regulations involve assurances of compliance, self-evaluation by recipients, establishment of grievance procedures and notification of employees and beneficiaries of the recipient's nondiscrimination policy as it regards handicapped persons.

The new rules apply to all types of physical and mental impairments, including drug addiction and alcoholism.

They cover, in part:

- **Employment practices**—barring discrimination by recipients of VA assistance in recruitment, hiring, compensation, job assignment and classification and fringe benefits. Employers are required to make reasonable accommodations to qualified handicapped applicants or employees unless this would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

- **Accessibility**—programs conducted in new facilities should be readily accessible to handicapped applicants and usable by them.

- **Processing**—VA procedures for processing Section 504 will be similar to those of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

of 1964 and will apply to all recipients of financial assistance from the VA. These non-discrimination requirements will extend to the entire range of medical care, rehabilitation, education and housing.

- **School—recipients** operating public education programs (preschool, elementary and secondary) are required to provide free appropriate education to each qualified handicapped child in the most normal setting appropriate. Evaluation requirements must ensure proper classification and placement of handicapped children.

- **Colleges and universities**—discrimination is barred against handicapped persons in recruitment, admission and treatment after admission.

- **Health and other social services**—discrimination is forbidden in providing of such services. Larger recipients are required to provide auxiliary aids to handicapped individuals as necessary. Hospitals are required not to discriminate against addicts or alcoholics who need medical services and to establish emergency room procedures for communication with persons with impaired hearing.

Copies of the VA regulations are being sent to all VA installations. During this past summer, compliance officers were given "504 training" at sessions held in Nashville, Tenn.; Boise, Idaho, and Hartford, Conn. □

New Award Goes to Hospital Staffers

Sarah Crawford, a nursing assistant at Tuscaloosa VAMC, is one of "a special few who willingly serve beyond the call of duty with their hands and heart."

Those were the words of Administrator Cleland in honoring Crawford and other employees with the first annual Hands and Heart Award. The deeds of these employees surpassed what was professionally required, providing emotional support, help and guidance to patients, Cleland said.

The award is available to only one person annually at a patient care facility. Each winner received an engraved nameplate with a detachable sterling silver Hands and Heart symbol that can also be worn as a pin. Each was also identified on a plaque displayed in a busy area of the VA medical facility, where those who pass will be aware of the person who earned this high recognition for extraordinary concern for patients.

In announcing the program, Administrator Cleland spoke of

the fear and loneliness that can result when a veteran first enters a hospital as a patient. Though treated by a competent health care team, he said, "the veteran may seek more and look to those directly in daily patient care to find someone to listen, to care, to be a friend."

Nursing Assistant Crawford is such a friend. One of many examples cited in the recommendation given by her associates and patients demonstrates the rapport she has established with them:

A very regressed patient was chronically uncooperative with his family and with staff at the VAMC. He would routinely lie on the floor, refusing to get up unless supported in a chair.

Working in her own quiet manner, and demonstrating far greater involvement than that required, Crawford brought about a dramatic turnaround one day. Showing unprecedented interest in life, the patient attended an off-station patient picnic, exhibiting a pleasant disposition

throughout a long day. Asked why by the amazed staff, he responded: "I love Sarah and I promised her I would cooperate. I would not want to hurt Sarah by not sticking with my work."

The fact that Hands and Heart awardees are usually well known in their medical centers is exemplified in the case of Dr. Anthony C. Guzauskas, assistant chief, surgical service, Tucson VAMC.

"Residents and students respect and learn from his ability and judgment; other members of the staff have the greatest regard for him, frequently counting on him for consultations and advice," his colleagues reported. They pointed out his willingness to pitch in and help when the workload is heavy.

But Dr. Guzauskas' associates explained that his patients know best how much he deserves his award: "Thank you so much for your compassion, sincerity and skill . . . Keep that smile - it makes the patient feel secure," one veteran wrote.

In many cases, it's clear that a combination of professionalism and compassion produced the excellence that earned the Hands and Heart Award. Alice O'Leary, R.N., of Columbia, Mo., VAMC, is a prime example.

When a patient transferred to her ward from Intensive Care was not expected to respond to treatment, Miss O'Leary rallied other nurses on the case, contacted all disciplines she felt should be involved, and generally intensified the care given the patient. When the staff later held a party to celebrate the patient's recovery, they stated they had learned through Miss O'Leary how excellent nursing care could "provide a muscle over medicine."

Crawford, Guzauskas, O'Leary — three examples of how VA's hands and hearts are extended to its veteran patients. Altogether, 153 very special employees in direct patient care have earned the right to wear the Hands and Heart symbol. □

Freed Named Deputy For VA R&D

Dr. Earl Freed, a career VA psychologist with an extensive clinical and research background, has been named deputy assistant chief medical director for Research and Development.

In his new role, Dr. Freed will be second-in-charge of the research efforts of the nation's largest health care system. He will replace Lawrence Hobson, M.D. Dr. Hobson has become special clinical assistant to VA's chief medical director for the agency's top priority studies on health-related effects of Agent Orange.

There are currently about 5,500 medical research projects at 129 VA medical centers. The program also includes Health Services Research and Development Service, which conducts studies on resource allocation, cost effectiveness and other system-wide approaches to providing quality care and the Rehabilitative Engineering

Research and Development Service, which involves nationwide efforts to develop prosthetic and sensory aids for disabled veterans.

An honor graduate of Yale University, Dr. Freed received his master's and doctorate degrees in clinical psychology from Syracuse University. He interned at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, then served at Albany VAMC and more recently at Lyons VAMC where he was chief of psychology service.

He came to Central Office in 1977 as special assistant to the director of Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service. He became deputy director of the agency's Medical Research Service in 1979.

As a nationally recognized expert, Dr. Freed has been a consultant on psychology and alcoholism. He is a member of the editorial boards of



Sign of their mission

A new service insignia worn by VA chaplains will make them more recognizable.

Chaplain Service's patch symbolizes the joining together of faiths to proclaim the message of hope to those who need it. The Christian

cross, the Star of David, the Holy Scriptures are all open to the descending of the dove of peace.

Set in the midst of these four symbols is the VA logo which gives the VA Chaplain Service its place of mission. □

Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research and of the Journal of Studies on Alcohol.

Dr. Freed holds the Diploma in Clinical Psychology of the American Board of Professional

Psychology. He has authored or co-authored over 100 published scientific papers and is the author of two texts on alcoholism and mental health. □

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bonds are a great source of creativity and leadership. The story of the Southeast Asia Memorial at West Point illustrates all these things.

Begun in 1976

"The Southeast Asia Memorial Project was born in April of 1976 when some West Pointers gathered in Washington, D.C., to plan a remembrance for their troops and brothers who died in Vietnam. For four years the project grew. Today you see its outward and visible result.

Reconciliation expressed in landscaped site

"But there is the inward and spiritual story. The project united ten West Point classes of the war years. The ten 1960s classes led the effort to build

the memorial. The act of uniting has helped reconcile ourselves to the past, to see it clearly, to learn from it, to weep and to be strengthened for the work we have in our life. This reconciliation is important. The reconciliation is born of bonds that tug at us — the bonds to the men who died. Our allegiance to the best in their lives is what drew us together to create this project and brings us together here.

"Look about, at this site. The landscaped, garden-type design expresses a mood of mature reflection and of invitation to passers-by.

National leadership

"These themes of reconciliation and of a reflective, garden-type design have been proven at West Point, and they have

become guides for the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial project which is being created on two acres in the Mall area in Washington, D.C., next to the Lincoln Memorial. Developing these themes is an act of leadership.

"This link reconciliation, of creativity and of leadership runs right from this place at West Point to the heart of our Nation's Capital. The link is with leaders from all across our generation of American men and women. The link has been fashioned by many West Pointers. The names matter. Look at some of their names: Pete Lagasse, Jeff Rogers, Mark Lowrey, Art Mosley, John Ford, Matt Harrison, Bob Kimmitt, Joe Zengerle, Dick Radez, Wes Clark, Jack LeCuyer and Tom Carhart. Their work expresses

a bond to men now dead. You know the dead men, too: men like Mike Field, Buck Thompson, Tommy Hayes, Al Hottell, Carl McGee, Frank Reasoner and Jerry Clark.

One message

"There is one message here. It is that West Point gives us each other. This is the secret of all military service. Its power is intimacy and fellowship. Each of us does the work. We build the bonds to each other. And the result is that we teach each other. We teach each other the most important things: that the soul of leadership is sacrifice and that valor is bearing blows that would otherwise fall on a sister or brother; that the love of brother and sister is not broken by anger, or distance, or time, and it bridges the shade of death." □